

WARHAMMER®

FANTASY ROLEPLAY™



OMENS OF WAR™

ADVANCED COMBAT AND WARRIORS

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OMENS OF WAR

EXPANDED MARTIAL BACKGROUND, RESOURCES, AND RULES

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CORE PRODUCT

Throughout *Omens of War*, reference will be made to the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* Core Product. This refers to either the books within the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* Box Set (*Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* Rulebook, *Tome of Adventure*, *Tome of Blessings*, *Tome of Mysteries*) or the Guides (*Player's Guide*, *Game Master's Guide*, *Creature's Guide*).

NEW RULES

In addition to a wealth of new information and background material on the Old World and the role of combat in the *Warhammer* setting, *Omens of War* includes some new and expanded rules on mounted combat, fighting styles and enhance cards, and Chaos. Players and GMs should familiarise themselves with these new rules before using them in play.

MOUNTED COMBAT RULES

Includes new rules and content for mounts and mounted combat, as well as the care and feeding of horses. These mount rules can be found in Chapter 6, starting on page 42 of this book.

MARKS OF KHORNE

The Ruinous Powers may bequeath a special boon upon one of their followers, a Mark of Chaos. The Mark of Khorne and its effects are discussed in Chapter 1 of the *Book of Blood*.

USING THE MATERIALS INCLUDED WITH OMENS OF WAR

Omens of War includes a variety of new cards, sheets, and components for the Game Master and his players.

NEW CARDS

The location, item, condition, and talent cards can be added to the other cards of those types and used as needed.

CREATURE CARDS

Omens of War includes 20 new creature cards. Full rules for creature cards can be found in the *Creature Guide* and abbreviated rules can be found in Chapter 3 of the *Book of Blood*.

MUTATION CARDS

Omens of War includes 4 new mutation cards. The complete rules for mutation and corruption can be found in *Winds of Magic* or the *Game Master's Guide*, available separately. If you are not using the rules for mutation and corruption, then when an effect calls for a target to suffer corruption, the target should suffer an equal amount of fatigue and stress instead.

PUNCHBOARD

The punchboard components should be carefully removed from the frames. The pieces can be added to your existing supply of tokens and standups for *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*.

SEVERE INJURY WOUND CARDS

Severe injuries help to underscore the "perilous" part of grim and perilous adventure in the Old World. The severe injury wound cards should be shuffled into the deck of regular wound cards. See Chapter 2 of the *Book of Blood* for more information about severe injury cards.

FIGHTING STYLE & ENHANCE CARDS

Some warriors of the Old World specialize in the use of particular armaments, and over time develop or acquire a distinctive fighting style. *Omens of War* includes 30 fighting style action cards and 6 new enhance action cards. Rules for both types of card can be found in Chapter 6, on page 48 of this book.



SET ICON

The cards and sheets included with *Omens of War* are noted with a special set icon. This allows you to quickly identify the supplement materials when sorting, adding, or removing cards from your game.





CHAPTER ONE

A LAND OF STRIFE

The Old World and the many realms beyond are lands forged in and shaped by war. Armies of thousands, even tens of thousands, have marched into battle for many purposes: to defend their homes, to seek vengeance on a hated foe, to conquer new lands (or reclaim old ones), to fuel the vanity of their rulers, or to satisfy the insatiable bloodlust of their gods.

Regiment after regiment throw themselves into the gore-soaked fray. Thunderous cavalry charges crash into the enemy. Soot-belching war machines rain down death from afar or wreak mechanical carnage up close. Titanic monsters screech out of the sky, leaving men fleeing in terror, crushed under massive feet, or rent and torn by tooth and claw. Wizards and sorcerers raise mountains, cast down city walls and annihilate the foe with powerful magic. Amidst it all stride mighty heroes and dread lords, inspiring their followers with words of courage or dark threats, slaying the most horrific of monsters, cutting a path through the enemy, ready to face the great champions of the foe in single combat and turn the tide of battle.

The lands of the Empire are no exception. Indeed this realm of men is beset on all sides by ravening enemies who would slaughter or enslave every last inhabitant, burn every farm, defile every shrine, and tear down its magnificent cities stone by stone. From the

mountains come rampaging orcs and goblins, united in their frenzied love of battle. In the forests lurk savage beastmen, who once laid claim to this land and take every opportunity to tear down the civilisation that has usurped it. From the frozen north march barbaric marauders, men who worship the Chaos Gods and bring hideous daemons as their allies. Below the earth tunnel insidious skaven, gnawing away at the very foundations of the land, ready to enact their diabolical plans. Even within the Empire, there are still those who would betray their fellow citizens for power or profit, and despite so many external threats, there are still times when the disparate provinces and city states that form the Empire march to do battle with each other.

What follows are a series of excerpts from *A Land of Strife*, a popular book taking a look at the Empire's history by the scribe Emmet Taubenheim. The following text is from the fourth printing, considered by many scholars to be the most accurate of the book's current six editions. Other scholars prefer the fifth edition's more concise writing and organisation, while many also remark on the wonderfully illustrated colour plates found in the extremely rare second edition, printed in Nuln.

THE FORGING OF THE EMPIRE

The Empire originated more than two-and-a-half thousand years ago. The great underground realm of the dwarfs lay in broken ruins, with many once-great holds abandoned and overrun. This had allowed hordes of green-skinned orcs and goblins to pass through the mountains unchecked, to raid and pillage the lands that would one day become the Empire. At that time, these lands were inhabited by savage tribes of men, primitive fur-clad hunters who fought daily to protect their homes from the beastmen of the forests. The remaining dwarfs quickly recognised a worthy ally in their fight against the orcs and goblins, and the men in turn were keen to learn the dwarfs' skills at metalworking that would allow them to construct weapons and armour of iron. The men were fierce and courageous warriors, and the mightiest among them was Sigmar, of the Unberogen tribe. Despite his young age, he had already defeated orcs in many battles.

As the greenskin attacks grew ever bolder, an orc ambush captured Kurgan Ironbeard, the High King of the Dwarfs, as he and his household travelled towards the Grey Mountains. However, Sigmar and his war party were already hunting this band of orcs and caught them before they could escape with their prize. Sigmar slew many orcs and freed the dwarf captives. In gratitude, King Kurgan presented a rune-inscribed warhammer to Sigmar, a magical heirloom of great power. This hammer is known as Ghal Maraz, which means Skull Splitter in the dwarf tongue. Sigmar and the dwarf king swore an oath of allegiance to each other, and armed with Ghal Maraz, Sigmar became an unstoppable warrior. Soon he inherited the leadership of his tribe, and after many years of war, the twelve greatest tribes of men all pledged their fealty to him. Together with his dwarf allies, Sigmar drove the orcs and goblins from the land, becoming known as Heldenhammer – the hammer of the goblins.

THE BATTLE OF BLACK FIRE PASS

When new hordes of orcs and goblins threatened to invade, King Kurgan sent word to Sigmar to request aid. Sigmar responded with urgency, summoning his chieftains and commanding them to muster their armies. A massive tide of greenskins was marching through the Black Fire Pass, the only route for such a large army to traverse the Black Mountains. The orc horde outnumbered the men and dwarfs many times over, but Sigmar and King Kurgan led their forces to the narrowest section of the pass, a natural choke point where the greenskins could not bring their advantage to bear.

The orcs charged the defenders' lines again and again, each time breaking on the wall of shields, axes, and spears that stood firm against them. The air was filled with countless arrows and quarrels, but still the orcs came on. In places the line wavered, but Sigmar and Kurgan shouted words of courage and resolve, and smote down any greenskin that came near. After many hours of grim and bloody fighting, the orc attack melted away for the final time, and Sigmar led a ferocious countercharge into the routing greenskins, slaughtering thousands and scattering the army once and for all. It was not long after that Sigmar was duly declared Emperor of all the lands bounded by the great mountain ranges.

THE NEW REALM

Upon his coronation, Sigmar divided up the land, granting rulership of each province to the twelve tribal chieftains who had fought with him and captained his armies. Under Sigmar's wise and strong rule, the Empire prospered. Villages became towns, towns grew into cities, and with the aid of the dwarfs, the Empire's skills of craftsmanship and construction grew every year – some say far faster than many of the older dwarfs deemed wise or proper.

After a reign of fifty years, Sigmar gave up his throne and travelled east, never again to be seen in the lands of men. In the following years, Sigmar came to be worshipped as a warrior god. Shrines in his name were built all across the realm, and he joined the pantheon of deities that the people of the Empire pray to. To avoid infighting that might tear apart everything Sigmar had built, the chieftains agreed to elect one of their number to become Emperor in Sigmar's place. This system has remained more or less intact to this day, with the ruler of each province titled an Elector Count to reflect their role in the process.

THE RUNEFANGS

After the great victory at Black Fire Pass, King Kurgan ordered his most skilled Runesmith, Alaric the Mad, to forge twelve mighty magical swords, as a mark of gratitude and allegiance to Sigmar. This monumental task took Alaric a hundred years, well beyond the time that Sigmar had departed from the Empire. In his stead, the Runesmith presented the swords, called the Runefangs, to the new Emperor, who in turn passed them to the twelve Elector Counts. The Runefangs became the badge of office for each Count, and priceless heirlooms of those ruling families. The Counts have borne them into battle many times to slay enemies of the Empire, and they are occasionally presented temporarily to a trusted general or hero, if the need is dire and the Count himself cannot fight.

THE AGE OF THE EMPIRE

Though the cities grew and the armies were strong, prosperity was not to last. As the years passed, the Elector Counts became corrupt, vain and power hungry. Emperors came and went – some good, many bad – culminating in the reign of Boris Goldgather. Boris was a self-serving, incompetent ruler who utterly neglected his duties in favour of increasing his personal wealth. People starved and the armies dwindled as taxes were redirected into his own coffers. In this state, the land was ill-prepared for the calamitous events that commenced in the year 1111. A virulent disease, known as the Black Plague, broke out simultaneously in all parts of the Empire. Tens of thousands died choking on their own blood, wiping whole villages and towns from the map. Great pyres and mass graves became a daily sight. Snaking columns of refugees attempted to flee their fate, but only succeeded in spreading the infection still further. Boris Goldgather too was struck down by the plague. While a welcome relief for many, it left the Empire leaderless.

THE SKAVEN WARS

In this terribly weakened condition, the Empire had little chance of defending itself when tides of the loathsome ratmen – or as some call them “skaven” – erupted out of sewers and hidden tunnels to swarm across the land. The Black Plague had been created and spread by their malicious paws, all part of a diabolically audacious plan to seize control of the Empire. They looted and destroyed the disease-ravaged settlements, slaughtering thousands and enslaving thousands more, many of whom were led in chains down into the tunnels, never to be heard from again.

However, there were some who resisted. Those who remained able to fight rallied under the command of the Count of Middenheim, Count Mandred. The surviving soldiers of the Empire formed a desperate but determined army, and Mandred led them in a series of battles to drive back the skaven. Though cowardly in small numbers, large forces of skaven were vicious and driven. Besides, the devious leaders of the ratmen were not about to abandon their prize easily. They were finally scattered and driven back underground at the Battle of the Howling Hills. Mandred slew the skaven warlord leading the verminous horde, who could not stand before the power of a Runefang.

Count Mandred, now dubbed the Ratslayer, was elected Emperor and started to rebuild the shattered realm. However, his reign was cut short when he was murdered by a skaven assassin who somehow bypassed every guard and locked gate. Strangely, despite the terrible events of this time, the skaven wars are now largely unheard of, or at least dismissed as a fictional tale. Relics, evidence and accounts of those events have all disappeared over the years, apparently stolen or accidentally destroyed, while any scholar or historian claiming the truth of the stories tends to meet with an untimely demise... As such, the majority of Empire citizens discount the existence of the skaven, at least as any kind of organised threat, as nothing more than an old wives' tale.

THE TIME OF THREE EMPERORS

The death of Emperor Mandred was yet another catastrophe for the Empire. With rivalry and ambition clouding their wisdom, the remaining Elector Counts failed to agree on a successor. Politics and bitterness turned to anger, which created border skirmishes and eventually erupted into outright civil war. In 1360, Elector Countess Otilia of Talabecland announced herself Empress and launched an invasion of the adjoining province, Stirland. Over the following decades, the Empire broke into separate warring states. Various Emperors claimed rulership as the previous one met his end, while simultaneously Otilia's heirs in Talabecland claimed the throne as a hereditary position. Then in 1547, Count Siegfried of Middenland proclaimed himself to be Emperor too, and so heralded the time of the three Emperors.

This was an age of bitter internecine strife as the three claimants to the throne warred with each other and sought the backing of the remaining Counts – both their political support and their military might. Bribes, blackmail, and threats flew back and forth, while armies marched to do battle with their neighbours, razing border forts, pushing border lines, or even attempting to depose a rival Count. For all intents and purposes the Empire had ceased to exist, and the divided factions were ripe for attack by outside enemies.

THE LOSS OF DRAKWALD

It is during the Skaven Wars that the province of Drakwald was lost – almost the entire population, including the ruling Count and his heir, wiped out either by the plague or by jagged skaven blades. Later, rulership of the land was nominally split between the Counts of Nordland and Middenland, but the area has never really been reclaimed. The abandoned villages, farms and towns were never resettled, and were soon swallowed up by the encroaching forest. Should anyone now be foolish enough to travel into the forest for any length of time, he might just stumble across a few fallen timbers and stones, moss-covered and overgrown with tree roots, all that remains of what was once a thriving settlement. The true rulers of the Drakwald are now the beastmen that stalk its twisted remains, and a man would be wise to travel with a large, armed force, lest he become the next meal of those hate-filled creatures.

GORBAD IRONCLAW

While greenskins in general are quite incompetent, Gorbald Ironclaw is often spoken of as the greatest orc warlord in history. He seized control of the Ironclaw Orc tribe and went on to conquer dozens of other tribes of both orcs and goblins inhabiting the Badlands to the south. As his rampage progressed northwards, dealing savage defeats to the dwarfs on the way, many more greenskin tribes flocked to his banner, lured by the promise of war and slaughter. By the time he marched through Black Fire Pass, Gorbald's horde was truly enormous, perhaps even greater than that defeated by Sigmar in the first days of the Empire. However, this time there were no dwarfs to stand in their way, and no united Empire army, for the Elector Counts were unable or unwilling to call on each other for aid.

In 1707, Gorbald's invasion spilled into the provinces of Averland and Solland, devastating everything and everyone in its path. Eldred, the Count of Solland, mustered what armies he had at the River Aver, just north of Averheim, nobly attempting to bar the way into the rest of the Empire. Though they held the riverbank for a while, thousands of orcs plunged through the water and eventually gained a foothold on the other side. As the greenskins started to encircle the defending men, Eldred ordered a retreat, knowing that to stay would doom his entire force. However, Gorbald was one step ahead. He had despatched his fast-moving cavalry northwards to sack the Moot and circle back around the Empire army. Goblins astride howling giant wolves and orcs riding snorting great warboars smashed into the rear of the army, turning an orderly retreat into carnage. Realising that all was lost, Eldred drew his Runefang and, with his bodyguard of greatswords, drove into the orc masses calling for Gorbald to meet him in single combat. The challenge was brave but futile, for even with the power of his magical sword he was no match for the monstrous orc warlord. After hacking the Count to pieces, Gorbald took his crown and his Runefang as trophies, and continued unopposed into the heart of the Empire.

Gorbald's invasion reached all the way to the city of Altdorf, seat of the Emperor Sigismund. After a prolonged siege, Gorbald's army became disenchanted with the lack of success and broke apart to pillage the lands about. The siege was broken and the threat ended,

though not before Sigismund had been ripped apart by a wyvern and the Imperial palace turned into its nesting lair. The province of Solland had been obliterated, its people dead, its towns razed. The surviving Solland nobles fled to Averland, while rule of the lands was taken by the Count of Wissenland. Eldred's Runefang was lost for years until its recovery by a dwarf adventurer, who returned it to the Imperial vaults.

THE VAMPIRE WARS

Three hundred years later a new threat arose, this time from within the borders of the Empire, in the gloomy, shadow-filled land of Sylvania. Two centuries earlier, the vampire lord Vlad von Carstein had usurped control of the region, and now with his powers at their zenith and the Empire weak and divided, he launched his bid to become an immortal undead Emperor. Commanding a shambling army of dead soldiers, summoned from their graves and bound to his will, he ravaged Stirland and Ostermark before marching on Altdorf itself. Every man killed by the rotting, deathless army was raised up by Vlad to swell the ranks still further, so the terrified defenders were forced to fight the corpses of their erstwhile comrades. The vampire was finally slain when the Grand Theogonist of Sigmar cast himself from the walls of the capital, pulling Vlad with him onto the sharpened stakes below.

Over the following centuries, Vlad's offspring, the so-called vampire counts, brought fresh terror to the land. The blood-crazed maniac Konrad von Carstein and the evil master of Dark Magic, Mannfred von Carstein, each attempted to seize the crown and were only stopped at the cost of thousands more lives. At last, with them both dead, the danger seemed to have passed and Sylvania was subsumed into the province of Stirland. However, the region is shunned to this day, for the dead there do not rest easily. At night, the peasants cower in their hovels while cannibal ghouls roam the land and those foolish enough to venture out are preyed on by the vampiric lords who still rule this area.

THE GREAT WAR AGAINST CHAOS

As the Elector Counts and so-called Emperors continued their power struggles and bickering, an even greater threat was growing in the far north, one that would eclipse all that had come before. Fell omens occurred, terrifying nightmares afflicted the populace, and half-mad soothsayers ranted about the end of the world. They had good reason, for the power of Chaos was waxing strong. Most years, bands of barbaric marauders came south to pillage and raid in Kislev and the northern provinces of the Empire, but 2301 was very different. It is said that the Realm of Chaos itself, the warped region of twisting insanity at the top of the world, grew and expanded southwards, flooding the world with magical energy. The marauders marched forth in their thousands, among them those blessed by the Dark Gods, the armour-clad Chaos Warriors. Bounding, screeching and growling alongside them came daemons – hideous and strange, fed strong with the billowing Winds of Magic.

This vast horde poured south into the lands of Kislev. The men of that desolate realm were fierce warriors, and their army included many mounted archers and the famous feather-adorned winged lancers. However, the force was swept aside by the might of the Chaos Warriors, the unnatural ferocity of the daemons, and the sheer numbers of marauders. The horrific incursion reached Praag,

the northernmost city of Kislev, and laid siege. Marauders assaulted the walls daily, while tireless daemons attacked at night. The desperate defenders held on for as long as they could, but eventually the gates were smashed asunder, and daemons ran amok through the streets bringing a waking nightmare to the screaming inhabitants. As the city fell, the Realm of Chaos engulfed it entirely, mutating and merging the defenders and the buildings themselves into a hideous parody of their former existence. Everywhere, man and stone were melded so limbs reached out of walls, mouths wailed from pillars. This was merely a glimpse of the horrifying insanity that would come to pass over the world if the incursion could not be stopped.

BATTLE AT THE GATES OF KISLEV

While the Elector Counts had sent no aid to Kislev, one man came to the fore at last to unite the armies of the Empire. Magnus was a noble of Nuln, a devout believer in the Sigmarite faith, and a powerful orator. His rousing speeches struck a chord with the common folk and soon he had assembled a huge following that marched with him from city to city as he progressed northwards. One by one, the Elector Counts pledged their own forces and sent forth their regiments of professional soldiers to join the militia. The knightly orders too answered the call to arms and rode north. On the journey, they were joined by Teclis, a powerful high elf mage, who pledged his allegiance and went on to train the more promising human hedge wizards in the arts of battle magic.

Magnus split his forces in two, sending the fastest ahead, hoping to reach Praag in time to relieve the defenders. This army consisted mostly of knights and Kislevite lancers, but despite their hard ride



A HOSTILE LAND

While the proud cities of the Empire are centres of progress and enlightenment, havens of relative safety (except in times of invasion), this state of affairs does not extend far beyond the city limits. The vast miles of the realm are largely blanketed in dense, forbidding forests – unmapped and untamed. These shadowy eaves are home to all manner of hostile creatures: mutant outcasts, Chaos-worshipping cultists and murderous brigands, skulking goblin tribes and marauding orc warbands, the restless dead summoned from their graves to serve the wicked intent of necromancers, hideous unnamed monsters, and thousands, perhaps millions, of beastmen prowling the trees with malice in their hearts, eager for the taste of flesh.

Travellers through the forests, even on the main routes, must go well protected should they wish to reach their destination. Farms, villages, and even small towns must keep vigilant watch and plentiful guards lest they be suddenly overrun in the night. It is not uncommon for such settlements to disappear, inhabitants slaughtered or devoured, and buildings burnt. The trees reclaim the earth with unnatural speed, so roads that once led to such places often seem to peter out into the depths of the forest. Those who know the dangers often warn that the Empire's cities lie in the heart of enemy territory.

they arrived too late – the Chaos army had moved on, leaving the city as a disturbing vision of hell. Horrified and enraged, the cavalry force turned south filled with a thirst for vengeance.

Magnus and his mass of infantry marched to the capital city of Kislev, only to discover it surrounded and besieged by the Chaos horde. Though the walls were yet unbreached and the Kislevite defenders aided by a small but stalwart contingent of dwarfs from Karaz-a-Karak, there was no time to lose. Magnus ordered the charge. His force drove deep into the Chaos horde, while Teclis and his battle wizards fought crackling magical duels with Chaos sorcerers. But for all the size of Magnus's army, the forces of Chaos numbered many more, and after their initial momentum was spent, the men of the Empire became surrounded still some distance from the city walls.

However, as the Warriors of Chaos and hell-spawned daemons scythed down regiment after regiment, and all hope seemed lost, Magnus's second army returned. Fuelled by the horrors they had witnessed at Praag, the Empire knights and Kislevite lancers thundered into the flank of the enemy lines. In the city, the defenders saw their chance, and humans and dwarfs sallied out. Attacked on three fronts, the hordes of Chaos could not hold their ground and routed from the field, thousands of marauders slain, while many of the daemons suddenly melted out of existence as the Realm of Chaos waned and retreated. Kislev, the Empire, and indeed the Old World had been saved. For his heroic deeds, Magnus was crowned Emperor, finally reuniting the provinces and putting an end, more or less, to the warring of the Elector Counts.

THE REIGN OF KARL FRANZ

In 2502, Karl Franz, the Elector Count of Reikland was crowned Emperor. Though he has yet to face anything like the cataclysmic events of ages gone, there has nevertheless been war aplenty and the situation seems to grow worse every year. In the north, Chaos incursions continue, raiding the coast of Nordland and Ostland. Occasionally these attacks can be met and countered at the shoreline, the marauding ships holed and sunk with cannon fire. More often, they land unopposed, pillaging and razing towns or even marching south in force to seek a greater prize. The northern towns of Unterhall, Kressle, and Volganof have all seen major battles in recent years that were only narrowly won with the combined forces of the Elector Counts.

Other threats have appeared too. Armies of hulking, ravenous ogres have left their homelands far in the east, and crossed the mountains intent on battle and food. The beastmen, an ever-present danger, seem to be multiplying faster than ever – their attacks growing in size and ferocity. Rumours persist of the skaven menace, though never proven (research indicates a number of accounts where a village or isolated town has been discovered with its entire population missing, vanished without trace. In a few locations, entire settlements – and even the occasional border fort – have sunk inexplicably into the ground, leaving nothing but a gaping hole into the depths of the earth). The greenskins, too, are a constant plague on the Empire. Most recently, an invasion into the province of Averland required Karl Franz himself to lead the forces of Reikland to reinforce the poorly led state soldiery. Although the Emperor's intervention turned the tide, Marius Leitdorf, the Elector Count of Averland, was laid low by an orc chieftain.

Despite all these external threats, it takes all of the Emperor's statesmanship, force of personality and, on occasion, force of arms to ensure that the Elector Counts provide mutual support in times of need, and to prevent them from falling back to bickering and the pursuit of ancient feuds. For as predators on all sides grow bolder and fiercer, never has unity been more important.



CHAPTER TWO

WAR ACROSS THE EMPIRE

The Empire is a nation forged in bloodshed and quenched in war. The Empire's enemies lurk both without and within its borders, and it's a rare month that doesn't see armies marching and clashing together somewhere in the Empire's many provinces. When no other enemies present themselves, the nobles of the Empire have been known to turn on one another and go to war over land, titles, or insults real or imagined.

Each province has its own history of warfare and its own traditional enemies, from the Nordlander's hatred of the Norscan raiders who ply the sea of claws to the grim spectre of the Vampire Counts haunting the province of Stirland. When soldiers from different provinces meet, they swap stories of their battles and their enemies, each convinced that their foes are the most deadly and that they deserve special praise for emerging victorious against them.

In this chapter, famous (or infamous) conflicts from the history of several Empire provinces are examined, often in the words of a survivor of that battle.



Chaos raiders? That's nothing! They're only human, after all, no matter what gods they worship. Now, orcs! Orcs are bleeding dangerous. Twice the size of a man and three times as strong - and tough! I've never seen anything take that kind of punishment and keep fighting!

They may not be subtle, or even terribly bright, but pound for pound there's not a warrior on the battlefield more dangerous than the greenskin menace. Except for us Averlanders, of course.

- Averlander Sergeant Adam Ollenburger



Reikland

THE BATTLE FOR AXE BITE PASS; 2515

An excerpt from Jaques Baston, *L'Histoire D'Montfort, Presse Quenelles, 1539 (2517 IC)*

Duc Folcard D'Montfort has been the proud guardian of Axe Bite Pass, a crucial trade road and barrier between Bretonnia and the Empire, for some years. Although relations between the rival nations can be strained, trade has flourished under the duc's rule. However, not every man within the province of Montfort always agreed with his liege's stewardship, least of all his nephew, a rash young knight named Hernault Clairvaux. The young man, marked by an immutable scowl and an absurdly waxed and curled moustache, was embittered by the fact that he would never become the heir to Castle Montfort.

After taking counsel with the young Knights Errant and a group of hired swords from the Empire led by a man calling himself 'Otto l'Magifique,' the brash Hernault decided that the neighbouring Imperial garrison was no match for their combined strength. It would be an honourable challenge to drive the Imperials from Axe Bite Pass; a great deed that would surely see Hernault and his peers named full Knights of the Realm. Hernault, perhaps deluded by 'Otto,' even believed that King Leoncouer would present him with a grandiose title in his throne room as a reward for his farsighted thinking and skill in battle.

With Mannslieb high in the night sky, Hernault and his company sneaked away from Castle Montfort. At daybreak, they let out a cry of 'For the Lady! For Bretonnia!' and charged up the pass in the famed tight lance formation of the Bretonnian Knights. Both knight and destrier were in high spirits as they drove frightened merchants from the rocky road. The Bretonnians, numbering nearly one hundred knights and at least as many more mounted yeomen and squires, soon reached the Imperial fortress of Helmgart. With its stout oak doors, colossal portcullis, and stone battlements equipped with cauldrons of burning oil, Helmgart was a siege target no sane general would wish to assault. But, pushing their sweating mounts near the point of exhaustion, the knights took the garrison by surprise and charged into the courtyard before the huge wooden doors could be closed. Once inside, the knights faced barrages of handgunner fire, but their superior Bretonnian mail deflected most of the shots and the floor was soon stained crimson with the blood and viscera of Imperial soldiers.

The grim-faced Hernault ordered the stores open in celebration of the victory, but, filled with hubris at his success, he failed to discover that pigeons had been dispatched to Bogenhafen carrying requests for aid. Their minds addled by ale, the Bretonnians made no attempt to guard their realm's precious new possession. The next morning, Hernault was woken by a glint of light; he opened his eyes and saw the morning sun gleaming off the pristine steel armour and barding of a company of tightly packed Imperial knights riding up the road towards Helmgart. A grey-haired, moustached man with

laurels around his head led the charge upon an enormous steed, his sword glowing in the light. Rumours quickly spread that this man could only be Kurt Helborg, who was of such fame that he was known throughout Bretonnia.

Hernault hastily assembled his knights, who had no choice but to counter the charge or suffer the same fate as the slaughtered garrison. Riding out from Helmgart at the head of his company, Hernault scoffed at his unchivalrous opponents, confident that his strength in numbers, tactics, and skill would bring him another victory. The distance between the forces closed with incredible speed as Hernault lowered his lance and took aim at the enemy general. At last, the heavy formations clashed together in the narrow confines of the pass. Although the pass was considerably wider here than at most points, there was no space to manoeuvre and no place to run. Hernault was amazed by the speed of the enemy general, who shifted his balance before Hernault could alter his aim and smashed the young Bretonnian from his horse with the pommel of his weapon. Dazed and prone, Hernault heard the vague shouts of 'to Helborg! For the Reiksguard! For the Emperor!' before he passed out. Leaderless, the Bretonnian resistance wilted. The knights found that the expertly trained Imperial cavalry was more than a match for them, and the few that survived the battle were ransomed back to their homeland in disgrace.

In the aftermath of the humiliating defeat of the Knights Errant, Hernault was expelled from his uncle's province and Bretonnia itself. Rumours persist that a young Bretonnian knight has founded 'Neuvau Montfort' in the Border Princes, but such stories have not been verified. As for the grizzled mercenary from the Empire, this 'Otto l'Magnifique,' who claimed to have slain trolls and daemons single-handedly and was perhaps responsible for Hernault's foolhardy endeavour, no one has seen him. Reports from the battle made no mention of the zweihander-bearing sell-sword; nor has he been seen since in the court of Montfort. I heard a rumour that 'Otto' had also become rather too friendly with the fiancée of Hernault, which perhaps explains his disappearance. Whether this soldier was the mind behind the disastrous incursion or not, the goodly Duc Folcard has ensured that trade and relations through the pass have remained on reasonable terms since the incident.

KURT HELBORG

The Grandmarshal of the Reiksguard and Reiksmarshal of Karl Franz's armies, the moustachioed knight is one of the more easily recognised figures in Reikland both by reputation and description. He wields the Sword of Vengeance, the runefang of the former Solland province, and is renowned as one of the finest swordsmen in the Old World. Helborg is an unusual figure amongst the upper echelons of Imperial society, having risen through the ranks to his lofty position, a true show of Helborg's formidable prowess in battle. Over the years, Helborg has fought hundreds of battles, from minor skirmishes, to leading armies of his Reiksguard, pennants waving in the wind, against innumerable hordes of the Empire's enemies. A formidable general as well as combatant, Helborg finds the concept of defeat completely foreign.

Middenland

The province of Middenland is dominated by the Drakwald Forest. This evil place is home to countless beastmen, and only a few dotted settlements lie within its shadows, walled and guarded, with the gates well barred at night. Ulric, god of wolves, winter, and war, is worshipped strongly in this province.

THE FALL OF KREVINGHOF

*From the journals of Marksman Galt,
of the Fourth Forest Patrolmen*

For months we'd had reports of farms and villages disappearing. Not just attacked and burned, but actually disappearing, wiped from the map as if they'd never existed. The forest tracks that had led to these places now faded into tangled branches. Cleared farmland had vanished, as if the trees had walked back to replace those that had been felled.

When we realised that contact had been lost with Krevinghof, a well-defended town, Baron Brellhaus didn't waste time. He rounded up as many regiments as could be spared, including all the lads from the Second and the Fifth Forest Patrols as well as ours, plus some road wardens and a load of halberdier watchmen from Middenheim (who weren't that keen on being under the trees).

Ulric must have been with us, because the road was clear and quiet, but as we neared the town, we all smelled the stench of burnt flesh in the air. Our scouts confirmed the news: Krevinghof was a smoking ruin, the population slaughtered, and scrawny half-beasts were even now tearing down the stones of the shrine to Ulric. The Baron ordered the advance, and we charged into the town. The beastman runts scattered and we gave chase, though not into the tree-line. A half dozen were slain, one by my crossbow. The Middenheimers cheered, but the rest of us knew it was far from over – it was getting dark.

As night fell, the forest erupted with hideous braying and growling that put ice in your veins. Worse still, it came from every side – we were surrounded, and by hundreds of the half-beasts if the noise was anything to go by. But the Baron had prepared us well. He'd ordered us to dig fire pits around the perimeter, fuelled with forty barrels of pitch that we'd brought with us in wagons. Gaps were left in this wall of flame, and it was facing those places that we deployed (the Middenheim halberdiers as a reserve in the middle).

The plan was good. When the snarling horde surged out of the trees, they shied back from the blaze. They were herded through the gaps and straight into our crossbows. Second patrol had it worst and was almost overrun until the Middenheimers got stuck in. But then came a thunderous noise as the beast chieftain approached, riding a great wooden chariot pulled by two mutated monstrosities. The speeding cart dove straight through our fiery barrier, crashing round and into the side of our lines. We fled from its path, though a dozen or more of my patrol were gored and trampled. The beast-lord roared, fur ablaze, a vision of hell, and bore down on Baron Brellhaus. As I watched, the Baron took not one step back, but drew



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his pistol and shot the beast straight in the head. With the chieftain gone, the horde lost heart, fading into the darkness. The creatures that drew the chariot fell to crossbow bolts and halberds.

At first light we marched away. We left a pyre of burning half-beast corpses, and the Ulrican shrine rebuilt as best we could. We bore away our dead, and managed to save some sacred artefacts of Ulric that had miraculously been left intact – a small prize for a hard-fought victory.

BARON KARL BRELLHAUS

Baron Brellhaus bears the nigh impossible duty of keeping the forest roads in the north-east of Middenland clear and safe for travellers, and protecting the towns, farms, and villages that lie in the region. It is a task he takes seriously, marshalling the efforts of his men from his castle, where extensive if basic barracks have been constructed. He is a veteran of many battles with the beastmen and well respected by those he commands. Despite doing the best he can with the resources at his disposal, his failures weigh heavily on his mind.

THE RUINS OF KREVINGHOF

The town of Krevinghof still lies in charred ruins, although there has been some talk of an expedition to resettle the place. People say the site is watched over by Ulric, for the trees have kept their distance and the shrine remains undefiled even though it has no guard.

Nordland

PEASANT LEVIES DEFY THE GOREQUEEN

T*he following is taken from a seditious pamphlet authored by persons unknown and distributed throughout Salzenmund and other locations along the Nordland coast.*

FORCES OF THE GOREQUEEN PREYED UPON THE FOLK OF NORDLAND – BUT ARE OUR LEADERS ANY BETTER THAN THE CHIEFTAINS OF THE BLOOD-THIRSTY NORSE?

Since the founding of Sigmar's Empire, bloodthirsty raiders have harried our northern shoreline. These depraved savages inhabit Norsca. For eight months of the year, it is a land of treacherous ice and howling blizzards, whilst the summer is a time of mist, mud, and bloodsucking flies. Such a land breeds ferocious men.

How different are the lives of the popinjays and plutocrats who govern in Salzenmund! They wear fur lined green velvet cloaks to keep the weather at bay, and task bebies of servants with horsetail whisks to rid them of flies.

These two worlds collided in Sigmarzeit 2398, and who would be the folk to suffer? You, the common people of Nordland! A bloodlusting queen of the northern tribes ordered her people to their longboats and sailed across the Sea of Claws. She was a fierce woman, said to be the consort of the dreaded Blood God himself. In one hand she clutched a daemon shield and in the other a long barbed spear. Her tribe fell upon the fishing villages of Nordland like sea wolves. Their purpose was not to enslave the Nordlanders, nor to enrich themselves on spoils of war. They simply slew all that they could find. Neither man, woman nor child, nor even livestock, was spared sacrifice to the insatiable Blood God.

DID THE GENTLEMEN OF SALZENMUND RAISE AN ARMY TO DEFEND THE COASTAL FOLK? NO – THEY HID LIKE CRAVEN CURS!

It was left up to Harold Dreizacker, a simple fisherman, to rally the Nordlanders to defend their homes. He headed a militia of fishing folk who beat their boathooks into halberds and patrolled the coast as lookouts. He organised a fleet of small boats to be ready at all times to respond to the sight of the Gorequeen's red sails upon the horizon.

As a cold Geheimnistag wind blew, the Nordlanders felt relief, for the close of summer heralded the end of the raiding season, but it was not to be. Three days later the Norscans fell upon Dietershafen, and there was a battle. Harold and his fleet sailed to intercept the raiders, but the bloody queen of the Norse threw her great spear with such force that it smashed Harold's vessel to matchwood

and sent the hero tumbling into the waves. All was thought lost, and what happened next is unclear, but it seems that the people of Dietershafen were saved from slaughter by the sudden appearance of a great vessel clad in iron and belching steam and cannonballs. Whatever drew a dwarf ship to the battle that day is not known, but the dwarf mariners must have surely settled a mighty grudge as their vessel was more than a match for the longships of the Norse. Only a few raiding ships escaped to the open seas, and what became of the Gorequeen none can say.

There was even more to celebrate when Harold Dreizacker was discovered, frozen but alive, on a nearby shore. He was nursed to health and praise was heaped upon him by the folk of Dietershafen, for without his intervention they would surely have fallen to the axes of the Norse.

The villagers of the Nordland coast prepared for a harsh winter, for many working men died in the raids, and the Norse had burned many storehouses and fields. Harold agreed to travel to Salzenmund, to beseech the nobles there to provide for their people. However, he never returned and help never came. Only hardy folk survived the Nordland winter of 2398.

THE FATE OF HAROLD DREIZACKER.

So what became of this brave man? He possessed no political wiles, no personal fortune, and no private army, but he nevertheless organised the folk of the Nordland coast into a force that could defy a barbarian queen. Most folk say that spies of the vanquished Norse slew him in revenge.

We say different. We say that upon reaching Salzenmund, he became such a gadfly to the noble rulers of Salzenmund, shaming them so much for their cowardice and degeneracy that they had him done away with. Another crime committed upon the humble folk of the Empire by the parasites who purport to lead them. The nobility are a cancer that eats into our society. They need us more than we need them.

ARISE AND SMASH THE NOBILITY!

L*iving under the threat of the Norscans all the time, it does something to the Nordlanders. They're half-Norscan themselves.*

*- Klaus von Rothstein,
Opinionated Merchant*

Hochland

2478: THE HOLDING OF HERGIG

Taken from *The Shocking Truth About Ratmen*, by Johan Lieber, reportedly printed in 2498. Very few copies of this book exist, as it is seen by many as sheer folly, and others as a work of sedition.

Wilhelm Lieber was right! I knew it, I knew they existed; my great-grandfather was right and I must present this new evidence to the world. Beneath the city of Hergig, they scuttled through the sewers, through tunnels no longer known to man. They came one night-unseen, unheard. Hundreds of verminous rat-men poured into the narrow city streets, bursting forth from drainage holes, from carefully prepared tunnels under shrubbery and rocks, and into basements of abandoned houses. Gutter runners and Stormvermin, led by the vile grey seer Krikk, surged through the near-empty streets, carving their way through the isolated watch patrols. Wilhelm's study listed these different varieties, but no one believed him. Terrified by the sight of the rat-men, the people of Hergig barricaded themselves inside their hovels. After all, to most citizens, the foul creatures known as the skaven are but a myth, a cruel bedtime story for naughty children. Many townsfolk were disintegrated by the warpstone-fuelled spells of the powerful Seer; others were carved in two or relieved of their intestines by the wicked weapons of the skaven warriors.

By the time the alarm was raised, the rat-men horde had nearly reached the palace. The disorganised watch and state troops guarding Count Leudenhof rushed out in haphazard fashion, only to be cut down under the sheer numbers of the pestilent opposition. There was no escape from the towers of the elector's palace and Leudenhof was forced to don his armour and reclaim his Runefang from its ceremonial position. He would lead his troops personally to ensure that another of the precious swords would not be lost without a fight.

The elector marched his bodyguard into the besieged courtyard and gave spirit and courage to his fearful troops. After two hours of bloody fighting, with terrible losses on both sides, it seemed

GUNTHER KLOSS

In 2478, Gunther was a young man; no hero was he. But his actions that night changed his fate. Promoted on the orders of the elector in the aftermath of the battle, the young man went on to become a great hero of Hochland. He fought in campaigns against beastmen and marauders, leading his band of long-riflemen into combat time and time again. His death came in battle in the year 2499, when he was ambushed and torn to pieces by braying gor warriors in the thick woodlands outside Hergig.

THE HOCHLAND LONG RIFLE

Nuln may have a reputation as the centre of engineering innovation in the Empire, but Hochland is justly proud of its contribution to Imperial technology—the Hochland Long Rifle. Consider the following note Engineer Todmeister included in his personal journal shortly before presenting his latest work to the Engineering College Consortium of 2475:

It is finished! The world will marvel at my creation! I will be rich beyond my wildest dreams and the envy of the engineering guild. No longer will they mock me or my experiments with blackpowder; they shall instead cower at my might! Now, I need a mighty name for my creation, so that all may know the power of the Hochlander's rifle—something official that even the Imperial army will appreciate. (various scribbles). I have it! The world shall gasp at the incredible power and accuracy of 'Leon Todmeister's Fantabulously Far-reaching Harquebus of Unforeseeable and Unperceived Bereavement'. Leon Todmeister

as if the tide was turning—until Krikk let loose with a desperate burst of magical energy. A mighty bolt crackled through the night air, illuminating the battle as it struck skaven and human alike. Leudenhof himself suffered a grievous injury, and his troops, who could ill afford further losses, were forced to fight a grim defence around his unconscious body.

The power of a warpstone is immense (I must study it further) and the force of the blast obliterated the unarmoured men atop the battlements. One young man dressed in the colours of Hochland had his blond hair scorched and his uniform burnt when the sergeant beside him was reduced to a pile of gore. Coughing, young Gunther Kloss, who had been part of the Hochland Handgunner regiment for all of three weeks, rose to his feet unsteadily and, finding his handgun blown from his hands, took up his fallen sergeant's newly crafted longrifle.

Peering through a small tube mounted to the top of the rifle and surveying the skaven forces magnified before him, he saw warp energy crackling around one of the filthy creatures at the back of the throng. Kloss took aim, held his breath, and pulled the trigger. His shot flew straight and true, crashing into the soft skull of the grey seer and exploding out the other side, taking several ounces of brain matter with it. Within moments, there was panic throughout the skaven lines, and by morning the rat-men who were not slain by the remaining Hergig troops had fled back from whence they came. Count Leudenhof, Hergig, and Hochland were safe, for now.

Hundreds fought against and bore witness to these skaven; I am convinced that my account will be a best seller and lift the clouds of heresy from the Lieber name.

Ostland

The Middle Mountains rise tall within the province of Ostland, rearing up out of the Forest of Shadows. Both are dangerous and inhospitable, full of brigands, Chaos warbands, and lurking monsters. To the north lies the Sea of Claws, and eastwards the border with Kislev. The people of Ostland are stubborn and brave – it requires such traits to survive in this cold, harsh region.

THE INCURSION OF ENDLESS SLAUGHTER

An Account of Desperate Times by
Emlych Kronkleiter, Physician

The daemons came without warning. It was the year of 2512, thus far unremarkable and free of the omens and prophecies that usually precede such an event. Tens of thousands of unnatural fiends from beyond reality appeared overnight and fell upon the villages, towns, and forts of Ostland. The people stood no chance – whether they fought, ran or lost their minds, the result was the same: terror beyond imagining and the slaughter of every living thing. Refugees fled the carnage, while the armies of the province fought, but the majority of both groups met a bad end.

Riders from Kislev reported that the incursion had not passed through their lands, as the Ostland generals had assumed. Yet if the daemon-spawn had not come from the north, then where? As an

entire province faced annihilation, small groups were sent out with the suicidal mission of slipping through the enemy to discover the source of the invasion.

Hunt Captain Grouff led one such band, a party of thirty veteran huntsmen well used to moving unseen through the forest. They travelled west, each wearing a talisman of warding provided by the priests of Taal and meant to hide their passing. Even so, they went to great lengths to evade the packs of daemons that stalked the lands. These expert trackers determined the direction of the daemon horde's movements and slowly traced it back to the source.

As they climbed into the foothills of the Middle Mountains, the terrain took on a disturbing aspect. Streams ran with boiling acid, trees screamed and the very contours of the land seemed to shift under their feet. Despite losing more than a third of the hunters to these unnerving occurrences, Grouff and his band finally reached a forbidding cave mouth, the rock formed into the shape of a huge fanged maw. Leading his men silently down into the earth, Grouff found his way into a huge cavern, filled with strangely coloured light. Eight Chaos sorcerers stood in a circle, in deep concentration, chanting words of fell power. In the centre was a pulsing, writhing rift in reality that led directly into the Realm of Chaos itself. The men of Ostland wisely averted their gaze from it. As more daemons coalesced and started to emerge, Grouff and his huntsmen loosed arrows from their bows, felling five of the sorcerous cabal. The rift flickered, bucked, and faded as the spell was undone, but the remaining sorcerers and half-formed daemons unleashed their wrath upon the intruders in a deadly pandemonium of mutating magic and tearing ethereal talons.

Across the hell-ravaged lands of Ostland the daemons faded from existence, the rift that sustained them gone. The desperate defenders thanked the gods for their reprieve – the real reason was, for the moment, a mystery.

HUNT CAPTAIN GROUFF

Captain Octavius Grouff was a veteran of many battles and hunts for dangerous creatures of the dark forests. He was known for tracking down the marauders that sacked Drollberg, slaying the troll of Ash Moor, and leading the defenders that felled the giant Blackshanks. He alone returned after facing the cabal – somehow stumbling back through the forest, a broken man, his mind tormented by the warped horrors he had been subjected to and the appalling deaths of his companions. It took many months for the staff of Wolfenburg sanatorium to discern the facts of what had occurred from his insane muttering.

THE FANGED CAVE

Even with the cabal broken and the rift closed, the cave where the great summoning was conducted is still thought to be a place of much power, saturated with energy. Academics and practitioners who know of such arcane matters conjecture that the Winds of Magic are naturally channelled down into the rock by some peculiar geology, or even that the sorcerers constructed a series of menhirs to achieve the same effect. Many individuals with dubious credentials have visited Captain Grouff and attempted to discover the precise location of the cave, but so far the captain's ramblings have been of little help.



Talabecland

A PRIVATE WAR BETWEEN THE VON SCHIRACHS AND THE KREBS FAMILY

The following is an excerpt from an unfinished tragedy by Detlef Sierck. This play is unusual in depicting a topical subject, feuding between a family of Stirlander nobles and their neighbours in Talabecland. As the play deals with real nobles and events with a less than reverent tone, it would no doubt prove hugely controversial. Detlef has only shown the manuscript to a few close friends.

ACT 1. Scene 1.

Scene: Private room in a Wurtbad inn. Enter GRAND DUKE ALBERICH HAUPT-ANDERSSEN of Stirland, COUNT MANFRED VON SCHIRACH of Krugenheim, BARON IMMANUEL KREBS of Marburg and a SERVING WENCH.

WENCH: It is an honour to be in such company, but now, gentlemen, I'll leave you to be. Within these walls you may talk without fear. The staff know to knock thrice when they bring the beer. (She exits and there is a lengthy pause).

HAUPT-ANDERSSEN: Gentles, have we not been here before? As you prosecute your private war, the common folk do quail and quake. Pray you, bury the hatchet for their sake! I hear tell that bands of your men-at-arms despoil the land like the direst of blights. Now even a Shallyan sister, as meek as a mouse, would pronounce a plague on each noble house.

KREBS: My liege, this news it wounds me so. Are folk so simple as not to know that the esteemed Krebs are innocent here? 'Tis the von Schirach house that they should fear! Ever since grave Ottilia gave her generals the orders that brought Talabheim's forces to Stirland's borders, the von Schirach family have preyed on our lands. They subjected our subjects to a robber's demands.

VON SCHIRACH: Oh spare us the ancient history class! Since such actions occurred a millennium passed. By the bye, the Baron fails to mention that his own forebears caused much of the tension. Let bygones be bygones, that's what I say. My grievance is due to wrongs still fresh today. My dear Grand Duke, do you recall last Mitterfruhl, when you held a great ball? My young nephew, Otto, a courteous chap, bumped into old Jurgen Krebs and doffed feathered cap. But would the other fellow reciprocate? It was as if his own hat were glued to his pate! Later that day, in a Stahlstrasse inn,

a von Schirach retainer was sipping his gin when three Krebs footmen entered the bar and smashed out his teeth with an earthenware jar.

KREBS: I must interject! These things may be true, but it wasn't us who started it, noble sir, it was you! The reason my men were of such foul mood is because they were deprived of their sleep and their food. The previous winter an Altdorf engineer sought an empty field, all flat, wide and clear, on which he could test a new sort of rocket for which he pledged gold from his very own pocket. He approached us in Marburg, and we told him, "No – it'll disturb our folk so find elsewhere to go." We thought that the matter was out of our hands, but on the Stir's other side are the von Schirach lands. For weeks the nights echoed with bangs and with booms, and a stray rocket burned Marburg's granary rooms.

VON SCHIRACH: This fellow's at risk of forgetting his station! I did what I did for the good of our nation! This was a patriotic act, not meant as a slight.

KREBS: Piffle, 'twas done with the purest of spite! That spring, Marburgers barely slept at night and one poor old woman died out of fright!

HAUPT-ANDERSSEN: Oh good sirs, see sense! All the bloodshed! The duels! Small wonder seditionists call noblefolk fools. This feud is down to all of you, from your subjects to your spouses! What would it take to make peace between your two houses?

Pause.

BARON KREBS: Well if Manfred were to pay for the damage he wrought...

COUNT VON SCHIRACH: To assume first name terms isn't something you ought!

BARON KREBS: What of the Westerland Wars of 2429? A Krebs man was run through by a soldier on his side!

COUNT VON SCHIRACH: That was nothing to do with the noble von Schirachs! And what of 2478, when Kiel was attacked?

HAUPT-ANDERSSEN: This is just futile, I bid you goodbye! (He exits and there is a lengthy pause).

KREBS: Bah to you!

VON SCHIRACH: Go and die!

Exeunt.

Stirland

THE BATTLE FOR HEL FENN, SYLVANIA, 2145

An account by Grand Marshall
Blucher Von Vincke, 2513

In 2010, the evil Vampire Lord Vlad Von Carstein sacked Solland and the Ostermark after carefully building up his power base in Sylvania, which he had ruled under various guises for some two centuries. Despite Vlad's eventual defeat at Altdorf and the demise of his successor, Konrad Von Carstein, at the Battle of Grim Moor in 2121, the Vampire Wars continued. Mannfred Von Carstein laid siege to Altdorf in 2132 only to be undone by Grand Theogonist Kurt III's recitation of the Great Spell of Unbinding. Driven back to Sylvania, Mannfred raised an army estimated by some to be in excess of one hundred thousand, comprised of freshly raised corpses, ghouls, wights, zombies, and even the cowering mortal peasants of Sylvania that remained in the thrall of the Von Carsteins.

Elector Count Martin of Stirland—a man with good reason to hate Mannfred—gave chase to the Vampire Lord. His province, which neighboured blighted Sylvania, had suffered grievously at the hands of the Von Carsteins. However, when he arrived at Hel Fenn in the midst of Sylvania, Stirland's forces were hopelessly outnumbered. No one in the Empire thought that Mannfred could have raised such a powerful force so quickly. In fact, many scouts originally thought Mannfred's army had to be the trees moving at the edge of the plain at Hel Fenn, not a colossal throng of necrotic flesh. The Elector's first move was one that would ultimately prove to be of great consequence. With the forest to his rear, Martin deployed his troops to secure a defensive position between an abandoned fort

MARTIN OF STIRLAND

Martin of Stirland was an unremarkable warrior, but he was nonetheless a magnificent leader and tactical genius. His campaign at Hel Fenn is taught to all young officers, such was his strategic brilliance. He steered the Imperial ranks against the foe despite the overwhelming numbers they faced, kept his army tightly in formation, and filled his men with pride and courage; an impressive feat given that his men would face the lifeless corpses of former comrades. His well-planned and perfectly executed envelopment of Mannfred was the perfect counter to the hammer blows of the undead horde.

In the wake of the battle, statues of Martin were raised across the Empire and Stirland was granted control of Sylvania (although it is doubtful if anyone else wanted the damned land). Despite Martin's efforts, Sylvania has remained abandoned: it remains a foul place where the dead still rise from their eternal slumber and unspeakable beasts roam at will through the dark forests.

and walled farm, keeping most of his forces behind a fog-ridden ridge, out of sight of the advancing horde. This decision would have great consequences on the outcome of the battle and, as a result, the Battle of Hel Fenn remains required study for all of my students.

Mannfred took the bait and advanced relentlessly, for although he sensed that the dwarf allies of Stirland were still to arrive, he could not see the hidden Imperial troops. He planned to crush the humans quickly, so each army could be dealt with individually. The Vampire Count ordered charge after charge at the flanks of the army, but the skeletal troops were crushed by a lethal combination of Black Guard with their massive greatswords and handgunners massed on the ramparts of the fort and behind the walls of the farm. Martin also had several artillery pieces that churned through thousands of undead bodies, but they did little to dent the immeasurable regiments rushing forwards.

Mannfred pushed the Imperial halberdiers and swordsmen back slowly but did not realize that this was Martin's intention. The hidden troops suddenly emerged from behind the ridge and flanked the undead while the Knights of the Divine Sword, led by the Grand Theogonist himself, crashed into the rearmost troops, which had already suffered devastating losses from mortar fire. By this time, the dwarf reinforcements also managed to break out of the forest and join the battle, cleaving through the rotten flesh and brittle bones of the opposition.

Mannfred realised he had been lured into a trap and made to escape across the sodden marshlands at the edge of the battlefield to return to his desolate lands. Martin himself gave chase and decapitated the Vampire Count, whose spirit was already broken by the effort of supporting such a vast army. As Mannfred's body collapsed, it melted into the muddy ooze, never to be recovered. The War of the Vampire Counts was won.



Averland

Averland is one of the few provinces in the Empire that is not blanketed with dense forests. As such, it has grown wealthy from farming the land and breeding fine steeds. However, the Black Fire Pass that leads into the province has been a common route for greenskin invasions, and Averland has borne the brunt of these attacks.

THE RETAKING OF CASTLE KREIGLITZ

From Noble Families of Averland, a History, by Ludo Maus

The army of Baron Kreiglitz marched east in the summer of 2520. Their goal was to recapture the Baron's family castle in the foothills of the Black Mountains, which had been lost fifty years earlier to an orc invasion. The rampaging horde had been halted, but Castle Kreiglitz was never reclaimed, becoming a nest and stronghold for the greenskins.

The Baron's army had been hired for the occasion, a gathering of the best mercenaries and sellswords that Kreiglitz could afford: crossbowmen from Tilea, huntsmen from Stirland, veteran beast-fighters from the Drakwald, guild exiles from Marienburg, grizzled ex-state troops from Reikland, some dispossessed and disgraced Bretonnian knights, and even a small regiment of ogres. There were also two regiments of Averland state troops and an impressive artillery train of cannons, assigned to Kreiglitz by the Elector Count in exchange for a large 'donation'.

Kreiglitz halted his army on the approach up to the castle, and ordered the artillery to commence a barrage, hoping to secure an easy victory by driving the occupiers out of the buildings and away into the mountains. This tactic was partially successful. The punishing cannon fire certainly brought the orcs from out of the castle to see what all the commotion was about, but they then proceeded to charge straight towards the human lines.

While the various mercenary bands were experienced battle veterans, there was a distinct lack of coordination between them, for there were no senior officers other than Kreiglitz himself. Each regiment set about fighting the way they knew best: the crossbowmen formed a static, defensive line, the beast-hunters attempted a countercharge, the state regiments waited for orders, while the ogres waded into the midst of the greenskins, doing plenty of damage but ruining the sight-lines of the huntsmen. The cannon batteries were too slow to load grapeshot, and were nearly overrun by vicious goblins, before the Bretonnians swept them away with a lance charge.

Eventually, Kreiglitz gained some control over his army. Most of the orcs had gleefully joined in the brutal melee with the ogres, giving raucous cheers and howls every time they managed to hack one of them down. Instead of sending in support, the Baron pulled his battle-line back. When the last ogre fell and the battered orcs turned to face the humans, they were met with a thunderous fusillade from the artillery, volleys from the missile troops and then a massed charge from the remaining regiments, led from the front by

Kreiglitz. The few greenskins still standing turned tail and fled for the mountains, and before the day was out, the Baron had raised his family crest above the highest tower.

BARON OTTO KREIGLITZ

Baron Kreiglitz is a noble without a domain, his family land having been lost to orcs two generations earlier. Bitter at the loss of his birthright, he has become determined to recover his family seat. Kreiglitz has spent the last of his wealth, borrowed large sums, called in favours and promised much in order to recruit the sizeable army that he now leads. He is a proud and determined man, but he has risked everything on this venture.

CASTLE KREIGLITZ

The Kreiglitz family castle (more of a fortified mansion really) has been occupied by greenskins for years. They have defiled every corner, made their own ramshackle 'improvements', set fires in the bedchambers, flooded the halls, and left it with a terrible stink that refuses to wash away. The tiny goblinoids known as snotlings still infest the attics and sewer pipes, despite the humans' attempts to eradicate them.

The artillery barrage that pounded the castle during the battle has left many walls demolished and great breaches in those that still stand. It would be barely defensible should more orcs return to counter-attack. Indeed, since word of the victory first arrived back in the lands of Averland, there has been no further news. Messengers have not returned and locals mutter that Castle Kreiglitz may be back in the hands of the greenskins. Of the Baron and his army, there has been no sign.



Wissenland

THE STRANGE SIEGE OF SCHLOSS KROPPELEBEN

The following notes are taken from a diary found in the ruins of Schloss Kroppenleben shortly after its partial destruction by forces unknown on the night of 19th Pflugzeit 2518. Whilst the diary's author is not known, it is likely that it was written by Konrad Prohl, the master of the castle armoury. If this is so, Konrad's touching concern over the well-being of a servant girl may hint at an indiscretion. They were unmarried.

BACKERTAG 16TH JAHRDRUNG

Hermann returned from his first visit to Nuln today, clearly star-struck. Did not appreciate my joking that the Countess was old enough to have mothered him and insisted she looked stunning for her age. Johan agreed, stating she looked 'barely beyond thirty five'. Much laughter, but Hermann took it poorly.

ANGESTAG 19TH JAHRDRUNG

Hermann stopped moping and asked me to share my thoughts on a book he recently acquired. It was full of illustrations of small winged figures, delightful and grotesque, frolicking atop mushrooms and suchlike. He asked what I knew of such things. I mentioned that a villager called Marie was well known in Kroppenleben for her knowledge of folklore. Hermann plans to visit her.

Was able to catch a private moment with Heidi after dinner. She said she was doing well and let me touch her belly. She said she could feel kicking though I felt nothing.

AUBENTAG 22ND JAHRDRUNG

Hermann ordered an inventory of the armoury, and also asked if I could find cages of wrought iron. I mention this as a brass birdcage I found apparently wouldn't do. Some halberds require fresh shafts and Kroppenleben's poleturner was glad of the work.

AUBENTAG 30TH JAHRDRUNG

Hermann proposes an expedition across the Grey Mountains. Says he plans to pay tribute to our trading partners in Karak Hirn and then wants to survey the edge of Athel Loren. Counselling against this, suggesting such an expedition could cause a diplomatic misunderstanding with Bretonnians and that the wood contains dan-

gerous creatures and wild elves. Hermann seems determined to ignore me and has the support of a few reckless knights from the Order of the Broken Crown. Johan talked sense into him, though the Baron is due to visit Nuln again soon, and I fear Hermann will act during his brother's absence.

AUBENTAG 5TH PFLUGZEIT

As I feared, today Hermann and his knights headed across the Grey Mountains. Sigmar preserve him.

MARKTAG 14TH PFLUGZEIT

Hermann is returned, bearing an iron cage in which sits a creature in form much like a young boy but for a pair of moth wings and antenna sprouting from its head. The creature is bright green in colour and nine inches tall. It doesn't speak, but regards all with a sly look. It refuses normal food, but greedily consumes rose petals and dew. Hermann keeps it in his quarters.

Many folk in the castle have urged Hermann to be rid of it, but he refuses to listen. He says it will make a perfect gift for the upcoming birthday of the Countess. He now admits it was her who lent him the illustrated book.

BEZAHLTAG 16TH PFLUGZEIT

Spent morning pruning ivy upon the wall of the north tower.

ANGESTAG 18TH PFLUGZEIT

A grim day. Spent all morning pulling ivy off the north tower walls. It normally needs some pruning in spring but never twice within a week. Jan reckons something's up with plant growth in the vicinity. Pointed out to me that a large spinney has sprouted on the cliffs overlooking the castle. Wasn't there last week.

Heidi has birthed and it was nothing human. We called the priest from the village to dispose of it. The poor girl is devastated.

FESTAG 19TH PFLUGZEIT

We are besieged. Overnight the castle has become shrouded in greenery. Foliage creeps over the walls and up the spiral stair. Machicolations are stuffed with creeper and the moat clogged with weed. Ivy jams the portcullis open.

Just beyond the range of our cannon gather the strangest band of foes. They are like daemons I hear tell of, but their flesh is bark and heartwood. They look and move like an army of grotesquely carved yet unpainted marionettes. Some are lithe and swift, others ponderous behemoths.

They outnumber us by a great ratio. Soon they will assault and the castle is ill-prepared to afford much defence. What cannon we can bring to bear might account for a few before they reach the walls, but what then? I doubt such foes will be deterred with trip steps or buckets of hot sand.

(This is the final entry in the diary.)



CHAPTER THREE

WAR IN THE OLD WORLD

Battle and strife can be found everywhere across the Old World and even beyond. Armies clash in the dark forests, upon mist-wreathed mountains, on windswept steppes and bone-dry deserts, across stormy oceans, and within steaming, deadly jungles. Even deep within the bowels of the earth, the sound of conflict and slaughter can still be heard.

The Empire of men is not the only great power in the world. The dwarf realm, though much diminished, still boasts many fortified cities tunnelled out beneath the mountains and stubbornly battles the enemies that vie for control of the deep ways. The high elves dwell upon their island home in graceful, soaring cities, but they wage a bitter, centuries old war against their estranged kinsfolk, the murderous dark elves. And farther afield lie realms stranger still: far to the east, the ogre kingdoms of the icy Mountains of Mourn; west across the ocean, the dense jungles of Lustria that hide the crumbling civilisation of the cold-blooded lizardmen; and away to the south, the Land of the Dead, an entire land cursed with undeath.

THE COMING OF CHAOS

Chaos came to the world in an apocalyptic catastrophe when the dimensional gates of the Old Ones, hanging high above the poles of the world, were destroyed. As the gates broke up, the dangerously powerful substance known as warpstone hailed down onto the lands, twisting and mutating everything they touched. The rocks and trees were saturated with magic, and many creatures were changed, melding into strange and disturbing new forms. Worse still, a huge rift had been torn in the very fabric of reality at the roof of the world, and pouring through on winds of pure magic came an endless tide of gibbering daemons. Only the might of millions of lizardman warriors and the power of their mage-priests could slow the hordes long enough for the ingenuity and sacrifice of the high elves to drain away most of the roiling magic. The world was saved but had been irrevocably changed into a place of magic, Chaos, and war.

THE WAR UNDER THE MOUNTAINS

The ancient empire of the dwarfs was once grand and glorious, stretching the full length of the great mountain ranges of the Old World. Mining metal ores and precious stones, they tunnelled out vast settlements below the ground – incredible fortress cities of marvellous construction and engineering. They built a great tunnel road that linked every hold, allowing them to march from one end of their realm to the other without ever setting foot on the surface above. With their stalwart warriors and skills with metalworking and black powder, the dwarfs' domain was all but impregnable.

However, when massive earthquakes shook the foundations of the world their towering pillars tumbled, the mighty stone-walls cracked and vital tunnels collapsed. At a stroke, the dwarf empire found its defences destroyed.

THE GREENSKIN MENACE

While greenskins tend to favour dark, damp, shadowy places, only the night goblins dwell exclusively underground. These malicious goblinoids shun the daylight and wear hooded, black robes to shield themselves from the sun's glare whenever they emerge from their lairs. They brew frenzy-inducing potions from the poisonous fungus of the deeps and they capture vicious cave beasts to unleash upon their enemies or even ride into battle.

Evil and cunning, the night goblins wasted no time attacking the weakened dwarf holds and greenskins of all types were quick to follow them. Soon the dwarf halls were overrun with thousands of sneaking, stabbing night goblins and the ferocious gnashing teeth of their cave squigs. One by one, the dwarf holds fell, their proud warriors cut down, their wondrous works smashed, and their treasure hoards plundered.

THE SCHEMES OF THE SKAVEN

The greenskins are not the only race that claims rulership over the deep places of the earth. The verminous ratmen known as the skaven dwell far below, breeding and multiplying in the millions, gnawing at the roots of the world. Though cowardly at heart, the skaven possess a malign intelligence, and they constantly plot and scheme to garner power and influence over each other and, ultimately, the other races as well.

They combine magic with warpstone-fuelled engineering to create bizarre but terribly destructive contraptions. They infiltrate unsuspecting cities to spread virulent diseases and deadly poisons among the populace. They breed hideously deformed monstrosities, from huge mutated rats to hulking rat ogres to the massive and disgustingly bloated abominations of Hell Pit. Not surprisingly, many dwarf holds fell to the skaven and even now few tunnels are completely safe from their burrowing infestation.

THE DWARFS ENDURE

Despite their many losses, dwarfs steadfastly defend what remains of their shattered kingdom, recording every shame and defeat in their great Book of Grudges, that one day these wrongs might be avenged. The grim warriors of the clans march to war with axe and hammer. Heavily armoured Ironbreakers guard the deepest points

THE FALL OF KARAK EIGHT PEAKS

The city of Karak Eight Peaks was one of the jewels in the dwarf empire, a massive settlement, mine and fortress that was fiercely guarded by defiant warriors and fully prepared for attack. However, the malicious greenskins and devious skaven struck a deal to coordinate their assaults, the orcs assailing the upper levels while simultaneously the skaven tunnelled in from below. Still, the stubborn dwarfs were holding their ground until the ratmen poisoned the wells and unleashed a deadly gas that wafted through the halls, its fumes bypassing the strength of dwarf armour or axe. The remaining dwarfs were forced to abandon their ancestral home and their evil foes lurk there to this day, warring with one other for control of the tunnels and caverns.

In recent years, a determined and vengeful dwarf army has forced a way back into the hold and now maintains a small enclave there, battling constantly with their two hated enemies.

of the mines against incursions from below. Master Engineers maintain ancient war machines and Runesmiths create magical rune-forged weapons and armour. And those dwarfs who have suffered some terrible shame or failure of duty take the path of the Slayer, seeking an honourable death in battle.

Certainly, the dwarfs are still a formidable adversary and, not content to sit idly in their halls, they regularly march forth to take the fight to their foes, reclaim lost ground or otherwise settle a long-held grudge. There are still those who talk of reclaiming the former glories of their ancestors, but the more pessimistic (or perhaps merely realistic) debate whether they can even defend their few remaining holds.

BATTLE FOR THE FORESTS

Long before the race of man came to power in the Old World, the forest-covered lands were the domain of the feral beastmen. These mutated half-men, half-beasts were first created in the cataclysm of the warp gates' collapse, when the magical power of Chaos entered the world. Thus they consider themselves the true Children of Chaos and the rightful rulers of all the lands now known as the Empire. The beastmen regard this territory as their blood-grounds, theirs to prowl and hunt, and they harbour a bitter resentment towards those who have encroached upon their realm, chopped down the trees, and raised buildings and walls. They hate men above all, perhaps jealous of their clean limbs and skilled fingers, and seek to return the world to its primal state when men were nothing but prey-animals to be butchered and devoured.

So when the Chaos moon is full, and the beastman shamans claim the portents are favourable, a mighty chieftain will light a great pyre deep in the woods and howl long into the night. His call summons the brayherd, a gathering of the tribes, or herds, in preparation for war. Once all the herds in the area have arrived, the chieftains challenge each other for the right to lead in brutal fights to the death. As soon as this dominant beastlord is established, the others

instinctively follow his growled commands. The assembled mass of beastmen then descends into a frenzied orgy of ritual chanting and the messy sacrifice of captives.

Soon the horde works itself into a blood-mad rage and surges out of the forest to fall with horrendous violence upon whatever unfortunate outpost or settlement the beastlord has chosen for destruction. Their target is surely doomed, for the beastmen will tear its inhabitants apart with feral savagery. The muscular gors and scrawnier ungors, who together make up the bulk of the herd, stampede towards the foe, spurred on by the bellows of the beastlord, emboldened by the dark incantations of the bray-shamans or driven into a wild blood-lust by the presence of huge, gore-frenzied minotaurs.

Even walled towns cannot hold out against the largest beasts of the herd – rampaging razorgors, immense, multi-limbed gorgons and even stranger, more hideously disturbing beasts emerge from the deepest recesses of the forests. Those defenders that fight will surely be hacked and torn to bloody ruin, those that run will be hunted into the dirt and ripped apart, and those that throw down their arms will be borne away into the trees to be bled and butchered. Truly, the hatred of the beastmen knows no bounds.

THE DEFENDERS OF ATHEL LOREN

Not every tract of forest is ruled by the beastmen. The forest of Athel Loren, which lies within the realm of Bretonnia, is guarded by very different, though no less dangerous, beings. This is the domain of the Asrai, the wood elves, descendants of those who chose to stay behind when the rest of the high elves left the Old World and returned to their island home. Over the centuries, the wood elves abandoned the ways of high elf civilisation, and became at home with the trees and many creatures of the forest. They remain an isolationist culture, shunning most contact with other races.

Any that dare invade the enchanted glades of Athel Loren are met by a sudden ambush - deadly accurate arrows streaking out of the eaves from leaf-cloaked archers and consummately skilled riders dashing through the trees on graceful elven steeds or swift

warhawks. The spiteful spirits of the forest fight alongside the elves - dryads stalk with grasping, thorned claws, while enormous treemen stride forth to smash apart their foes with limbs of oak.

The wood elves do not always stay hidden within their own borders. They readily emerge to enact vengeance on those who have harmed or defiled the forest in some way. It is said that they can travel between forests and woods by way of mystical ghost paths and the sight of faint, elegant shades marching to war can occasionally be spotted at dawn or dusk. The Asrai have thus come into conflict with men and dwarfs, who fell the trees to build or to burn, as well as greenskins and beastmen, whose nature is to destroy and corrupt. The wood elves make no distinction and show no mercy.

WAAAGH! GROM

A greenskin Waaagh! is a massive, rampaging invasion or a violent migration of hundreds if not thousands of orcs and goblins under the banner of a single, mighty warlord. A Waaagh! escalates as it gathers momentum, gathering more and more tribes with the promise of battle. Mercifully, most eventually fall apart as bickering and infighting take their inevitable toll on the ranks. Only a fearsome and brutal leader, usually a massive orc chieftain, can hold such a horde together. One of the few goblins to lead a Waaagh! was Grom, a corpulent and belligerent individual who at some point consumed a large portion of troll flesh. After somehow surviving this meal, he gained the regenerative healing powers of the troll and grew so fat that he had to ride into battle on a sturdy chariot. Grom's Waaagh! rampaged across the Empire and sacked dozens of towns and cities. The greenskins then constructed a huge, ramshackle fleet and disappeared across the ocean to invade the fabled high elf domain of Ulthuan.

DOMAINS OF MEN

The Empire is, of course, not the only human realm in the Old World. Men have spread their domain across the length and breadth of the Old World. And where there is man, there is war.

THE LAND OF ICE

Kislev lies to the north of the Empire – a cold, windswept land of steppes and tundra. In such an open expanse, the Kislevites are naturally gifted horsemen; their armies contain many skilled horse archers, as well as the swift Winged Lancers. And it is well that they do, for their domain borders Norsca and the Troll Country, and beyond those, the Northern Wastes and the Realm of Chaos itself. These lands are wild and dangerous, the home of fierce marauder tribes who worship the Dark Gods. Here can also be found the lairs of trolls and many other more fearsome monsters.

Kislev is the closest target for any Chaos incursion and the easiest over-land invasion route into the Empire. Marauder warbands commonly roam the plains, eager to plunder and kill. As such,



every Kislevite town and settlement is walled with high stockades. During the Great War Against Chaos, Kislev was ravaged by a huge army from the north – daemons and mortals alike in service to the gods of Chaos. The city of Praag fell to the invaders and was transformed into a nightmarish vision of hell by the warping power of Chaos. Even though it has since been razed and rebuilt, the city remains a haunted, disturbing place, the taint of its past impossible to remove.

THE LAND OF CHIVALRY

Among the human lands, the kingdom of Bretonnia is second in size and power only to the Empire. The Bretonnian armies are dominated by knights, for unlike the Empire, where the strength of well-drilled soldiery is recognised, in Bretonnia, the might of a proud hero clad in gleaming armour and astride a rearing charger is regarded as the pinnacle of warfare. Young nobles train with sword and lance, eager to win glory and renown upon the field of battle.

While the knights dwell in soaring castles (emulating the high elf ruins that still dot the landscape) and follow a strict code of chivalry and virtue, the peasant population of the realm is poor, down-trodden and diseased. They scrape out a meagre living, their hovels clustered at the foot of towering castle walls or in squalid, damp cities. When they are given arms and ordered into battle by their lords, they make poor troops – not that the knights expect much of them anyway.

Fortunately, the Bretonnian armies are bolstered by the presence of enchanting damsels of the Lady, able to channel the magic of the mysterious Lady of the Lake. They also include Grail Knights, rare and awe-inspiring individuals who have quested long to behold the grail of the Lady and are now suffused with her power.

ESTALIA & TILEA

The lands of Estalia and Tilea lie south of the Empire. Both consist of many small kingdoms and city-states, rarely united and often warring among themselves. Neither can boast might or wealth even close to the Empire's. Estalia is, however, famed for its merchants, whose trade caravans can be encountered across the Old World. Tilea is known chiefly for its many mercenary regiments, who march to war for any master willing to part with enough gold. East of Tilea is the region known as the Border Princes, a lawless place where brave adventurers and exiled nobles attempt to build a new frontier, in spite of the orcs and other dangers that infest the land.

THE WARS OF THE ELVES

The high elf realm of Ulthuan is an island continent, a place of staggering beauty, idyllic woodland glades, majestic coastal cliffs, and towering mountains, around whose peaks the winds of magic can be viewed as dazzling aurora. At the heart of the sparkling inner sea, on a tiny island, is the Vortex – a great spell through which the warping winds of magic are siphoned out of the world in a swirling whirlpool of energy. This is how, by the skill and sacrifice of their mightiest mages, the high elves saved the world from daemonic annihilation when the dimensional warp gates of the Old Ones collapsed. However, in the final climactic battle against the Chaos-spawned hordes, Aenarion, the first and greatest Phoenix King, gave his life to defeat four titanic greater daemons of the Chaos gods.

THE SUNDERING

The obvious heir to the throne was Malekith, Aenarion's son by the mysterious seeress Morathi. Yet Malekith was passed over in favour of another candidate, and he and his poison-hearted mother launched a campaign of deception and secret power building, culminating in the murder of the new Phoenix King. Malekith attempted to appoint himself as ruler but was horribly burnt and scarred when he stepped into the flame of Asuryan, the ritual test for kingship.

So began a civil war, as Malekith led the forces of Nagarythe, his home domain, in a bid to take the throne by force. As the forces arrayed against him slowly gained the upper hand, Malekith prepared one last, insanely desperate gambit to destroy the Vortex and summon the daemon hordes back into the world as his allies. The usurper's world-ending plan was ultimately thwarted, but the titanic energies of his monumental spell lashed back, causing earthquakes that toppled cities and mountains. An immense tidal wave crashed over the land, drowning thousands, and Malekith's domain of Nagarythe sunk beneath the waves. Even as the land was destroyed, the sorcerer lords who had fought for Malekith cast enchantments on their huge fortress towers so that they broke away from the rock and floated upon the waves. In these 'black arks,' the traitors, now known as the dark elves, fled across the northern oceans to found a new realm in the icy lands they named Naggaroth.

THE WAR OF THE BEARD

In the years before the Sundering, still millennia before the coming of Sigmar, the high elves and the dwarfs enjoyed a time of friendship and trade. The high elves had many settlements throughout the Old World and, despite their many differences from the dwarfs, the two proud and noble races had forged a strong relationship. But



the dwarfs had little knowledge of the elven civil war – indeed such a thing was unthinkable in their society – and consequently it was an easy thing for Malekith to send his agents to attack dwarf trade caravans and lay the blame squarely on the high elves. When the dwarfs demanded recompense, the arrogant high elves refused and sent the dwarf ambassador back with his beard shaved off – the worst insult and shame imaginable to a dwarf. With Malekith stoking the fires of bitterness still further, war was inevitable. The dwarfs marched upon the elven outpost of Tor Alessi, in what is now Bretonnia. In response, the high elves sent a great fleet that all but emptied the isle of Ulthuan.

The War of the Beard (known as the War of Vengeance by the dwarfs) raged for centuries, battle after battle, each victory for one side fuelling the other's desire for vengeance. The high elves fielded shining ranks of skilled warriors, powerful mages, and even huge and ancient dragons. The dwarf's empire was at the height of its power; every axe, hammer, and shield was enchanted with runes of terrible power and hundreds of war machines stood ready to pound the enemy defences into dust. Neither side had faced such a foe before, and neither would back down. As the remaining elf forces marched on the dwarf high king's fortress of Karaz-a-Karak, terrible news arrived from across the sea. Malekith's plan had at last come to fruition – the dark elves had invaded Ulthuan.

THE HATED KIN

Since that time there have been thousands of years of unrelenting war between the high elves and dark elves. The fleets of both sides contest the oceans and invasion is followed by counter-invasion on both Ulthuan and Naggaroth. Malekith, the Witch King, lives still, his arcane sorcery and warp-forged armour sustaining his life indefinitely, only bitterness and revenge left in his icy heart.

THE COMING OF THE OGRES

Far to the east of the lands of the Empire, beyond the treacherous peaks of the Worlds Edge Mountains and the deadly plains of the Dark Lands, lie the lofty Mountains of Mourn. Here, amid the ice, snow, and the ruined ancient castles of the Sky Titans, can be found the ogre kingdoms. Ogres are massive brutes, covered in sturdy slabs of muscle and rolls of tough, blubbery flesh. They can smash a man into an unrecognisable pulp with a single fist, though many prefer to do so with a heavy, iron bound stone club. Their most noticeable features are their stomachs, which tend to bulge out well over their belts, and are capable of digesting practically anything they swallow. They are duly proud of their guts and protect them by strapping on large, round armoured plates.

Ogres are nomadic by nature, and many trek to far lands, seeking to feast and fight. They are willing mercenaries, happy to be paid in gold or food – though woe betide any general that does not pay up. However, recent years have seen wholesale migrations out of the Mountains of Mourn as some entire tribes head west. Some have already reached as far as the Empire and demonstrated the damage that an army of ogres can inflict.

THE LAND OF THE DEAD

In the arid, poisoned deserts south of the Badlands the dead do not rest. The entire population of the ancient civilisation of Nehekharu was killed by disease and drought, but later raised up as a millions-

strong undead army by the immortal sorcerer Nagash. Although Nagash was defeated, if not destroyed, by the might of man and the treacherous magic of the skaven, the land remains cursed to this day.

The cadaverous tomb kings linger within the necrotic cites and forbidding pyramids, insane with fury at the appalling fate forced upon them. Even after so many thousands of years, they summon forth their bone-dead legions from the drifting sands to once again go to war. Skeletal warriors march in perfect step, huge constructs of clay and bronze stride forth, animated by the spirits of the dead, and the tomb kings lead those who were once their favoured warriors ahead of the army, on mighty chariots drawn by steeds as long-dead as the riders.

THE SERVANTS OF THE OLD ONES

Thousands of leagues westward across the oceans lies a jungle-filled continent, teeming with life – though most of it is deadly. Insects, snakes, and even the plants seem designed to prevent outsiders from penetrating the interior of the steaming rainforests. Hidden in this place are the ancient temple cities of the Old Ones, crumbling and half ruined, yet still majestic. Aeons ago the Old Ones ruled this world, shaping it as they pleased into an earthly paradise, with the lizardmen as their servants. But when their dimensional gates were destroyed and Chaos entered the world, the lizardmen were left alone to enact the Old Ones' intentions as best they could.

The millions of scaly saurus warriors battled tirelessly against the unstoppable tide of daemons, while the awesomely powerful slann mage-priests used their magic to hold back the encroaching Realm of Chaos. Once that danger had passed, the survivors retreated back to what was left of their civilisation and the mage-priests have spent the ensuing millennia contemplating what little they understand of their absent masters' divine plans.

However, their jungle isolation was not enough to keep them free from war and strife. Human explorers, lusting for wealth, searched long for the fabled golden cities of the gods and, despite the dangers and cold-blooded guardians, succeeded in plundering many sacred relics. The lizardmen have gone to war to punish the transgressors and reclaim certain artefacts – not because of their worth in gold, which is meaningless to them, but because they may contain some clue pertaining to the Old Ones' plan.

The skaven too have invaded the continent, having tunnelled their way beneath the earth. They spread diseases that took a heavy toll on the saurus and slann, leaving only the nimble skinks – usually the scribes, artisans and scouts of the temple cities – to battle the invaders.

Now at long last many mage-priests seem to have reached a consensus. The plan of the Old Ones has gone awry. The civilisations of the younger races should not exist and the lizardmen intend to correct this mistake. They have the power to raise mountains and topple cities. Their warriors are implacable and have no concept of fear or mercy. They, too, march to war.



CHAPTER FOUR

KNIGHTS OF THE EMPIRE

It is widely acknowledged that the best fighting men of the Empire are its knights. These warriors form shock cavalry units, whose glorious charges have broken the backs of enemy armies throughout the Empire's long and bloody history of conflict.

On the field of battle, a knight wears a suit of full plate armour, crafted by skilled dwarf smiths, and rides a heavy-set destrier, trained to bite and kick in close combat. Most carry a well-made hand weapon, specially designed to be employed from horseback, as well as a lance. Many knights also carry shields for protection, and to display the elaborate heraldry of their order. Some knightly orders, such as the Knights of the White Wolf, fight with massive two-handed hammers or other weapons, but all knights are deadly on horseback or afoot, the product of a lifetime's dedication to the art of war.

HISTORY

As with most scholarly subjects in the Empire, the origin and history of knights is hotly contested. What follows is an excerpt from *The Invincible Armies of the Empire*, by Bertram Lehrer, a self-proclaimed expert in the field.

I contend that the history of the knight can be traced back to the twelve tribes who settled in these lands around three thousand years ago. The Sapherian historian Allurian notes in his *Elven War Studies* that there has, for millennia, been an elven tradition of shock cavalry units. He posits that, as elves lived in the Old World when humans first settled there, the tribesmen may have copied the idea, or the concept may have been preserved down the centuries through oral tales and 'folk memory'. If correct, this theory suggests that the knightly orders of our glorious Empire share a common lineage with the finest of elven cavalry, such as the illustrious silver helms.

Certainly by the time of Sigmar, members of the nobility were fighting from horseback – it is even possible that Sigmar himself led such a unit of cavalrymen. While still not true knights as we understand them today, these cavalrymen would have been heavily armoured by the standards of the

time and were probably armed with primitive precursors to the modern lance. And the distinction of noble blood remains a hallmark of knighthood to this day!

But not all of knightly history has been marked by nobility in deed. As the effects of the black plague began to destabilise the country at the start of the 12th century, some knights grew infamous for harrying settlements for loot. Whether or not Emperor Boris Goldgather approved of such activity is not known, but he certainly didn't prevent it, and was so overtly corruptible that it is inconceivable to think he refused bribes to overlook such activity.

In the wake of the plague, many knights redeemed themselves by fighting for Mandred von Zelt and bringing peace to the Empire once more. But callous acts during the plague years led to uneasy relations with the peasantry. On the one hand, peasants viewed knights as the saviours of the Empire, but on the other, they suffered at the hands of roving knights during private wars between feuding nobles.

Knights continued to provide the Empire's armies with a core of hard-hitting, durable shock troops during the subsequent centuries. In many cases, these were glorious achievements in which knights were hailed as heroes. For example, the knightly orders were at the forefront of the liberation of Estalia from the forces of Sultan Jaffar in 1450, but possibly their greatest victories were those won during the Great War against Chaos, over 800 years later.

Knights still remain the jewel in the crown of the Empire's armies. Despite the proliferation of blackpowder technology, such as handguns and cannon, few battlefield manoeuvres are as decisive as a well-timed charge by a regiment of knights. Truly, they are our bastion against our enemies and the finest fighting men in the Empire.

Bertram Lehrer's position is not uncontested. Dissenting voices are many, such as this excerpt from the aptly named Harald Gunn, which was published in the *Nuln Journal of Military Technology*.

Herr Lehrer's theories owe more to an unseemly fixation on all things elven than any genuine scholarship. That Allurian, who by all accounts has never left Ulthuan, should be cited as an expert on human history over and above our own quite able historians is patently ridiculous. The fact remains that the early tribes used horses as transportation, not as beasts of war. The Asoborn Queen Freya famously rode a chariot at the battle of Black Fire Pass - and this is the closest reference we can

find to the supposed brigades of knights purported by Herr Lehrer. It might seem patriotic to name Sigmar as the first knight, but it is also wrong.

Knights as we know them did not arise until the technology to support them was developed - a pattern seen time and again by scholars and engineers of the Empire. The rise of the dwarf-made full plate armour worn by our knights and the breeding of steeds sturdy enough to bear them gave us the units of heavy cavalry we know today.

And the march of technology will see them decline just as surely. While their influence on the history and victories of the Empire is undeniable, it would be a mistake to assume that knighthood has some special virtue that protects it from the march of history - a mistake to which Herr Lehrer is all too prone. There is no armour, dwarf-made or no that can stop a cannonball, and when one considers the advances made in the past few centuries to our blackpowder weapons, one cannot help but imagine a time when all soldiers are armed with handguns and supported by artillery. The steam tank and the pistolkorps: these are the knights of the future!



EMPIRE AND BRETONNIAN KNIGHTS

If there is another nation with a knightly tradition as sophisticated and advanced as the Empire, it is Bretonnia. In both the Empire and Bretonnia, knights ride superb horses, wear heavy armour, and fight from horseback – usually, but not always, with a lance. That is, however, where the similarity ends.

In Bretonnia, knights are expected to behave in accordance with the rules of chivalry. Bretonnian knights believe that virtue and purity protect them from harm and bring them closer to their semi-divine patron, the Lady of the Lake. Some knights undertake a Grail Quest, vowing to seek for eternity until he becomes so pure the Lady herself appears to the knight and he drinks from her Grail.

To the knights of the Empire, the pageantry and chivalry of Bretonnians are silly and foppish at best and dangerous distractions at worst. Empire knights have their own standards of virtue and purity, and all that is required to be a good and virtuous knight of the Empire is to hate the enemies of the Empire, and to train vigorously and fight valiantly to defeat them.

THE KNIGHTLY ORDERS

To be a knight in the Empire is to be a member of one of the Knightly Orders. The Orders are diverse, each having its own history, traditions, and heraldry. Some, such as the Knights of the White Wolf, have their own distinctive fighting style. Others, such as the Knights Panther, were founded in far-off and exotic lands. Without exception, however, the Knightly Orders are powerful groups of fighting men and their appearance on the field of battle can turn the tide for the Empire.

Each Knightly Order is an autonomous organization and answerable only to its Grand Master, the single knight chosen from within the Order's inner circle to be its leader. The noble families and cults of the Empire support the Knightly Orders with regular donations and grants, all in an effort to prove themselves loyal subjects of the Emperor and petition the Orders for protection or assistance. Despite these "gifts," the Orders are not beholden to their patrons – a great lord may bring a sizeable donation with him when he begs the Grand Master for aid, but knights are not mercenaries to be bought and it's not unheard of for the Grand Master to keep the money and refuse to ride to war.

ORGANIZATION

While there are variations, each Knightly Order is broadly organized according to the same plan. Each Order is commanded by a Grand Master, who relies on the Knights of the Inner Circle for guidance and counsel. Some knights are made Preceptors and given command of units or chapter houses of other knights.

Below the knights themselves are the grooms, farriers, stewards, and various other support staff necessary to keep a dedicated fighting man ready for battle. Some scholars postulate that every knight requires a dozen common citizens of the Empire to support him.

RECRUITS

Knightly orders generally recruit from only one pool of likely aspirants – the Pistolkorps. Those who perform well within the ranks of the Pistolkorps attract the attention of the knightly orders. It is at this point that an aspirant's family is expected to make sizeable and recurring contributions to an order's coffers in exchange to give their son a chance to prove himself worthy in a series of trials, which vary by order but are always demanding. The Reiksguard, for example, sponsor a massive tournament at which aspirants must demonstrate their skill with horse and lance before they will earn their knighthood. The Knights of the White Wolf, however, are rumoured to send their aspirants alone into the woods in winter, with orders not to return until they have hunted and killed a white wolf with their bare hands. The trials can sometimes last for years, and are often fatal.

Many aspirants fail their trials, possessing neither the will nor resilience needed to join the ranks of the order (although the order retains any monetary contributions donated by the family). Provided they display the requisite skill and discipline, successful aspirants are knighted and inducted into the order.

KNIGHTS

The bulk of the knightly orders carry the rank of knight. Their duties may vary by order (the Knights Griffon, for example, are tasked with guarding temples of Sigmar) or by circumstance, but all knights are expected to be ready to ride to battle on short notice. As such, they spend the bulk of their time training and perfecting their skills with sword, lance, and any other weapons commonly used by

The so-called 'knights' of your Empire are barely worthy of the name. It takes more than a lance and steed to make a knight – do we call the pig-riders of the greenskins knights when they ride to battle? No. Knighthood is more than the art of fighting from horseback. It is a way of life, a code of behaviour, and a daily quest for virtue... It is chivalry, something I fear the cavalrymen of the Empire will never understand.

- Sir Guy du Bastonne, Knight of Bretonnia

I am eager to discuss knightly virtue further with Sir Guy or any other Bretonnian who cares to call mine into question. My lance and I will shortly put the matter to rest.

- Sir Theodoric von Ritterstein, Knight Panther

their order. Some knights may be assigned duties detached from the daily life of their chapter house, sent as messengers to other parts of the order or dispatched to look after the order's interests at court or in the field. Knights detached from their order are expected to uphold the order's military honour in their behaviour while afield, and sometimes common folk, burgomeisters, or minor lords may petition such a knight for assistance. In this way, a knight on detached duty is often indistinguishable from one living an adventuring life.

THE INNER CIRCLE

Most knightly orders are loosely based around an inner circle comprised of seasoned veterans and other senior figures. Entry into the inner circle is seen as a goal that most members of the order aspire to, once they have proved themselves gallant warriors and upholders of the order's honour and values. Many orders may require the performance of a particular feat or quest in order to enter their inner circle. These feats are usually tailored to suit the character of the order itself. For example, a Knight of the Black Rose may be expected to destroy a powerful undead creature, whilst a Knight of the Blazing Sun might have to prove himself to be an able commander on the field of battle.

The inner circle is therefore comprised of the order's best fighters, as well as those that the order's masters recognise as being trustworthy and of good character. Knights of the inner circle sometimes fight together on the battlefield, and provide the very best fighting units an Empire general can hope to field.

Knights of the inner circle are privy to any secrets unknown to those outside the inner circle. As such, there is often an aloof nature to such men.

PRECEPTORS

The Grand Master is, of course, far too busy to oversee the duties, training, and discipline of his entire Knightly Order, and so he relies on his Preceptors to see to the day-to-day business of commanding the men. Preceptors may be in command of a chapter house, or a small unit of knights assigned to support an imperial army in a particular city, barracks, or campaign. Whatever the nature of his responsibilities, a Preceptor is also expected to lead his men in battle when the occasion requires it, and even those veteran Preceptors who have been scarred by decades of war are still formidable opponents.

Preceptors are chosen from within the ranks of the order, both from within and without the Inner Circle. They are always veteran knights who have shown a talent for command and warfare, and are generally well-respected by their peers and knights.

GRAND MASTERS

At the head of each knightly order is an individual known as a Grand Master. Such men have made a great study of warfare and have earned the respect of their order by dint of their personal prowess and their ability to lead men in war. Grand Masters of knightly orders have even found themselves in charge of entire armies at many points in the Empire's history, and it is a foolhardy Elector Count who would not seek the council, or command, of a Grand Master in times of conflict. Men following a Grand Master to war are often comforted by the fact that they are under the command of a man who has seen conflict and is a renowned fighter

THE PISTOLKORPS

The Pistolkorps are made up almost exclusively of young noblemen eager to "earn their spurs" and join a knightly order. These pistoliers carry a brace of pistols and ride a spirited horse into battle, serving both as scouts and as a highly-mobile cavalry force for the Empire's armies.

The young men of the Pistolkorps are trained by outriders, veterans who either failed to join a knightly order or cannot because they are not nobility. Outriders lead their young trainees in battle, and sometimes form small units of their own. When multiple outriders ride to war together they are much feared by the enemy, for rather than a simple brace of pistols many outriders carry the latest and deadliest armaments devised by the Imperial College of Engineers!

himself. They may also take comfort that when a Grand Master marches to war, he does so in the company of a great many fully armoured knights.

KNIGHTLY TRAINING

Some churlish types claim that the danger that knights put themselves in during battle is a small price to pay for lives of privilege and luxury. This is unfair and untrue. Knights undergo arduous training regimes in order to perform their duties. Despite their associations with nobility, knights lead hard and austere lives devoted to becoming consummate warriors.

To make an effective knight an aspirant must become an expert horseman, learn how to don and maintain a suit of dwarf forged full plate armour, and be able to strike an opponent with a lance



JOUSTING

Of all training rituals across the Old World, the joust is the most iconic of knighthood.

The rules are simple. Two knights face off against each other. At a signal, they spur their horses into a gallop, level their lances, and attempt to strike their opponent whilst simultaneously trying to avoid or deflect the return blow. When jousting in a tournament setting, the knights typically make three passes and score points for the accuracy and power of each of their strikes.

Quick Jousting Rules

Should a PC ever find himself involved in a joust, these rules can be used to quickly determine how things go each time they tilt at an opposing knight.

Each tilt is decided by an opposed Weapon Skill test, made simultaneously by each combatant. Fortune and Expertise dice can be added for appropriate skills and circumstances, but do not add any dice for specialisations in using a lance or the Ride skill. Any opposing knight will be well trained in such things. However, add misfortune dice if the PC lacks such skills.

✖ **FAILURE** You fail to hit the opposing knight, though he breaks his lance upon your armour.

⚔ Both you and your opposition break your lances.

⚔⚔ You break your lance and manage to avoid your opponent's blow.

⚔⚔ During the tilt, your opponent loses his balance, and must make a **Hard (3d) Ride** check in order to remain in his saddle.

💀 During the tilt, you lose your balance, and must make a **Hard (3d) Ride** check in order to remain in the saddle.

✧ A lance shivers, creating a shower of splinters that find their way through chinks in armour. If only one contestant broke his lance, the splinters hit his opponent. If both contestants broke their lances, the GM determines which one is hit. The affected contestant takes a hit equal to the opposing knight's Strength plus 3. Armour does not provide any defence against the hit.

For all intents and purposes, a jousting lance counts as an improvised weapon, save that it belongs to the Cavalry group.

at full gallop. To hone their fighting skills, knights fight mock combats with one another using blunt weapons. To become accurate with a lance, they relentlessly train to strike at each other from horseback at full tilt.

Such training exercises are dramatic spectacles in themselves, and on the rare occasions when the citizens of the Empire are allowed to view these normally private affairs, they attract the attention of many folk in the vicinity. Public spectacles or tournaments usually coincide with celebrations held to mark Mitterfruhl (the spring equinox) and the first day of summer (18th Sigmarszeit). They are usually hosted in the austere and military courtyards of the order's chapter house.

THE ORDERS

The Knightly Orders can vary greatly in size, power, creed, and tradition. Some orders may be as small as ten men, devoted to the defence of a single town or tower and desperately poor. Others may be numberless, with chapter houses in every major city of the Empire and holding huge swathes of land and associated incomes. Some dedicate themselves to a particular god, others to an abstract virtue or a region, or others only to martial prowess (or, as the uncharitable might say, themselves). The numbers of knightly orders in the Empire are unknown, and it would be impossible to describe them all. Some of the most important and notable, however, are described on the following pages.





KNIGHTS OF THE BLAZING SUN

The Knights of the Blazing Sun are dedicated to Myrmidia, the goddess of martial virtue and military strategy. Like the Knights Panther, they were first formed during the crusades against the forces of Sultan Jaffar. The story of their founding has become the stuff of legend. During the wars to liberate Estalia from the Sultan's forces, a group of sixty knights from the Empire was stationed at the city of Magritta. The city was attacked by a force headed by some of Araby's most feared warriors, the dreaded Black Scimitar Guard of Emir Wasr the Cruel. It is said that the battle between the knights and Emir's guards was fiercest around the temple of Myrmidia, and that a regiment of the Arabyans had stationed themselves at the base of a huge bronze statue of the goddess.

As the Arabyans closed in on the knights, a huge earthquake hit the city, and the statue of Myrmidia plummeted to the streets, crushing the Emir and many of his guards. The knights took heart from this auspicious event, and drove the surviving Arabyans from the city. The surviving knights swore devotion to Myrmidia, and on their return to the Empire established a great temple to the goddess in Talabheim.

Since then, the knights have won great honour by providing a key component to the Empire's forces in a number of battles. They have a good reputation due to their Myrmidian outlook to warfare, which encourages them not only to perfect individual fighting techniques, but also to encompass complex but highly effective strategies in their battle plans. However, many people in the Empire see Myrmidia as a foreign goddess, and sometimes call the patriotism of the knights into question as a result.

The Knights of the Blazing Sun wear golden armour, and their barding is lacquered black and trimmed in gold. They display a stylised sun as their heraldry.



KNIGHTS GRIFFON

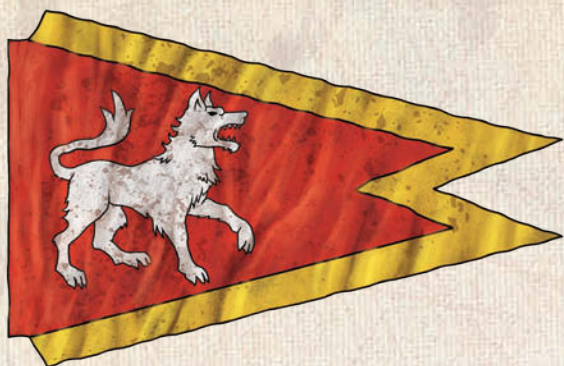
The Order of the Knights Griffon was first founded by Magnus the Pious shortly after the Great War Against Chaos. The order was originally created from a hundred of the most courageous members of the Knights Panther who battled to liberate Praag. However, unlike the Knights Panther, the order was tasked with guarding the temple of Sigmar in Nuln, the then Imperial capital. As such, they have become regarded as templars.

Since the ascension of Wilhelm II, the Imperial court has moved from Nuln to Altdorf. Because Magnus created the Knights Griffon with the expressed purpose of guarding "the high temple of Sigmar in the Empire's capital", the knights have taken his word literally and relocated to the High Temple of Sigmar in Altdorf. This is a move that has brought them into close proximity to the Order of the Fiery Heart, with whom the Knights Griffon have developed a rivalry.

The Knights Griffon wear either lacquered armour of green and gold or bright steel, though many members also wear black as a sign of their association with Nuln. Their horses barding is of the same, or a deep burgundy. They often wear the skins of wild beasts (a legacy of their origins as members of the Knights Panther) and their heraldry depicts a rampant griffon brandishing a sword.

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

Some Knightly Orders dedicate themselves to one (or more!) of the deities of the Empire, usually one of the martial deities such as Sigmar, Ulric, or Myrmidia. These orders, while still autonomous entities, may have ties to the cult of that deity, even going so far as to include guarding its priests and temples as part of their duties. Such knights are sometimes known as "knights of the temple," or "knights templar." Templar Orders, as they are sometimes called, are no less dangerous and independent than their secular brethren, and it is a foolish arch-lector indeed who would presume to order them about.



KNIGHTS OF THE WHITE WOLF

The Knights of the White Wolf, or White Wolves as they are more commonly known, are an order devoted to Ulric and one of the most numerous and powerful of knightly orders. White Wolves can be found guarding the temples and priests of Ulric throughout the Empire, and regiments of these knights often serve in the armies of Elector Counts. The Elector Count of Middenland also frequently petitions their aid in ridding the immediate Drakwald forests around Middenheim from the dark horrors that lie within. A petition that is often granted, and occasionally achieved if only for a brief time.

The White Wolves are an ancient order based in Middenheim. They were founded following a great victory against Chaos outside the city walls, with claims made that this dates back to the time of Ar-Ulric Wulcan, over 2,000 years ago. Many members of the White Wolves are hard-nosed traditionalists, and whilst the order's leaders are guarded about their opinions regarding the beliefs of other gods, it would be inconceivable to think that the order doesn't include individuals who look down on Sigmar's followers. Some members of the order are also known to regard followers of Myrmidia with a dismissive attitude. Fortunately for the Empire, such petty bigotries remain private and usually only result in the knights pushing themselves further in terms of prowess and valour on the battlefield in the hope of outshining their rivals. What is known for sure is their famously fiery temper – their ferocious war cries and charges are legendary.

The White Wolves ride to war bareheaded, their long hair and beards flowing in the wind. They wear cloaks fashioned from the pelts of wolves from the Drakwald Forest. These cloaks are important personal items for the knights – each is required to hunt down and kill a wolf with his bare hands as a rite of passage when becoming a member of the order. Unlike most knights, the White Wolves do not fight with a lance, and also eschew the use of shields, preferring to keep both hands free to wield a massive double handed cavalry hammer. The knights wear red for the banners and barding of their units.



ORDER OF THE FIERY HEART

The Order of the Fiery Heart has a long and glorious history, dating back to 1360 when Grand Duchess Ottilia outlawed the cult of Sigmar in Talabecland and set the Age of Wars in motion. Devoted to Sigmar, the Order of the Fiery Heart have a well-earned reputation as protectors of the Sigmarite faithful, and have been known to serve as guards for temples and priests of Sigmar throughout their history.

The knights are well known for the fanatical zeal with which they pursue their crusade against orcs and goblins. They are experts at fighting greenskins, their battle skills honed from centuries of battling such enemies. However, the order is also a force to be reckoned with against any foe.

Certain rumours surround the order. The inner circle of the Knights of the Fiery Heart are said to consult a prophetic work named the Unfinished Book, a text that most Sigmarite priests regard as apocryphal. The order is also said to obsess over the loss of a particular magical artefact, a sword named Karaghul. In decades past, certain members of the order reported visions of Sigmar telling them to retrieve the blade from beneath the ruined dwarf hold of Karak Eight Peaks. Every few years a member of the order quests to find the blade, but none have returned.

The Order of the Fiery Heart colours are white with gleaming plate armour, and their heraldry commonly depicts the Imperial cross within a burning red heart.



ORDER OF THE KNIGHTS PANTHER

The Order of the Knights Panther was formed from knights who took part in the crusades fought against Sultan Jaffar of Araby during the 15th century. Elite warriors of the Sultan's guard wore panther skulls as helmets and fashioned cloaks from the hides of exotic beasts. Victorious Empire knights took such trophies and hung them from their own armour as a sign of victory. By the end of the campaign, the bonds formed between these fighting men led to the creation of the order.

Perhaps because of the manner in which their order was founded, the Knights Panther have never been associated with a particular province or religious outlook. The knights prefer to see themselves as above the petty bickering and political machinations of individual Imperial cults, provinces, and city states. In truth, they have their largest chapter houses in Carroburg, Talabheim, and Middenheim, and occasionally show a partisan favouritism to causes favouring these places. They form an elite corps of the standing army of Talabheim. A chapter of the knights sometimes forms the guard of the Elector Count of Middenheim, providing him with much the same services that the Reiksguard perform for the Emperor.

Since the end of the crusades, the Knights Panther have recast themselves somewhat as defenders of the Empire in general, with a particular enmity shown towards the minions of Chaos. They have fought at the forefront in battles against daemons and marauders, and many of them travelled with Magnus the Pious to Kislev to fight in the Great War Against Chaos in 2303.

The Knights Panther are perhaps the most instantly recognisable of the Empire's knightly orders. Their war panoply includes armour lacquered with blue and trimmed in gold, a helm bearing a flamboyant crest in the shape of a bestial head, and the spotted skin of a great cat, worn as a cloak. A yellow spotted panther is usually depicted upon the knights' blue shields.



THE REIKSGUARD

The Reiksguard are the personal troops and bodyguard of the Emperor, and each member has sworn a solemn vow to protect the Emperor's life at the expense of their own if necessary. Thus, they are not a knightly order. The Reiksguard forms an elite core of highly trained, expensively-equipped knights who are loyal to the Emperor in person. They are also responsible for the guarding of all the palaces and castles belonging to the Imperial crown. In times of war, they take to the field alongside the Emperor, forming an elite unit at the core of the Empire's armies.

The ranks of the Reiksguard are open to all nobles loyal to the Emperor, and joining the Reiksguard is considered a military and social honour amongst the nobility. Barons, dukes, and counts clamour to have their sons accepted into such an acclaimed brotherhood. After training, new recruits join the Reiksguard in a deadly ritual that concludes a tournament held in the presence of the Emperor himself. This event occurs every year in Altdorf during the Mitterfruhl festivities. A newly knighted member is then given a task by the Reiksmarshal, the Grand Marshal of the Reiksguard Knights. For example, he could be commanded to become one of the Emperor's personal guard, or ordered to join a formation that marches to war under the leadership of an Elector Count. Unlike Grand Masters of the Knightly Orders, the Reiksmarshal commands at the behest of the Emperor himself, and the Reiksguard are considered to be the Emperor's personal troops, and so do not possess the autonomy of other knightly orders. The current Reiksmarshal, Kurt Helborg, enjoys the friendship and trust of Karl Franz, and is regarded with as much respect as any Grand Master. Kurt Helborg is widely considered the finest swordsman in the Old World and is Karl Franz's ablest and most trusted military commander.

The colours of the Reiksguard are red and white, and they traditionally bear symbols of allegiance to the Emperor – the crowned skull, laurel leaves (awarded to members of the Reiksguard who have performed a great act of valour), and the Imperial cross. Their shields and banners incorporate the initials of the reigning Emperor – presently this is, of course, 'KF'. It is the custom of Reiksguard knights to cover this heraldry with a swatch of cloth, the sash of shame, should they be found wanting for gallantry on the battlefield.



CHAPTER FIVE

MILITARY ORGANISATIONS

The armies of the Empire are a riotous mix of infantry and cavalry, war machines and monsters, wizards and priests. The regiments are often drawn from right across the Empire, as shown by the many different bold colours of their uniforms indicating which province they call home. There is also commonly a combination of loyal, well-drilled soldiers, and poorly trained, but determined militia, pressed into service for the battle, as well as ruthless mercenaries hired with coin. On occasion, there are members of other races fighting as part of an army, including hulking ogres, or even the diminutive halflings.

An outsider might well assume that such a group of disparate combatants could never form a cohesive force on the battlefield, but they would be sorely mistaken. In fact, the military might of the Empire is renowned across the Old World, for its complexity is a strength, not a weakness, that allows Empire armies to overcome any threat, and defeat any foe. Admittedly, the Empire military has a rather labyrinthine structure, at least compared to the simplistic methods of the greenskins, for example. However, this too can act as an advantage, providing a strict chain of command that, for the most part, allows orders to be quickly and clearly communicated.

MILITARY UNIFORMS

Every province and city state in the Empire has its own recognised colours, heraldry, and traditions. For example, the colours of Altdorf are red and blue, and as it is the seat of the Emperor, the heraldry features many associated icons such as crowns and warhammers. Averland's colours meanwhile are black and yellow, and the flag shows the sun, symbol of the destroyed province of Solland.

When Elector Counts or their subordinate barons recruit new regiments, they will not only provide weapons and armour, but usually also fund some form of uniform utilizing the state colours. There are no rules about design – the exact uniform might depend on the availability of material or dyes, the whim of a seamstress, or indeed the amount of spare gold. Some regiments will be fully adorned, while others may only bear a feather in the appropriate colour. Older regiments may end up with a variety of patterns within their ranks, while some develop their own traditions and eschew the provincial colours altogether.

A MILITARY STATE

Although the tribal chieftains of Sigmar's time became Elector Counts, loyal to the Emperor, the feudal system has not fundamentally changed. The Counts have a duty to maintain a standing army (indeed they would be foolish not to) to defend their lands, and to provide troops for the Emperor's command when he deems the need is great. Of course, there have been times over the centuries when certain Counts have refused to lend their aid, or even made war for their own agendas in direct defiance of the Emperor's edicts. However, the current Emperor, Karl Franz, and his loyal agents and ambassadors are powerful and persuasive.

The Elector Counts' standing forces are known as state troops. They are recruited more or less willingly from the populace of the lands, as they have always been. Many young men, and to a lesser extent young women, otherwise destined for a life of farming or other menial labour, choose the life of a soldier as a means to escape home and see the world, unaware of the terrible horrors they will face. Others may be sellswords, lured by the promise of a regular wage, or even whole mercenary regiments or bands of brigands given the choice of signing up or being forcibly disbanded. Once recruited, they may be given any number of postings. The town watch patrol the streets, guarding against anything from petty thieves and thugs to rebellion and revolt. Major towns and cities may have distinct regiments to mind the walls and gatehouses, often known by such names as the West Gate Guard, the Northern Wall Wardens, etc. The duty of road wardens is to protect travelers on the many miles of roads in the Empire, guarding against brigands and the denizens of the forests – however, the roads are long, and the road wardens cannot be everywhere at once. River patrols perform a similar task upon the busy waterways that flow through the land. The great rivers are routes for commerce and communication, and in some ways are safer than the roads, but they have their own dangers, including pirates, river trolls, and other lurking monsters. Watchtower garrisons are posted on the borders of the provinces and beyond in the mountain passes, watching for invaders from without as well as treacherous neighbours. All these roles have developed over the centuries, becoming a crucial part of how the Empire functions, yet those who perform them are broadly considered state troops.

However, it is unheard of for soldiers to remain in one of these postings for long, for inevitably war calls, whether close to home or in far-off lands. Then the bells are rung, the drums are beaten, great processions parade through the streets and the grand muster begins. The Count gathers his state troops, the captains and sergeants hire or forcibly round up companies of militia, aid is called for from wizards and knights, and bands of insane, doom-chanting flagellants appear, eager to join the battle. When all is prepared, the city gates are thrown wide and, followed by an enormous baggage train to supply the army, the assembled regiments march to battle.

THE GRAND MUSTER

There are many very different groups and organisations that can be called upon in times of war to form an Empire army – indeed some turn up whether they are wanted or not, and some may not appear even when they are sorely needed. Each has its own traditions and tactics on the field of battle, and a general must display great strength of character, leadership, and diplomacy to get the best out of all those he commands.

STATE TROOPS

Every province and city maintains a standing army of state troops, ready to defend their homeland or march off to war. How they are organised varies considerably depending on the location. In the most prosperous cities, there may be impressive army headquarters, extensive barracks, wide drill squares, shrines, and memorials. At the other end of the scale, a province lacking in coin may billet its troops within roughly built wooden palisades, to sleep in the open air, or if they are lucky a damp, draughty tent. Equally, there may be a complex and bureaucratic command structure of officers, or simply a few charismatic captains.

Halberdier regiments are common to the state army of every province. The halberd is a heavy two-handed weapon that combines a spear and a battleaxe, making it versatile and well able to cut down heavily armoured foes. As such, there has long been an Emperor's edict that every Elector Count should maintain regiments so armed.

Spearmen too are a regular sight, for spears are cheap and easy to manufacture, allowing regiments to be raised quickly when the need is urgent. A ranked up spear-block is formidable on the battlefield, particularly in a defensive role, as enemies must charge into a lethal wall of iron points.

Swordsmen are highly skilled melee fighters, using shields to protect themselves and get close enough for a darting strike with their blades. They are seen as bold and heroic figures by many. It is not uncommon for swordsmen to be deployed as a detachment, in position to support their parent regiment by charging the enemy flank where they are less armoured and cannot bring their shields to bear. This tactic tends to give the impression that the swordsmen



have won the day, when in fact the main regiment has done much of the hard work of facing the enemy head-on. The resulting rivalry and banter remains light-hearted – usually.

Regiments armed with handguns or crossbows provide long-range hitting power. While crossbows are easier to make and can fire further, handguns penetrate armour more easily and so are preferable against well-equipped foes. The blackpowder technology used by handguns and larger artillery pieces is known best in the city of Nuln, so the handgunner regiments in many provinces field weapons built in that place. However, the precious secrets and skills involved in making firearms are starting to spread to other parts of the Empire.

GREATSWORDS

Greatswords are state troops, but they stand apart and above the others. The men of these regiments wield massive two-handed blades that can slice through an armoured warrior with ease. However, such weighty swords are slow and difficult to swing, so only the most brave and skilled veterans are appointed to the ranks of the greatswords, elevated from other regiments after performing some exceptionally heroic and bloody deed. They are protected by the finest full plate armour, and often form the personal bodyguard for the captain, baron or count who leads the army. They swear binding oaths of duty and are famed for making stubborn, vain and glorious stands to defend their general.

PISTOLIERS AND OUTRIDERS

Young nobles seeking a glorious life in the military usually start out as a pistolier. These dashing individuals ride into battle on swift horses, armed with a brace of blackpowder pistols. Impetuous and foolhardy, they gallop as near as possible to the most dangerous foe they can find and unleash volleys of deadly pistol shot at close range. They then ride off again to reload, or if their hot-headed nature

gets the better of them, charge in wielding sword or the heavy butts of their firearms. Those that survive usually go on to become full knights, hopefully their fiery courage now tempered with battle-wisdom. Some though remain with the Pistolcorp, becoming instructors and leading the headstrong pistoliers into battle. On occasions they form elite regiments of outriders, armed by the College of Engineers with multi-barrelled repeater handguns – deadly but unpredictable weapons.

DETACHMENTS

In the age of Karl Franz, the soldiers of a given regiment are equipped with more or less identical weapons – at least the same general type. Each regiment is therefore specialised in its chosen role, but less able to cope should another task be required. For example, a block of halberdiers can chop through a band of orcs, but are mostly useless against goblin wolf riders shooting from range. Likewise, a line of crossbowmen can decimate any foe advancing from the front, but will likely be cut to pieces if charged in the flank.

As such, Empire regiments use coordinated tactics, where in the elements of the army must work in concert. Smaller units of men are often separated off from their larger parent regiments and re-armed so they can permanently provide mutual support. Each regiment and its one or two 'detachments' will remain and fight together, allowing them to perfect their battlefield drills. So if a foe charges a spear regiment, its detachment of handgunners can unleash a deadly volley into the enemy before they hit home. Then, while the forbidding wall of spears holds the opponents at bay, its second detachment of swordsmen can counter-charge into the enemy's vulnerable flank. These tactics have proved highly successful, allowing a well-drilled army of brave soldiers to defeat far more powerful foes.

THE KNIGHTLY ORDERS

The knightly orders of the Empire are described in detail in the previous chapter. They do not answer to the Elector Counts, but rather act independently according to their oaths and duties, and are led by each order's Grand Master. So if a general should wish for their aid, he would do well to humbly petition the Grand Master to send a contingent – demanding support rarely meets with success. Those knights that do attend a battle may place themselves temporarily under the command of the army's general, although should he prove incompetent, it has been known for the knights to be rather selective in which commands they follow. On rare occasions, the Grand Master of an order may ride to battle himself, and a wise nobleman-general will choose to cede command to this veteran warrior lord. If the noble is too proud or arrogant to relinquish control, the Grand Master will likely retain full command of the knightly contingent, deploying and charging as he sees fit. Alternatively, if the noble has been particularly offensive, the Grand Master might even turn about and lead the knights away.

THE IMPERIAL GUNNERY SCHOOL

Founded by Magnus the Pious after the Great War Against Chaos, the Gunnery School is based in the city of Nuln. It consists of a series of great forges that manufacture the mighty artillery pieces



of the Empire's armies, massive guns each capable of shattering enemy formations or breaching a castle wall. The foundries belch out black smoke that permanently wreathes the entire city. It is fortunate (or perhaps deliberate) that the state troops of Nuln wear black, which hides the soot stains.

THE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERS

Located in Altdorf, the College of Engineers is dedicated to science and progress. Master Engineers tend to be eccentric fellows, obsessed with tinkering and improving on their latest inventions. Their remit is theoretically to devise new weapons of war, but the results are sometimes debatable, ranging from the highly successful steam tank, Helblaster volley gun, Helstorm rocket battery and repeater handgun, to the bizarre clockwork steed, Herstel-Wenckler pigeon bomb and von Trumpmann's mechanical boots of marching. Engineers also assist artillery crews on the battlefield, making complex calculations and tiny adjustments to trajectory and fuse lengths, to ensure that each shot finds its mark.

THE COLLEGES OF MAGIC

After the high elf mage Teclis lent his magical aid to the Empire at the Battle at the Gates of Kislev, Magnus the Pious asked him to found a school to train more human battle wizards in the arcane arts. Each college teaches the lore of one of the eight Winds of Magic, for Teclis saw that no human mind could hope to master them all (as high elves do). So for example, the college of the Bright Wizards studies the lore of fire, its students capable of incinerating whole enemy regiments in explosive conflagrations. Jade wizards, on the other hand, train in the lore of life, with the ability to harness nature and heal the wounded. Battle wizards of all the orders are greatly valued in the Empire's armies, although a seasoned general will never rely on them totally – the Winds of Magic may suddenly calm at a crucial moment, leaving the wizard with no power to wield. Conversely, a wizard that summons too much energy and then loses control may cause a catastrophic and spectacular detonation that kills him and everyone nearby. Acting as the bodyguard of a battle wizard is not a favourable posting!

FLAGELLANTS

When war comes to their lands, and slaughter and plague ravage the population, when prophecies and omens of death and disaster are rife, when their families and homes are lost, it is not surprising that many of the survivors lose their minds. They become convinced that the end of the world is upon them and abandon their lives to roam in wailing bands from city to city, spreading their message of doom. They naturally gravitate towards battlefields, appearing unbidden, and hurl themselves at the foe. They fight in an insane frenzy, wielding heavy flails in whirling arcs. Terror and imminent death have no hold over their deranged minds – their bloody demise only proves them right, and will at last bring an end to their suffering. Such fanatical troops can be useful in battle, but their presence is disturbing for the rest of the army, sapping morale with their apocalyptic visions of defeat and destruction.

MILITIA AND MERCENARIES

It is unusual for a general to be satisfied with the number of men he has available to lead into battle, and many are forced to bolster their lines with lesser troops. These units are known as 'Free

Companies', and are only formed for the immediate conflict, although that might be anything from a single battle to a year-long campaign in foreign lands. Either way, those that do not die will be free to return to their lives once the fighting is done. Militia are often levied from the surrounding area, farmers and townsfolk determined to defend their homes or simply coerced into the ranks by burly recruiting sergeants. Such troops have no training, little armour and only the weapons they happen to own. Those familiar with a bow may be formed into regiments of archers to strengthen the army's missile fire, while the most skilled hunters may end up as valuable scouting units.

At other times, brigands and outlaws from the forests are rounded up, forced into the battle line and, if they survive, paid a few coins for their trouble. Some commanders rely heavily on mercenary troops – sellswords whose loyalty is bought with gold. It is an easy way to muster an army, if you can afford it. Such men may be undisciplined rabble, or they may be hardened veterans with skills that equal or even surpass state troops (some in fact used to be state troops).

Ogre mercenaries, known alarmingly as Maneaters, are an occasional sight in Empire armies. Halflings too are sometimes recruited, especially if their lands in the Moot are under threat, and they make excellent bowmen (wielding short bows, of course). Both are unreliable if not well fed, though in very different ways – halflings are likely to start stealing extra rations or just sneak off back home, while ogres may simply begin eating other members of the army. Other sellswords come from far off lands – Tilean crossbowmen, for example, are some of the best in the world, a worthy addition to any force.

It should be noted that unscrupulous commanders often send their mercenaries straight into the bloodiest fighting, for a dead soldier need not be paid. However, sellswords can become a liability if treated too callously – it is not unheard of for a regiment to switch sides in the middle of a battle should they receive a better offer from the enemy.



MILITARY LEADERS

The ultimate commander of all the Empire's armies is, of course, the Emperor Karl Franz, bearer of the magical rune-hammer Ghal Maraz, and if the threat is great, he will take personal command on the battlefield. If he is needed elsewhere, he will often appoint the Reiksmarshal Kurt Helborg in his stead. Helborg is the Grand Master of the Reiksguard, loyal bodyguards to the Emperor.

The Elector Counts often lead their armies to war, many of them veteran warriors and masterful generals. However, they have many duties and cannot fight every battle. At these times, another is entrusted with the responsibilities of leadership. This will often be a noble of the land – a baron (or some other provincial title) who has experience of command, whose lands are under attack, or who has simply the political connections to gain such a prestigious post. All noblemen of the Empire will have been schooled in the science of warfare, but whether they listened or remembered their lessons is another matter. As such, an army may be led by a brilliant commander who wields his troops as easily as he wields his sword, or an incompetent buffoon who hasn't the first idea about strategy or tactics.

Relaying the orders of the general, and commanding smaller sections of the force, will be captains – sometimes lesser nobles, more rarely common soldiers that have risen through the ranks and caught the eye of a general wise enough to look beyond the boundaries of class. Such chosen veterans tend to be experienced and brave, and are often popular among the troops. However, they may struggle with their conscience when sending men to their deaths.

WARRIOR PRIESTS

Many armies of the Empire are accompanied by warrior priests of Sigmar. These devout individuals minister to the spiritual needs of the troops by embodying the warrior spirit of Sigmar. Nothing inspires soldiers more than a zealous priest who charges into the thick of the enemy, smiting the foe with great blows from his warhammer, all the while bellowing hymns and battle-oaths in praise of the mighty war god. In some northern regions, warrior priests of Ulric are favoured over Priests of Sigmar to accompany the forces.

Other priests have been known to follow a typical Empire army as well. Priests of Morr soothe the passing of the dead and dying soldiers, priests of Shallya tend to the wounded, and priests of Myrmidia give tactical advice. Priests of Mannan may accompany seafaring armies, and priests of Taal may guide troops safely through forests and wilderness.

ADVANCING THROUGH THE RANKS

There are few formal ranks in the Empire state troops – on the whole a soldier is a soldier. Nevertheless, there tend to be informal levels of seniority, different in each regiment, indicated by position and duties within the unit. For example, in the Averland Fourth Fence Guards, raw recruits to the regiment are kept to the back where they can follow the lead of the others, while in the Ubersreik Forest Wardens, they are boxed in the middle to help keep the ranks and files orderly. Occasionally, as in the notorious Black Moor Brigands, new members will be herded to the front by cynical veterans who know the chances of survival are minimal, but on the whole becoming a front ranker is an honour given to the bravest and most skilled.

A given soldier is unlikely ever to leave the regiment he was recruited into, but may be moved from a detachment into the parent regiment, learning to fight with a new weapon. In many cases, such as the Middenheim Wolfclaws, this is viewed as a promotion, as the members of the main regiment consider themselves superior to the detachments – they take the brunt of the fighting after all. The most experienced, biggest or loudest man in each detachment will be deemed leader, though he still gains no formal rank.

The regiment's drummer (or sometimes bugler or piper) is an important specialised role, not merely there to boost morale, but to relay commands to the unit and its detachments over the din and clamour of battle. Becoming the regimental standard bearer is a great honour, worthy of much respect. This is often granted to a large, strong man, for the banner he must bear is heavy and limits what weapons he can wield. The standard will often be woven with intricate heraldry and designs, and may date back centuries in a long-standing regiment. Some of these banners are even imbued with magical energy. It forms a vital rallying point for the troops and at all costs must not be allowed to fall in the mud, or worse still be captured by the enemy.

Other non-combat, logistical functions must also be performed within the regiment – food must be cooked, weapons repaired, horses shod, wounds tended, supplies organised, maps read – such duties are given to those soldiers with an aptitude or taken by those wishing to avoid endless guard duty and digging latrines. Either way they provide a small step up in seniority.



MONSTERS AND OTHER CREATURES

There are many creatures used by Empire armies beyond the obvious horses, ponies, and mules that bear cavalymen or haul the baggage trains. In some regions there is extensive use of dogs for tracking or guard duty. Pigeons may be used to send messages, hawks as a diverting pastime for the officers. Bears are sometimes tamed to act as regimental mascots (and there are tales that in the cold lands of Kislev, they are actually ridden into battle).

More fantastical creatures are sometimes used as the mounts for great heroes – such as pegasi and griffons. These monsters are tremendously dangerous and unpredictable, and must be trained from birth if they are to accept a rider. A single dragon also serves the Empire's cause. Housed in the famous Imperial menagerie in Altdorf, this ancient and massive winged monster will accept no master other than the Emperor Karl Franz himself.

Though certainly not part of the Empire's regular armies, giants from the mountains are occasionally convinced to cease pillaging villages and fight as mercenaries, if an offer of huge amounts of food and alcohol can be communicated into their tiny brains. The best outcome a general can expect from such a temporary alliance is that the giant will stomp whole enemy regiments into the dirt, then be killed (thus negating the need to hand over half the army's rations) and topple over, crushing a load more of the foe.

REGIMENTAL CHAMPIONS

The only rank that gains much formal recognition from senior officers is the regiment's champion, usually known as the sergeant, or sometimes marksman in the case of handgunners and crossbowmen. Swordsmen tend to call their champions duellists, a sign of their great skill with a blade. All such men must be charismatic and capable fighters, some leading a hundred or more men into battle, setting a courageous, even foolhardy, example to their troops in the face of terrible horrors and danger, while at the same time having the tact to deal with superior officers who in many cases have far less battlefield experience than them.



THE BATTLE OF ICECLAW FALLS

The Chaos warband that sacked and slaughtered the town of Bellhaven struck without warning. Some said they must have landed on the coast without the watchposts detecting them and then eluded all patrols, others that they must have been lurking in the Middle Mountains since the last major incursion, waiting their moment to attack. Either way, the presence of such a large enemy force so deep within the province required swift action before more settlements were wiped out. Captain Hans Kretlitz, an experienced veteran from previous marauder raids, was tasked with the defence even though he had never held overall command before. However, every experienced general was posted further north, and the situation was urgent. This page presents the army that engaged the invaders near to their camp at the remote Iceclaw Falls. Note that a number of casualties were suffered in minor skirmishes before the main battle.

ARMY GENERAL

EACH NON-UNIQUE FIGURE BELOW = 1 FILE OF ABOUT 10 MEN

CAPTAIN KRETLITZ

Third son of Baron Marl Kretlitz
Wounded on the left arm in earlier skirmishes.
Armed with his father's greatsword, but now unable to wield it.

He commands ALL of the units below:



CAPTAIN: SECOND IN COMMAND

CAPTAIN SMIDT

Karl Smidt was the sergeant of the White Reavers Halberdiers until Kretlitz wisely recognised his potential and granted him a field promotion.

He has been given command of the archers and town militia, as well as the smaller regiment of spearmen.



HALBERDIER REGIMENT

THE WHITE REAVERS OF OSTLAND

123 men, plus detachments of 38 crossbowmen and 25 swordsmen (54 casualties suffered)

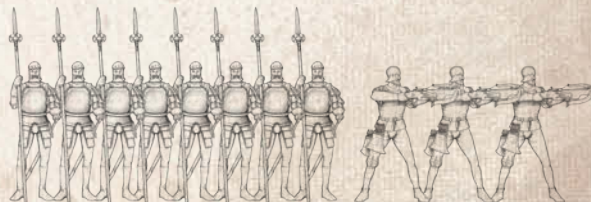
Unit accompanied by Krug and Blorr, Ogre Maneaters.



SPEARMAN REGIMENT

ENGRILL'S FOREST PATROL

84 men, plus detachment of 29 crossbowmen (17 casualties suffered)



SPEARMAN REGIMENT

TALLERHOF TOWN GUARD

40 men (20 left stationed in Tallerhof)



HUNTSMEN REGIMENT

THE BLACK ROAD HUNTERS

33 men

Veterans of numerous battles against beastmen.

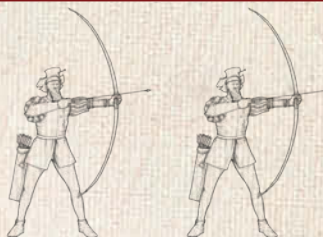


ARCHERS

19 men (61 casualties suffered)

Local farm workers, recruited prior to battle

Overrun during ambush.



MILITIA

164 men (31 casualties suffered)

Local townsfolk and villagers from threatened area

Armed with pitchforks, meat cleavers, makeshift clubs, etc.



WARRIOR PRIEST OF SIGMAR

HELMAR FROSS

Fross was instrumental in persuading the local citizens to take up arms and defend their homes.



KNIGHTLY ORDER

KNIGHTS PANTHER

40 men

Led by Preceptor Arturo Grof, bearer of the Sword of Emperor's Salvation.

These knights were riding through the area, and delayed their journey to answer the call for aid.



MORTARS

THE SOUTH TOWER SENTINELS

Battery of 3, with crew

These ancient artillery pieces were commandeered from a nearby watch fort. However, the intermittent rain and sleet are far from ideal conditions for black powder weapons.



FLAGELLANTS

88 men (61 casualties suffered)

This flagellant band appeared shortly after the destruction of Bellhaven, and keep up a constant clamour of wailing and the tolling of bells. They have severely hampered efforts to track the invaders. A large proportion of their casualties were suffered when they hurled themselves into icy rapids after apparently sighting a beastman on the far side.



THE GRAND ARMY OF BARON VON RAUSHVEL

When scouts brought news of a large horde of orcs and goblins massing in the lands just beyond the Black Fire Pass, the conclusion was obvious – an invasion was imminent. While many argued to wait and build up defences, Baron Ludo von Raushvel of Reikland fixed on a different course of action. A preemptive attack would scatter the greenskins before their numbers built up any further, and prevent them from ever reaching the Empire. His bold plan found much support, especially in Averland and Wissenland where the initial blow of any incursion would fall. So, well funded and well equipped, von Raushvel's grand army set off into the mountains. Shown here on this two-page spread is the force that departed into the pass.

ARMY GENERAL

BARON VON RAUSHVEL

Fourth cousin, seven times removed of the Emperor Karl Franz. Wearing the Armour of Lustrous Gold, heirloom from the Imperial Vaults. Raushvel also requested the loan of a Runefang but was politely refused.

He commands ALL of the units below:

EACH NON-UNIQUE FIGURE BELOW = 1 FILE OF ABOUT 10 MEN



GREATSWORD REGIMENT

THE BARON'S FIST

45 men, plus detachment of 20 handgunners

Assigned as bodyguards for von Raushvel, although his insistence on always riding his white charger makes him worryingly vulnerable to missile fire.



BATTLE STANDARD BEARER

CAPTAIN ELBRECHT

Younger brother to the general, Elbrecht von Raushvel carries an ornate banner displaying the ancient family crest.



CAPTAIN: SECOND IN COMMAND

CAPTAIN STRASSELHOF

Baron Fugler Strasselhof is a wealthy family friend of von Raushvel, and has provided a large sum towards the cost of the grand army. He does not, however, have any previous military experience whatsoever.

He commands the following units:



HALBERDIER REGIMENT

THE REIKLAND BARON'S MEN

110 men, detachments of 60 handgunners and 60 swordsmen

A long-standing regiment recruited from Baron von Raushvel's lands.



HANDGUNNER REGIMENT

THE FREIDOCK SHOOTERS

80 men, plus detachment of 40 spearmen

An experienced mercenary band, originally from Marienburg.



HALBERDIER REGIMENT

THE GRUNBERG FRESHMEN

100 men

Recruited specifically for the grand army.



ARTILLERY TRAIN

THE GRAND ARMY GUNNERS

9 cannons and 3 mortars, with full crew
All newly forged in Nuln.



CAPTAIN: THIRD IN COMMAND

CAPTAIN RAGG

Averlander Sir Hugo Ragg has had a long and accomplished military career, and is well-respected by his men. The following units fall under his command:



HALBERDIER REGIMENT

THE BLACK FIRE PASS WARDENS

140 men, detachments of 60 handgunners

This regiment forms part of the strong Averland contingent that always guards the route across the mountains.



SWORDSMAN REGIMENT

THE HEIRS OF SOLLAND

80 men, plus detachment of 40 crossbows

Though they bear the colours of Wissenland, these men are descendants of those that survived the destruction of the province of Solland. They harbour a bitter enmity towards greenskins and volunteered to join the grand army.



PISTOLIERS

40 men, divided into two units

Though technically answerable to Captain Ragg, these young nobles seem to pay little heed to his orders.



The remaining units are under the direct command of Baron von Raushvel:

ENGINEERS DETACHMENT

3 Helstorm rocket batteries with crew
1 Helblaster volley gun with crew



MASTER ENGINEER

TARQUAR FLUTE

This noticeably eccentric engineer hopes to field test his new invention: Flute's Folding Field of Impact Obfuscation.



WIZARD LORD

ARKOS SHADEFELL

A member of the Grey Order, Arkos joined the army unannounced and unasked the day before it marched into Black Fire Pass. He keeps the reason for his presence to himself and follows no direction but his own.





CHAPTER SIX

EXPANDED RULES

Omens of War features a wealth of new options for players and GMs alike. This chapter details several new rules of interest to both players and GMs, including detailed rules for mounted combat, some notes on the fighting styles presented in the action cards included in the *Omens of War* box, and a new type of action card, called an *Enhance*. Rules for *Severe Injuries* can be found in the *Liber Carnagia*.

MOUNTS & MOUNTED COMBAT

Every general knows that cavalry are a fearsome force on the battlefield. A mounted soldier is more mobile than a footman, fights from an elevated position in comparison to infantry, and the size, weight, and power of the horse itself is not to be underestimated.

Horses are also of great utility off the battlefield. In the Empire, there is no faster and more reliable means of transport than a horse – even some river barges are drawn by horse or mule, plodding along the edge of the river. Farmers yoke teams of draught horses to their plow, and Strigany wanderers travel in horse-drawn caravans. Roadwardens take especial care of their mounts, as being unhorsed in the more hazardous portions of the Reikwald can be a death

sentence. Adventurers, too, will find many reasons to love their steeds. A horse can carry bulky items that would weigh a human or elf down (not to mention the adventurer himself), horses can travel further and faster in a day over level ground than a man on foot, and, as nearly every fighting force in the Old World has discovered at one point or another, there are many advantages to fighting from horseback.

This section covers fighting from horseback and the care and feeding of your horse companion.

HOW TO RIDE

Riding a horse or any other beast is governed by the Ride basic skill, which generally uses Agility as its primary characteristic. Riding also covers driving a wagon or carriage, and the basic care and feeding of horses.

In the Old World, almost everyone has at least some knowledge of horses. Even a character with no ranks of training in Ride can mount a horse and point it in the right direction. Basic tasks such as riding along a level road at a walk require neither training nor a check. Maintaining saddle and tack, feeding and grooming a horse,

MY KINGDOM FOR A HORSE

The mounted combat rules in this chapter presume that combatants are mounted on horseback. While horses are far and away the most common mount in the Warhammer world, they are not by any means the only mounts available. From the reptilian cold ones of the New World to the massive rhinoceros of the Mountains of Mourn, a wide variety of bizarre, exotic, and fearsome beasts have been broken to the saddle by various races. Some brave souls have even harnessed flying beasts such as fierce griffons or the majestic pegasus... not to mention the ancient dragons.

For the most part, there's no difference mechanically between riding a creature such as a cold one or a horse, although each mount may have its own traits and characteristics. As always, the GM and common sense are your guide, and fortune or misfortune dice may be awarded when a particular mount would be an advantage or disadvantage.

and dressing a horse for work or battle, however, are more specialized skills that would generally require either training or a skill check – thus the widespread use of grooms, farriers, and squires.

MAINTAINING CONTROL

Upon first entering a stressful situation, such as combat, riders and drivers of horse teams must make a skill check to maintain control. This check is generally of **Average (2d)** difficulty, and is usually a **Ride (Ag)** check. (In certain circumstances, the GM may rule that a **Handle Animal (Fel)** check is appropriate instead.) This check occurs automatically, and requires neither a manoeuvre nor an action.

If the check succeeds, the rider has maintained control of his horse and may act normally over the next act or until circumstances change enough to warrant a new check. If the check succeeds with boons, then the active character may also gain a ☐ fortune die to his next attack or other action on horseback. If the check succeeds with banes, then the horse is still somewhat skittish and the rider will suffer a ☒ misfortune die to all future Ride checks during the encounter.

If the check fails, then the horse proves unmanageable. The active character can do nothing but fight the horse for control, dismount, or allow the horse to flee. Boons on a failed check mean that while the horse is balking, it neither bucks nor flees, and the rider can remain mounted easily (but cannot induce the horse to move except to flee). If the check fails and generates one or more Chaos Stars, then not only does the horse prove unmanageable, but the rider is hurled off and lands prone nearby! If fighting the horse for control, the rider can continue to make **Ride (Ag)** checks on successive rounds, but this counts as his action for the round. Banen on any check to maintain control will contribute cumulative ☒ to all future **Ride (Ag)** checks during the encounter as the horse grows increasingly hysterical and wild.

One check is sufficient to maintain control for an entire act, and a new check should be made during each Rally step (or any time the GM deems that the situation has changed enough to warrant a new check).

HORSES AND FEAR OR TERROR

Even battle-trained horses are susceptible to the same fears and terrors that can lay soldiers low. Indeed, they react rather stronger to such things than disciplined troops. Mounted characters that are exposed to Fear or Terror effects must make a new **Ride (Ag)** check to maintain control. The difficulty of the check is equal to the magnitude of the Fear or Terror effect. If the check fails, the horse loses 1 wind, in addition to the usual effects.

MOVEMENT AND MANOEUVRES

Controlling a horse requires one manoeuvre per turn, unless the horse is standing still or moving in a straight line (such as during a Carriage Chase – see below). If the rider cannot or will not use a manoeuvre to control his mount, the horse either continues in a straight line, drifts to a stop, or performs some other action consistent with its nature (GM's choice). The rider cannot use any movement manoeuvres while on horseback, except to dismount. Instead, the horse uses its own manoeuvres to move about the battlefield.

Most horses are **SWIFT**, and so receive one free move manoeuvre per turn (in addition to the free manoeuvre all characters and creatures receive). This means that for the cost of one manoeuvre to control the horse, a mounted character effectively gets to move twice for free on his turn. Technically, horses can use their free manoeuvre for anything they like, but since they're big dumb animals, movement is about the limit of what they're capable of. Horses that have received special training may have other options.

If a player wants to perform additional movement manoeuvres with his horse, he may do so by spending some of his horse's wind (see page 46). He won't generally have to spend extra manoeuvres of his own, barring exceptional circumstances.

DWARVES AND HORSES

Dwarfs are a proud, stubborn folk, much bound by tradition and suspicious of change. They are also a mountain-dwelling people, who build great cities beneath the earth, and as such do not have much use for horses or other mounts, except as beasts of burden or labour. It is, in fact, a point of dwarf culture that Dwarfs **do not** ride. Why don't dwarfs ride?

Because they don't and that's all there is to it!

Unlike humans and elves, dwarfs have no tradition of horsemanship in their culture. Obviously, they're physically capable of riding; although they are rather too small for most horses, a dwarf could do quite well on a suitably sturdy pony. Rare indeed, however, would be the dwarf capable of overcoming the weight of generations of tradition of **not** riding to mount such a beast. Any party attempting to travel at speed with a dwarf in tow is well-advised to invest in a wagon or carriage, where the dwarf will be much more comfortable.

Suggestions that dwarfs don't ride because they are afraid of horses are not advisable, and will likely be met with a new entry in the Book of Grudges.



BEING MOUNTED

A number of special rules and considerations apply to characters who are mounted.

ADVANTAGES

In addition to the obvious advantage in mobility a horse offers, a skilled cavalryman has other edges over infantry. A character trained in the Ride skill and mounted on horseback receives the following benefits:

- + ☐ to all *Melee Attacks* due to the advantage of height and leverage
- + ☒ to all opponents attacking the rider in melee, unless the attacker is using a halberd, lance, spear, or similar weapon

An untrained rider receives no such automatic benefits – he has enough trouble with keeping his saddle!

There are numerous other, non-obvious benefits to being mounted. For example, the GM may rule that sitting atop a warhorse gives a character an advantage to Intimidate checks, or to Leadership checks. If nothing else, being on a horse puts a character's head closer to the sky, and gives him a better field of view.

DISADVANTAGES

While there are many and obvious advantages to riding a half-ton of horseflesh into battle, there are other tasks that are harder on a galloping horse than they would be otherwise. Two examples are archery and spellcasting.

- + Anyone attempting to perform a ranged attack from horseback suffers ☒ per hand required by the weapon – which is why pistols are so favoured by pistoliers. This penalty is ignored if the horse is standing still and the rider has stirrups to stand up in. (Stirrups are standard with all saddles in the Empire.)
- + Casting a spell or channelling power while riding is significantly harder than doing so at rest. All that jostling about makes it harder to concentrate, and constant movement makes the Winds of Magic rather harder to control. Wizards add ☒ to all checks to cast spells while riding – potentially more or less depending on circumstances.

There are further disadvantages in that there are some places horses either will not or cannot go. Obviously, a horseman will have a daemon of a time getting into cramped sewers, or climbing a spiral staircase to the top of a tower without dismounting. Also, horses are animals with minds of their own. Asking a horse to jump over a pool of burning pitch, or charge a regiment of pikemen, might well be more than the beast is willing to give! The GM is free to call for a Ride or Handle Animal check to coax the horse into doing something it might deem dangerous.

UNHORSEING THE FOE

Obviously, one way to deny a foe the benefits of being a horse is to knock him to the ground. Infantry sometimes drill in this tactic, and it is the primary goal of knights jousting in a tiltyard. In general, any attempt to unhorse a cavalryman is opposed by his Ride skill, and will generally suffer ☒ penalties based on the size of the horse, the quality of the saddle, and other factors. If using the **Perform a Stunt** action to unhorse a foe, the check is generally **Athletics (Str) vs. Ride (Ag)**, with an additional ☒ to reflect the inherent difficulty in getting close enough to lay a hand on the rider.

STUNTS ON HORSEBACK

Characters on horseback are liable to try all sorts of weird and wonderful things. Fortunately, the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* system is robust enough to support such creativity, but it may require quite a bit of flexibility and good judgement to adjudicate all the things PCs may try. Here are some common stunts that characters may attempt on horseback, and suggested difficulties for each. Most of the items on this list can be attempted as a manoeuvre, while others may be applications of the **Perform a Stunt** action. Your GM is the final arbiter.

Easy (1d): Jump a low fence or narrow ditch, walk in water up to chest-height on the mount, ride quickly over gravel

Average (2d): Ride into a hostile crowd, jump a waist-high (on a human) fence, walk in water over chest-height on the mount, fast-mount, ride quickly over slippery ground

Hard (3d): Jump a chest-high (on a human) fence, snatch an object from the ground while moving at a full gallop, mount by jumping from a high object onto a standing horse, ride quickly over uneven ground

Daunting (4d): Jump a fence taller than a man, mount by jumping from a height onto a running horse

EPISODE TEMPLATE: CARRIAGE CHASE

Overview: The PCs have been hired to escort a travelling Imperial judge to a remote settlement, so that he can settle a few outstanding questions of local justice. The judge is riding in a coach-and-four, and the PCs are either riding in the coach with him or mounted on their own steeds riding escort. While riding along a twisty Reikwald road, the party is set upon by a group of mounted brigands!

ACT 1: THE CHASE BEGINS

The brigands spur their horses on to give chase, and the driver of the coach cracks his reins. Soon, everyone is running flat-out. Since the chase is moving along a “straight” line (the road), and everyone is going full-tilt, a progress tracker can be used to track the relative position of all participants. Anyone in the same space on the progress tracker is engaged, riding side-by-side. Anyone one range band apart is at close range, two range bands is medium range, and three range bands is long range. Further than that is extreme range.

All the horses are assumed to be going full-tilt and using all their free manoeuvres just to keep up with the pack. (Anyone not on a Swift mount is in trouble!) Attempts to close (or widen) the gap require the rider to spend a manoeuvre and pass an **Average (2d) Ride (Ag) check**; success means the active player can move forward one space on the progress tracker. A player may make this attempt more than once in a turn; each time he does so the check’s difficulty increases by 1 and his mount loses 1 wind. A character may move backwards one range band automatically, should he want to allow other riders to catch up (it’s not hard to slow down a little).



FALLING OFF AND FALLING BEHIND

When riding full tilt in a chase scene, there’s a danger of falling so far behind as to be out of the chase. There’s also a danger of falling off your horse!


A character at extreme range from all enemies may make one last attempt to close the gap on his next turn to at least long range. If he fails, he’s out of the chase, unable to keep up.

Anyone rolling two ✱✱ Chaos Stars on a check in a chase may fall off his horse or carriage! Anyone unhorsed in this way or any other way is left behind almost instantly, and may well be trampled to death.

Act 1 ends when at least half the brigands have been unhorsed, killed, or fallen behind, or when a brigand manages to make it to the coach and leap aboard (a **Hard (3d) Coordination (Ag) check**).

ACT 2: A TWISTING TURN

The carriage shudders and jerks to one side as it goes around a sudden twist in the road. The road here is rougher, the trees closer, and the road is no longer straight. All attempts to gain ground are now **Hard (3d)** in difficulty.

Meanwhile, a fresh wave of brigands spring from hiding in the trees, beginning at medium range from the coach. These brigands gain an  to their first attempt to gain ground due to their mounts’ freshness.

Act 2 ends when the chase comes to an abrupt stop as the carriage runs out of road - perhaps the brigands have thrown several large tree trunks across the road here.

ACT 3: AT BAY

Any bandits the PCs haven’t managed to unhorse or outrun now attack in earnest! The chase part of the episode is over, and now the PCs must deal with the consequences. The end position of the chase will determine the initial positions in the battle to follow, and good performance in the chase should be rewarded in this battle (perhaps if the PCs were well ahead of their pursuers they receive a bonus to initiative). The brigands will retreat if they manage to secure the judge, which may well result in a new chase, going in the opposite direction!

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

The characters are not initially mounted (and must steal horses from their pursuers). A traitor lurks on the coach. The judge is not what he appears to be. The mounts are not horses, but a more exotic and dangerous mount!

ALTERNATIVE USES

The PCs are the pursuers. There is no carriage; everyone is mounted on horses. Rather than horses and carriages, the chase features boats and small craft.

THE CARE & FEEDING OF HORSES

Horses are animals like any other beast, but they are used rather differently from the usual creature in the context of *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*'s mechanics. A few standard horses are presented below, but obviously not every horse is standard. Furthermore, it is entirely possible that in some encounters, every character will be mounted – in such circumstances, it would quickly become unwieldy to use the full rules for creatures for every horse. Therefore, the mount rules presented in this chapter use a high level of abstraction for using horses in play.

WIND

Every horse has a **WIND** score, which reflects how much strain, stress, and abuse it can take before it gives up or even dies. For most horses, its wind score is equal to that horse's Strength. Only exceptional horses (such as an Outrider's Trusty Horse or a Knight's Battle-Bred Horse), or horses with an exceptional bond with their riders have companion sheets with separate wind trackers. For other horses, you can use fatigue or stress tokens to track spent wind.

For most horses, this means that the only characteristic one needs to know on a mechanical level is the horse's Strength.

Wind is a resource much like a PC's fatigue. Any time a horse would suffer fatigue, stress, or damage, it instead loses 1 wind. If an enemy attacks a horse, there's no need to roll dice – it simply suffers 1 wind (possibly more for especially brutal foes). A horse may lose 1 wind to perform an extra manoeuvre on its turn, much like a PC suffering fatigue.

Horses recover wind the same way that other characters recover fatigue. Since horses don't have a separate Toughness score, the horse can make a Strength check rather than a standard Resilience check when called upon to do so. Alternately, the horse's rider or handler can substitute a Ride or Handle Animal check.

BLOWN HORSES

A horse with no wind remaining is considered **BLOWN**. The horse can continue to exert itself and lose wind, however to do so is to risk literally running the horse to death.

Each time a blown horse loses 1 wind, make an **Average (2d) Strength check** for the horse. Its rider or handler may substitute his Ride or Handle Animal check, if desired. If the check is failed, the horse falls over dead! Even if the check is successful, repeated stress to a blown horse may, at the GM's discretion, do permanent injury to the animal and require its retirement when the current misadventure is concluded.

STRENGTH

Horses also have a **STRENGTH** score. Full statistics for horses are generally unnecessary, but they may well be called upon to make Athletics checks to jump or run, or be asked to haul a heavy load. Skilled lancers may be able to use the horse's Strength, rather than his own, to drive a lance home, and of course players may find all sorts of other creative uses for a mount's Strength score. Unless otherwise indicated, the Strength score is also what defines a mount's maximum wind.

THE HOBBY HORSE

The mounts in this chapter are highly abstracted and not presented with a full profile for simplicity's sake. The characteristics of a horse that most riders care about is that horse's wind score and its Strength. Should you desire more detail or need statistics for a horse outside the context of its role as a mount, you can use the following characteristics:

Swift: Horses may perform 1 free move manoeuvre each turn.

Instinct: Horses may use their WP instead of their Int when making Observation checks.

CREATURE	ST	TO	AG	INT	WP	FEL	A/C/E	WOUNDS	STANCE
COMMON HORSE	5 (4)	4 (1)	3 (0)	1	3	1	2/0/0	10	N/A

TABLE 3-1: HORSES

HORSE	STRENGTH	COST	RARITY	SPECIAL RULES
Draught horse	6	75s	Plentiful	None
Riding horse	5	2g	Common	Swift
Warhorse	6	10g+	Rare	Swift, Trained for war

MAINTAINING A HORSE

An average horse requires 20 to 25 pounds of feed per day; more for a larger horse or one that is regularly worked hard. Fortunately, horses subsist mainly on grass and hay, which are widely available in the Empire, and depending on local conditions and time of year may be able to forage for most of their food.

As a general rule of thumb, it costs about as much to keep a horse fed and lodged as it does for his rider.

BUYING A HORSE

The buying, selling, rearing, and training of horses is a major industry in the Empire. For most people, a horse represents a major investment, and no-one wants to make the wrong choice. Everyone has a story about an unscrupulous horse-trader, a bad purchase, or a lucky foal that grew up just right. Horses may go through a dozen owners over the course of their lives, and acquire a host of habits good and bad along the way.

For the purposes of these rules, there are three types of horses: work horses, riding horses, and warhorses. In reality, there is tremendous variety between horse breeds and individual animals, but in terms of horses suitable for riding in battle, these are the broad categories. All prices herein include bridle, saddle, and necessary tack.

Draught horses are large, even-tempered horses commonly referred to as “cold bloods.” They are bred for power and docility, not for speed. They do not have the “Swift” ability common to most other horses. Often times draught horses are sold in matched pairs, called teams. A team that is trained to pull together, and are the same height, can command significantly more than the two horses sold singly. Draught horses are not ideal mounts, for obvious reasons, but they are less prone to spook or startle than most other breeds.

HORSES & ENCUMBRANCE

Horses and other four-legged animals are much better suited to carrying heavy loads than men or even dwarfs. A horse’s maximum encumbrance is double that of a human of equivalent strength. An adult human rider is about 15 encumbrance, meaning that most horses can carry a single rider, tack, and the rider’s gear without much difficulty.

With a wagon or cart, a horse can pull about double what it can carry, although doing so at speed can be unsafe and unwise.

Riding horse is the term for a number of varieties of horse bred throughout the Empire for speed and endurance. Sometimes called “hot bloods,” these horses are normally more spirited and finely proportioned than draught horses. Most riding horses are mares or geldings, and they are commonly used by roadwardens, messengers, travellers, or anyone else trying to cover a lot of ground in a hurry. Riding horses are **SWIFT**, and receive a free movement manoeuvre each turn.

Warhorses are the finest examples of horseflesh in the Old World – just ask any warhorse breeder. Larger than a riding horse, faster than a draught horse, warhorses are the product of meticulous breeding and years of training and careful conditioning. Intact stallions are favoured as mounts of war, due to their increased aggression and power. Because they are trained for war, in addition to being **SWIFT**, warhorses confer a ☐ to their rider on any check to maintain control in battle. They receive no bonus on similar checks outside of battlefield situations.



FIGHTING STYLES

Most soldiers in the Old World have a simple goal: return home alive. State troops in the Empire are trained and drilled to a high degree of proficiency, and their courage and skill have won many important battles, but to call them expert warriors is generally an overstatement. These soldiers learn the basics of parry and thrust, how to care for their weapons and armour, how to march and manoeuvre in formation, and perhaps most importantly of all, how to stand their ground in the face of the enemy.

Some warriors, however, go above and beyond these basics. Career soldiers learn many tricks and skills over the course of their many battles (assuming they survive, of course!) and some become scholars of war. They specialize in the use of particular armaments, and over time develop or acquire a distinctive fighting style. Every now and again, an old career soldier is invited to pass on his technique to the younger generation, and in this way fighting styles are preserved and passed on at military academies and in training barracks throughout the Empire.

The fighting styles described in *Omens of War* include:

Zweihander: A dangerous, destructive style, focusing on the use of a massive greatweapon. Favoured by Greatswords of the Empire, dwarf hammerers, some warrior-priests of Sigmar, and anyone else with two hands and a large weapon.

Bulwark: A defensive style requiring a shield in one hand and a hand weapon such as a sword in the other. An example would be Empire Swordsmen fighting in close formation and supporting one another.

Hunter's Eye: The kind of style that would be used largely in either Hochland or Stirland, a style of archery that emphasizes awareness and patience.

Diestro: Fashionable amongst the noble elite of the Empire. Fencing weapons and off-hand daggers are used with speed and grace.

Twin Weapon: Warriors who use the Twin Weapon style forgo a shield and wield a second hand weapon, spinning and slashing like a whirling storm. Chaos Marauders and Beastmen often use this kind of fighting style.

Thunder: A style that involves pushing the capabilities of black powder weapons to the limit... or, frankly, well beyond!

Mounted: Fighting from horseback is a style in itself. This style is commonly used by knights of the Empire, but similar techniques have been developed by cavalry of every race and nation.

Judgement: The Witch Hunters of the Holy Order of the Templars of Sigmar teach a variety of deadly techniques, many requiring some combination of sword and pistol.

Slayer: Dwarfs who have taken the Slayer Oath are willing to sacrifice their own lives to ensure the defeat of a powerful enemy. Those more interested in survival than victory are well-advised to look elsewhere.

The traits that denote these fighting styles are not restrictions or requirements, unless the Game Master decides to treat them as such. They are merely mechanical hooks, qualities that various game effects may refer to.

ENHANCE CARDS

Enhance cards are a special subset of action cards that are used to make existing actions better. They are acquired and learned just like other action cards, but can only be played in concert with another action – one that can be enhanced by the card in question.

When playing an **Enhance**, the active player first announces his action and his target, then announces and plays his **Enhance** card while assembling his dice pool. When he does this, he may remove dice from his dice pool to trigger specific bonuses to his action. Up to 1 die of the appropriate type to fill each “slot” on the **Enhance** card may be removed; for example, if a card has a Fortune die slot, a Characteristic die slot, and an Expertise die slot, the player may choose to remove up to 1 each of Fortune, Characteristic, and Expertise dice from his dice pool. For each die that is removed in this way, the corresponding specific effect from the **Enhance** card is triggered if the action is successful.

Each action may only be enhanced by one **Enhance** card.

Enhance cards are always considered successfully played if their “parent” action is successful. If the “parent” action fails, then so does the **Enhance** card.

Enhance cards are considered action cards in all respects, except as noted above.

ENHANCE CARDS

ACTION TYPE

DIFFICULTY

EFFECTS



Enhance cards have many features in common with other action cards. The differences are noted below:

Action Type. Enhance cards are represented by a comet icon.

Difficulty. Any additional dice to be added to the parent action's dice pool when using this enhance.

Effect. The enhance cards's game effects are listed here.



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