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# THE CRUSADER<sup>TM</sup>

*The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*

## HOW IT ALL HAPPENED

BY GARY GYGAX

## A PEEK INSIDE

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

## OF ARMS AND ARMOR

BY MIKE STEWART

## GAME REVIEW: AIRSHIP

BY JAMES M. WARD

## THE ANGRY GAMER

BY A TROLL

## CONSTRUCT- ING CASTLE ZAGYG

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PUBLISHER: Stephen Chenault  
MANAGING EDITOR: James M. Ward  
EDITOR/DESIGNER: Elizabeth Stewart  
VISION KEEPER: Nicole Leigh  
COVER ARTIST: Peter Bradley  
INTERIOR ARTISTS: Mark Allen,  
Peter Bradley, Jason Walton, Bryan Swartz

Letters of inquiry are welcome and should be sent to the address above or sent via e-mail to [thecrusader@trolllord.com](mailto:thecrusader@trolllord.com)

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# How It All Happened by Gary Gygax

*The Inspiration for the D&D Game, its Creation, GenCon's Founding, How TSR came into Being, and its Early Days...*

## Miscellaneous Make-Believe



### Gary Gygax

has written and had published over 70 games, game products, and books since he began creating in the 1960s, when he founded the world-renowned GENCON gaming convention. His first professional gaming work was published in 1971.

He co-founded the game publishing company Tactical Studies Rules (later TSR, Inc.) in 1973 with his longtime friend from Lake Geneva, Don Kaye.

His best known game and fiction credits include co-creating and authoring the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Role-Playing Game, creating the AD&D game, WORLD OF GREYHAWK Fantasy World Setting, and the Gord the Rogue novels. He is often referred to as the "Father of Role-Playing".

*This is the final installment of Gary Gygax's "How it All Happened." This column has taken you from Gary's childhood through to the creation of D&D and TSR. It has been an honor to host this column for Gary. We thank him for the opportunity and challenge. It is yet more, if the final, echo of Gary's voice in these offices and this journal.*

*After the first issue of **Crusader** hit the stands, Gary turned this series of articles over to me, offering them to me for publication. I was very excited to take it on. Here was the story of "how it all happened" by the man who made it all happen. He touched on so many of the early influences that drove him to imagine and eventually create the material that served as the bedrock for the RPG industry. Personally I have thoroughly enjoyed these reads. They punctuate moments that were no doubt the culmination of hosts of events and happenstances in Gary's youth. They give us Gary Gygax in a new light. He's not only a business man, not only a game designer; not all the other things, both good and bad, that people have labeled him. Rather, they give us something far more valuable. They give us Gary Gygax, the man. This was Gary as I knew him. A jovial, good natured, company loving fellow who possessed a volcanic temper, an amazing drive, an indisputable ability to forgive and forget and above all a man who never lost his childhood and that wild imagination that gave birth to and brought together so many amazing stories.*

*Enjoy this final read from the ultimate Dungeon Master. I know I have.*

*Steve  
2008*

One night we heard there was going to be a beer party (beer could be purchased at 18-years of age then in Wisconsin) in the "Crazy House." I was highly skeptical, but I followed along so as to not be left out of whatever else happened. I was correct, for when we entered the place by the rear entrance in the west, walked around on the ground floor, it was clear no one else was in the place. A sudden

crash sent panic through the group, and out the nearest window they went—John Rasch, John Kohn, Don Kaye, Dave Dimery, and Terry Criner. I had been leading the way, and as I came last to the jumping out place, I heard Terry complaining about a twisted ankle, as someone helped him off and away into the trees. No way I was going to risk my ankle or leg jumping out a window about eight feet above ground onto ground littered with broken masonry and bricks! I took a deep breath, clenched my fists, and walked down that central hallway past the half-dozen doorways to either hand, into the foyer, out and down the steps. After all, I had experienced real poltergeist phenomena years before, and the noise was likely that of a raccoon disturbed by our presence. Nonetheless, when I hit the last step on the way out I was breaking into a run. When I found the others downtown and they learned I had walked out the front way, they were impressed with my bravery. I didn't tell them that a likely sprained ankle was more fearsome to me than a bumping sound in the night...

Of course only a small part of my time was spent on adventurous things like being in the ruins of Oak Hill Sanatorium. Far more time was spent playing chess. On many a school day Tom Keogh and I would meet in the back booth of the restaurant that served as the local bus station, there to drink coffee and play chess until it was "safe" to go to the YMCA and play there. Often game play would be at my place; there we would play double chess or the circular variant I had picked up from the *Boy's Own Book*. There was no formal chess club, but of the regulars playing, Terry Criner was best, I was second, Ron Hudson was third, and Tom was fourth. Tom and I thought much alike, though, so that when we played as a team in double chess, we regularly defeated Criner and Hudson, much to their annoyance. None of us could beat Karl Szabo, an old timer from Chicago who owned a local bar. I worked there as porter and dishwasher, and in due course I learned that Karl had played against masters and grand masters, so that answered that question. I was sad that my Grandfather Burdick wasn't alive, so I could see those two having at it, grandfather often playing seven boards at once when he was younger.



Don Kaye wasn't all that fond of chess, but any card or board game was fine with him. From poker to **Clue**, **Touring**, **Monopoly**, and including the old **Big Business** game, Don was in there playing to win. One night when six of us started playing a **Big Business** game, it came down to Tom Keogh, Don Kaye, and I having to call it a three-way draw after way too many hours. Don's favorite games were military-based ones, and thus he loved to join me in setting up battles with my toy soldiers, firing off the lady-finger firecrackers in the Britons cannons. As I have mentioned before, we tried to devise some rules to make gunfire and hand-to-hand combat reasonable and fun, but we failed. Had we thought of dice instead of coins, it would have been another matter. We didn't...

Most summer evenings were spent hanging out with the regulars down around the lake front or riding around in someone's car listening to rhythm & blues music on WLAC from Nashville, Tennessee—a station I discovered in 1954. I'll never forget when disk jockey Gene Nobles played Chuck Berry's *Maybelline* 17 times in a row. All of us were really rocking and rolling at that, and it didn't hurt that we were drinking some *Peter Hand's Special Reserve* beer. Yet on a late night anytime of year I would likely be found listening to Jay Andres radio program, *Music 'Til Dawn*, as I read a fantasy or SF story, possibly an historical novel, taking a break now and then to work on a floor plan of my devising. Most were of castles or castle-like mansions with secret stairs and rooms. Somewhere around I have part of a multi-sheet one I did when I was around 17.

Admittedly, when we got together and discussed the incredible, horror and science fiction were as popular as fantasy. Not a one of the inner circle of my friends wouldn't have given their eye teeth to be picked up and carried off into distant parts of the galaxy by a space ship, flying saucer, or otherwise. Finding "haunted" places was another prime interest although Tom wasn't eager to encounter the manifestation he was treated to when sleeping in the upper bunk in my bedroom.

This brings us up to the time where my last real escapades as a teenager in Lake Geneva took place. In the following episode you'll read about knife fights and sword duels I experienced just before moving into Chicago on my own.

### *Faux Duels*

My friend John Kohn was built like a gorilla and could climb like nobody else I have ever seen. In gym class he could climb a rope using hands alone, reach the top, and be back down before the next fastest climber using hands and feet had reached the top of the rope. John was also a natural at throwing techniques in wrestling and like fighting. Back in the mid 1950s, martial arts were barely known. Terry Criner had taken some Judo classes, and he gave John Kohn a wide berth. That wasn't because John was aggressive, but because even in fun one risked getting thrown a goodly ways when up against him. Once a carload of four strangers ran John's old Chevy off the road. When John got out of the car two of them were already rushing at him. Without thinking John grabbed the first and sent him flying over the top of Chevy. The second assailant attempted to stop his charge, failed, and followed his fellow to land in the ditch. The other two stayed in the car and drove off in a hurry. John did likewise, as he didn't like to fight, as he couldn't punch well.

One day he asked me to practice with him. He wanted to see how he could do against a knife-armed attacker. I was agreeable, because John was always careful to break my fall when he threw me. So we began a session of me rushing at him with one of my hunting knives held in the crude overhand strike, out-thrust, and low in cut/thrust manner. Each time I was sent over John's shoulder or head to land relatively gently on the ground, although it didn't look that way to an unknowing observer. There were soon several in automobiles stopped and pulled over to the curb so as to see the "fight." It worked so well, we staged several more like "deadly combats" to fool the tourists. Shouts demanding I drop my knife and stop attacking, were the most common sentiments. Cheers for John throwing me were almost as usual. A few twigged to the joke and ended up laughing at those who thought it was a serious business.

That really helped enliven the usual dull routine of life in a small town. So did the swords...

Somewhere Tom Keogh came into possession of a pair of practice dueling sabers—he never did tell any of us where he got them. As he was then assistant manager of the Geneva Theater, he kept them in the downstairs dressing rooms, and after the theater closed he would break them out. Those who helped him tidy up got to do some fencing. By the time summer rolled around several of us had gotten to be fairly adept at putting on a "match" as good as many one might see on screen, with stamping, lunges, rushes, and locked blades with mock blows used to drive one opponent or the other back. We tried such matches in the side yard of my house, but nobody paid much attention, as the matter was clearly two teen-age boys fencing with heavy, blunt-ended, and un-pointed practice swords. That would never do! I suggested a formal duel at dawn as in the movie *Scaramouch*, and from there we worked out the whole plan. Terry Criner and Tom Keogh were to be the duelists. Each wore black trousers and white shirt for the event. John Kohn, John Rasch, John Patrick, and I were to be the seconds, wearing the same color scheme as the duelists with a black coat or jacket over the white shirt. The site of the contest was the far side of the lagoon in what is now the Bigfoot Beach State Park just after sunup...dawn if you will.

We marched out into the open in solemn manner, two separate trios, doing our best to attract as much attention as possible without seeming to do so. The Lake Geneva area being what it is, there were plenty of passing cars, people already pulled over, so we had the audience desired. The opponents faced off, saluted, I dropped a large square of white cloth, and the duel was on. After several minutes Tom was thrust through, we ran to him, and in "binding his wound" wrapped a red-dyed bandage around his chest. Tom's seconds helped him to his feet, but he collapsed, so they then picked him up and carried him off into the trees where Terry and his seconds, John Skinner and I, had hired off into the alley, as if fearing to be caught. Later on, we heard about a swordfight in Button's Bay where someone was stabbed, so the faux duel was a partial success.

Late that autumn I moved into Chicago. I was tired of working as a part-time mover and there weren't a lot of prospects for a high-school drop-out in the small town of Lake Geneva. It was time I sought my fortune by venturing into the wide world. Although I didn't know it then, I was on the road to becoming a real gamer.



## Wargaming

I went off to Chicago where I immediately found work...in the supply department of an insurance company. Working in a warehouse filling orders for advertising materials, business forms, supplies, and then shipping them out parcel post of freight was pretty dull. So was collating mass mailings to, running a postal metering machine, and running giant old photostat machine, and developing the pictures filled my days. Luckily, I had a life outside my work, and reading and playing chess were as enjoyable as ever. In a couple of years I got married. When my first child was born I decided it was time to get some relevant education, and I began going to night school to learn basic insurance principles. When the second bairn arrived, I enrolled in junior college, taking night classes. As I was on the Dean's List every semester, and several of my professors wrote letters of recommendation, I was accepted at the University of Chicago, but I never attended school there. I had been offered a job as an underwriter trainee, and I took it. Eventually I became a supervising underwriter, enough of that boring stuff!

Besides playing at the Rodgers Park Chess Club, actually managing a 7-2-1 record against a ranked Expert, I picked up a book on Japanese chess, shogi, and a nice little wooden set at a Japanese gift store located on North Broadway a few blocks from where I lived on Winthrop Avenue. Adding that game helped, but the breakthrough came when I was downtown looking for books in Kroch's & Brentano's. There I discovered my first board wargame, The Avalon Hill Company's **Gettysburg**, which I bought myself for Christmas in 1958. It cost \$4.98, a pretty hefty sum for me back then. That was the best five buck investment I ever made! It set me on the path to becoming a game hobbyist and creator. As it turned out I had a regular opponent in Chicago, a young chap named Mike Magida against whom I often played chess. He took to board wargames as readily as I did, and was an excellent player. My regular opponent in Lake Geneva was Don Kaye. After the first game we picked up every new Avalon Hill offering with eager anticipation. Eventually I broke down, subscribed to their magazine *The Avalon Hill General*, and my first gaming article was printed therein. It was a reprint of a paper I did for college English, "The Battle of Gettysburg, If Heth had gone Forward," for which I had received an A, (I did a lot of research, had 53 footnotes including quotes from the *Southern Historical Society Papers*, the *Official Records*, and *Harpers Magazine*.)

By then I was somewhat known to Avalon Hill's Vice President, Tom Shaw. I was the first person to write to the company and ask if I could buy blank hex sheets. In a personal conversation years later, Tom said they decided on a price of \$1 each. I bought five of them. I still have a letter from Tom to prove I was an Avalon Hill fanboy. When I changed jobs, I was an underwriter working in downtown Chicago, a certain Carl Olson I met told me about the hobby Industry Association of America's annual trade show that was then held in the city. Of course I left work and went there to hang around at the Avalon Hill booth. This I did every year for several years, and soon had a guest badge from "AH," which made me feel important...

Meantime, with several friends I set about making a super complex builder wargame using the blank hex maps. Each of seven of us created our own nation with a name like "Bellum," Guerre,"

"Krieg," etc., some smaller neutral ones, on the world we named "Pax." Not only did we create a cylindrical planet, but the rules were so complex and complicated we scrapped the whole exercise.

I moved back to Lake Geneva in 1964, commuting between there and my job in Chicago until I left insurance in the fall of 1970. I took advantage of the long ride to read much history and do not a little article and game-rule writing too.

As I noted, from the ads in the *General* I got into postal communication with many gamers to play wargames by mail and to enjoy the fellowship. With two such gamers, Bill Speer and Scott Duncan, I co-founded the International Federation of Wargaming (IFW) in 1966. This was a serious association to promote gaming, the first such, and it grew to over 700 members. By this time I was also active in play of Postal *Diplomacy*.

From such contacts, I got to know quite a number of gamers personally, so in 1967 I invited as many as were near enough to my home to come and spend a weekend playing games. Later I came to call that weekend "**GenCon 0**," and about 15 or 20 persons showed up, half of whom spent the night there in their sleeping bags. We played board wargames, naval miniatures on the living room floor, and everybody but my then-wife loved it. In fact, I was so enthused I told Bill Speer and Scott Duncan that we should have a gaming convention like SF fans did for their hobby. They said, "Go for it," and that I did. In 1968, I ran the first **GenCon** (a play on the Geneva Convention of warfare and the place the event was held) in the Horticultural Hall in Lake Geneva. It was for IFW members, cost \$1 for the single day it ran, and 50 persons paid, that covering the rent for the hall exactly. Gamers from New York, Texas, Oregon, and Canada showed up, so the event was national and international. Most of us played on Sunday too as we were ostensibly cleaning the hall. Thus all agreed that there had to be a **GenCon II**, and it had to be at least two days long.

In the next episode I will reveal how I became "hooked" on military miniatures and got into the "pro" ranks soon thereafter.

## Military Miniatures

While I was reasonably familiar with military miniatures wargaming before GenCon I, in 1968, it was there that I became enamored with them. That was thanks to Jerry White from Portland, Oregon, as I recall, who brought his Hausser Elastolin plastic 40 mm medieval figurines and a castle to the convention. On the Sunday we were supposed to be cleaning up I played "The Siege of Bodenberg" with Jerry and others, and ever afterwards, I was hooked. That wasn't surprising to me, as my first complete wargame design had been the *Battle of Arsouf*, published in a fan magazine not much before I was introduced to the medieval miniatures game noted.

Being so interested in the 40mm scale figurines, I got together with Don Kaye, and the two of us built a 6' x 10' sand table in my basement in the fall of 1968. I bought an extra plywood sheet, painted it green, to lie on top of the sand when a traditional tabletop was desired. I formed a local group, the Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association with miniatures buffs Professor Leon (Lee) Tucker of Chicago and Michael (Mike) Reese of Harvard, Illinois, as principal members with Don Kaye, Rob and Terry Kuntz, and me. We played a lot of WW II and later military



miniatures, some ancients, and a smattering of Napoleonic. There were many weekend-long miniatures battles fought with German forces against Russian or British-American AFVs and troops. At a 1:1 scale, small unit tactics were the main feature, and the *Tractics* rules were play tested thus.

Shortly thereafter I was delighted when Jeff Perren came up to Lake Geneva with his large force of 40 mm Hauser Elastolin figures and a set of rules for medieval warfare on a 1 figure equals 20 men scale. With Jeff's permission I expanded those rules, then in the early months of 1969 added rules for 1 figure equals 1 man scale, jousting rules, and finally a "Fantasy Supplement: to add magic armor and swords, wizards casting spells, and a large number of fantastic creatures—fire-breathing dragons, elementals, giants, trolls, ogre, etc. Jeff kindly sold his collection of 40 mm figurines to me, so they were always on hand for battles in the basement on the sand table. Ranges and damage area for fireball and lightning bolt spells were the same as those for the mundane heavy catapult and cannon. Not a single eyebrow was raised.

While I enjoyed playing virtually any period miniatures, medieval was my favorite, so I formed a special interest group in the International Federation of Wargaming, naming it the "Castle & Crusade Society." I wrote and published a small newsletter for the group of about 20 or 30 members of the C&C Society, calling it *The Doomsday Book* after the Norman record created after William conquered Anglo-Saxon England. Dave Arneson from the Twin cities was an original member of the society. About that time I published the rules Jeff had written and I expanded upon as the LGTSA Medieval Miniatures Rules. By that time the play on the sand table had become almost exclusively fantasy miniatures. Other periods, including medieval, would attract a handful of participants for a weekend game. When word about the fantasy battles got out, we would have a dozen or more players crowding around the table, so we ran games to suit the gamers. We did have dropouts though, notably Dr. Tucker, who quit speaking to me because of my "heresy" Mike Reese, and Jeff Perren, as they were interested in the historical only.

Near the close of the year 1969 Don Lowry got in touch with me about publishing games and rules through his small press, Guidon Games. Don was then running a mail order hobby shop, Lowry's, and publishing a semi-pro gaming magazine, *Campaign*. I wanted very much to become a professional author and game designer, of course, insurance being incredibly dull in comparison, even though I was very able as an underwriter and an excellent salesman too. I had wanted to quit my job and strike out as an author, but my then-wife discouraged that. Although she hated gaming and gamers, she was right, as I had four children by then. Nonetheless, I spent much of my free time working on games and game rules.

In the fall of 1970 the company I worked for decided to move its operations from Chicago to San Francisco. I was out of a job, absolutely delighted too! Turning down offers from a couple of large agencies, the first thing I did was to call Don Lowry and accept his offer to become the Editor-in-Chief for Guidon Games. The second major step I took was to acquire shoe repair machinery, get it moved into the basement, Don Kaye inheriting possession of the sand table, his garage becoming its home. Then I was as set as I could manage, the shoe repair would generate a steady if marginal income for the support of the family, my

gaming work augmenting that. I was set to seek my fortune doing what I loved.

## Games Daily

Slipping back a couple years to cover **GenCon**, the second one in August 1969 was for Saturday and Sunday, and as I recall we charged \$5 for both days, \$3 for one-day admission. There were around 150 paid conventioners there, and my family ran the kitchen—hot dogs and soft drinks, they kept the profits therefrom for their labor. At \$.25 and \$.10 nobody accused me of skimming. The income from attendance enabled us to take all the workers out to have a Sunday night pizza and beer fest.

In 1970 **GenCon III** drew around 350 persons. The IFW in the person of Len Lakofka ran it, not me, the site being George Williams College Camp in Williams Bay, Wisconsin. It was spread all over, and even so, it was crowded. I was pushing medieval miniatures play then, but enjoyed a *Don't Give up the Ship* naval miniatures battle that Dave Arneson ran, a recreation of the Battle of the Nile. I was on the winning French team. Everything else was about the same as **GenCon II**.

In 1971 I ran **GenCon IV** on behalf of the LGTSA. Figuring a larger crowd I rented both the Horticultural Hall and the Guild Hall of the Episcopal Church directly across the alley from the Horticultural Hall's side entrance. We had close to 500 attendees, and everyone had a great time. In 1972 the Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association was again the sponsor, and that meant I was doing most of the work. I rented the American Legion Hall in addition to the others, anticipating more growth. That was good as GenCon V drew in excess of 600 paying attendees. We were up to a three-day event then, and if I recall rightly, it was \$20 for all three days, \$10 per day otherwise. The "Choice hot Dogs" ads for GenCon drew as many groans as they did cheers. The workers loved it, though, as the LGTSA paid for a nice dinner at a nearby restaurant. It was at this point that I decided to make the dinner open to conventioners willing to pay their own way, so that they could rub elbows with the "names" who attended the "banquet" to be held Saturday night.

So 1971 and 72 were banner years for my gaming, a miserable one for earning a livelihood. Guidon Games published *Tractics*, *Chainmail*, *Don't Give up the Ship*, and *Tricolor* military miniatures rules as well as my *Alexander the Great* and *Dunkirk* board wargames. I even did "fill-in" typing of manuscripts, using an IBM and ending each line with a whole word and slashes thereafter for type spacing to add more gaming income to the royalty income. In all it was barely sufficient to make ends meet. Even though I was doing more game play and creation than ever before, the financial rewards were marginal. That discouraged me not in the least! What was disturbing to me was the way that Guidon Games, Lowry's hobbies, and *Campaign* magazine were being managed. The operation had moved to Maine, and service was getting terrible. Don Lowry asked me to move out to Belfast, Maine, and work with them. I declined politely. I foresaw trouble brewing and wanted to start my own gaming company.

I told Don Kaye that that was my aim, and while he liked the idea, he was dubious about the potential even if I picked up all the game work I had done for Guidon. Then in the late fall of 1972 Dave Arneson and Dave Megary came down to Lake Geneva for a gaming weekend and Don became more enthused.



## D&D & TSR

When Dave Arneson and Dave Megary visited Lake Geneva in late 1972 they brought two interesting things. Arneson brought a part of his *Chainmail* fantasy campaign and Megary brought a board game he had devised based on *Chainmail* and what Arneson had been doing. I was eager to develop a set of rules using the *Chainmail* Fantasy Supplement and progression of ability. Dave Megary wanted me to be the agent for his game, *Dungeon!*, that he hoped to have The Avalon Hill Company publish. Don Kaye, Rob and Terry Kuntz, and my oldest son Ernie were there to enjoy a lot of gaming.

When Arneson and Megary returned to Minnesota, I was ready to create a new game and develop the board game. These tasks I set to work on with a will. And before 1973 rolled around I had sent out for play-testing about a score of drafts of the 50-page manuscript I had written under the working title “The Fantasy Game.” At the same time I had revised the board, cards, and rules for the *Dungeon!* Game, and was in contact with Avalon Hill about it. Don Kaye was a great fan of both the role-playing game and the board game. So were all the others that I had playing them. However, when in the spring of 1973, as I mailed out the revised and expanded 150-page draft of “The Fantasy Game,” there was no interest in either from publisher Avalon Hill. In fact, Tom Shaw and George Phillies admitted to me later on that they laughed uproariously at the idea of such games having commercial appeal. As an aside, over 90% of the play-testing of the rules set that was to soon become the *Dungeons & Dragons* game was done by me personally, as I ran adventures nearly every day, sometimes spending eight or more hours doing so. The play-test groups to whom I sent drafts of the game essentially confirmed my belief that the game would be wildly popular, and answering procedural questions encouraged the second draft of triple the size of my initial one.

When August 1973 rolled around, there I was running **GenCon VI** on behalf of the LGTSA once again. The three halls were again rented—Horticultural, Guild, and American Legion—and the turnout was the largest we had recorded with over 650 paid attendees. Despite having to oversee the three sites and coordinate all that was going on, I managed to run a few of “The Fantasy Game” sessions, and the new participants were eager to get their hands on a set of rules so they could run their own adventures. Also, in the spring of the year Jeff Perren had had me visit him in Rockford, Illinois, to play a game of English Civil War military miniatures using his newly created rules. I liked them a lot, got his permission to revise and expand them as a potential product for the publishing company I wanted to start. During **GenCon VI** I spoke with many of the exhibitors, inquiring if they would pick up and distribute to their customers the *Cavaliers & Roundheads* English Civil War military miniatures rules. Don Kaye was with me when I made those inquiries. We both noted that there was a new game publisher showing its wares for the first time, Game Designer’s Workshop from Bloomington-Normal, Illinois, the company having been formed only a couple of months before the convention.

A few days after GenCon was over, Don Kaye came to see me. He asked if I could run a publishing company, and I assured him I could. At that Don said, he furnished start-up money to the tune of \$1,000 by borrowing against a life insurance policy, as soon

as I could get a partnership agreement together. That was easy, for my uncle Hugh L. Burdick was an attorney, and he did it *pro bono*. Don and I signed the deal in October 1973, and thus Tactical Studies Rules with a logo consisting of interlocked G and K came into being. Don agreed with me that we really should publish the D&D game immediately, but as we hadn’t the money to swing it, starting out with the *Cavaliers & Roundheads* booklet would serve. I took the manuscript and illustrations I had gathered to a nearby printer, Graphic Press, and before 1973 was out Tactical Studies Rules was in business.

## D&D Launches

Brian Blume attended **GenCon VI** in 1973. He introduced himself to me and the other local members of the Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association. That fall he attended many of my D&D game campaign sessions and always showed up on Saturdays for military miniatures games on the sand table in Don Kaye’s garage. Brian was friendly and amiable, so the group was glad to have him as a new member. When Don and I formed the Tactical Studies Rules partnership, Brian was interested in our enterprise, made suggestions as to how to get more copies of our single product, *Cavaliers & Roundheads*, into hobby shops, promote sales. Of course Don and I knew the process would be slow, as the English Civil War was not a particularly popular period for miniatures battles. We were reconciled to waiting a year or more to build up sufficient cash reserves to afford the printing of the D&D game.

In November Brian Blume approached me and asked if he might become a partner in Tactical Studies Rules. He mentioned that he was willing to put of \$2,000 for an equal, one-third partnership. When I broached this subject with Don Kaye, Don asked what I thought of Brian, and I said that he seemed like a good chap, a creative fellow, and one who was willing to work to make the company a success. Don thought the matter over for a week or so, and then he set up a meeting with Brian and me at his house on Sage Street. After questioning Brian at length, he agreed to the proposal provided I assured him that the sum would be sufficient to produce the D&D game. As we had over \$400 in the Tactical Studies Rules account from sales of our lone rules booklet, I could answer in the positive.

I had a firm estimate from Graphic Printing for producing the three booklets and loose reference sheets. That was \$2,100. I had also contacted a box supplier in Lake Geneva who gave me a cost of \$.20 each for 1,000 of the box size needed, those wrapped in brown wood-grain paper. I then checked for the cost of labels, and found that 1,000 front and spine labels could be done for under \$100. Thus \$2,400 was just enough to manage 1,000 copies of the *Dungeons & Dragons* game.

Don asked how much I expected we would make on an average sale of the Game at the cover price I planned to offer it at, \$10. I figured it out with paper and pencil there on his dining table. I assumed that half of our sales would be direct and gain full price, one-quarter would be at a retailer discount of 40% and one-quarter to wholesalers at 55% discount. I then estimated shipping and packaging costs, and it was clear that if my figures were anywhere close to correct, we would make sufficient profit to reprint twice the quantity, leaving a bit to spare for an inexpensive ad or two.

With that, it was agreed, and Brian Blume became a full partner in Tactical Studies Rules the next weekend when he brought a



check for \$2,000, and it was deposited in the company account. It was early December by this time, so I hastened on the following Monday to the office of Graphic Printing, and got the ball rolling on the production of the three booklets, reference sheets, and box labels. Just after the New Year all that, and the boxes too, were delivered to Don Kaye's house. Thereafter on a few weeknights and on weekends for sure, we gathered at Don's to collate the booklets and reference sheets (folding the latter), put them into a box, close it, then put on front and spine labels, stacking completed games on the shelves of the pantry off his dining room.

I sent out many letters to gamers telling them that we had the D&D game ready for sale, and we even ran a small ad in *Wargamer's Digest*. I personally wrapped and shipped off the first order in January 1974, one to an individual gamer, soon after that we sent out about 100 copies to wholesalers and just under that number to individual hobby shops. In the first year sales actually ran at about the percentages I had projected, so everyone was happy. By September 1974 we were out of stock, and I had Graphic Printing do a run of 2,000. Those arrived around the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, and backorders awaiting shipment amounted to more than 200 copies. We were on our way then, no question about it.

### *The End of Tactical Studies Rules*

The second print run of 2,000 copies of the D&D game finally arrived in early November of 1974, and we were busy a whole weekend thereafter making up copies and getting them shipped off by mail and freight. Given that, I had much creative time on my hands. Having been used to writing for fan magazines such as George Phillies *Panzerfaust*, semi-pro periodicals such as the IFW's *International Wargamer*, and even a pro one now and then since the late 1960s, and with the Castle & Crusade Society no more, I longed to get some articles and essays out. So about the time the second printing of the D&D game hit I had put together a little newsletter that I named *The Strategic Review*, its initials matching Tactical Studies Rules, TSR.

The first issue ran to five printed pages and had a cover price of \$.50. The content was all related to the company's product line, and because of the fact that the D&D game was far and away its leading product, I knew that the magazine would become mainly a fantasy vehicle in due course. I planned it for a quarterly publication, gave out most of the first issue as free copies sent with mail orders. Although I have all seven issues of the magazine stored away, it has been years since I've read them, so their content is generally forgotten, but I know that the general purpose for which I had created *The Strategic Review* was working. It had discount coupons which we saw coming back with orders, people were subscribing, especially after issue number two that was eight pages. I was much encouraged, and told Don and Brian that we would need to hire an editor and produce a full-blown professional magazine on a monthly basis as soon as the company could afford it.

It was in the beginning of 1975 as I was readying the next issue of *The Strategic Review* that I received the terrible news. Don Kaye had had a massive heart attack, and died in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. I was much saddened and forlorn, for Don had told me just a few days before that he was looking forward to telling his uncle that he would be leaving the metal spinning business to work full time for his own company. This he had said after looking at the line-up of new products we could do, the *Greyhawk*

supplement for the D&D game which we knew would have a great audience. It was with a heavy heart that I put in a memorial to Don as the last piece in the magazine I was readying for print.

The partnership agreement for Tactical Studies Rules did not contain a contingency covering the death of a partner, Don's wife wanted no part of the business, so Brian and I had to scramble. I cleared out a small room in the basement of the house I rented at 330 Center Street to serve as a stock room, and converted a big leather-working table to a shipping bench. We got the company's entire inventory moved from Don Kaye's home to my basement in short order. His wife dropped off the books and petty cash without a word, so it was plain that Tactical Studies Rules could no longer exist. Brian's father urged a corporate structure, loaned us the money with which to buy out the partnership interests of Mrs. Kaye, Brian and me. Of course Brian and I immediately put the buyout money back into the newly formed TSR Hobbies, Inc.

Although Tactical Studies Rules was no more, the new company seemed the same, although time would disabuse me of that fond notion. However, in the spring of 1975 all seemed to be well. Heritage Models, one of our distributors, had a press it wanted to run. They would print a run of 3,000 D&D booklets at no charge, do an over-run of 300 copies to sell through their operation to cover costs, and we readily agreed to that. Not having to pay for printing made it possible for me to sell the shoe repair machinery, clear the whole basement, and become the first paid employee of TSR Hobbies, Inc. in May 1975. Although I wished it had been Don Kaye who had that distinction, there was a good deal of happiness in my heart then, for it was the culmination of many years of effort. My salary was a princely \$85 per week, but that made no difference; I was a full-time pro game designer!

The advent of **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons** was the next great leap for TSR, but that's a whole different story, and one that is already much better known.

### *Gygax Family Oral Tradition*

The following is what I learned from my father, Ernst Gygax, and other members of the Gygax family. To the best of my knowledge and belief I am the first member of the family to record this information. Perhaps this history will assist in explaining my work. Clearly, my risk-taking nature and love of adventure can be explained by my heritage, as you will soon see.

#### *The Oral Tradition:*

(My father related this oral tradition in the main part. Some additional portions were added through discussion with other Gygax family members, not a few relatives of distant sort.)

All members of the Family Gygax are descendants of Goliath of Gath, the Goliath of the Bible. When he was slain, all of his descendants, my family, gathered their belongings and fled Philistia. They went first to the Greek islands such as Ios, and to Crete, but eventually at least my direct ancestors went to mainland Europe, settling in the city of Thessalonika and serving the Macedonian king there.

After some time thus, perhaps, even likely, several generations, four Gygax brothers petitioned the king for permission to sail (their?) ship west through the Mediterranean Sea and explore what lay beyond the Pillars of Hercules. Permission was granted, and



so the four intrepid men gathered a crew and went forth. In due course they passed Gibraltar, sailed into the Atlantic Ocean, and followed the coast of Europe thereafter. They managed to go a great ways, getting past Iberia, France, and the Low Countries; only at the tip of what is now Denmark, in the Skaggerak, did their voyage of discovery end in a storm. Their vessel wrecked, the four brothers and likely some unknown number of other crew somehow managed to survive. This band then trekked south overland to Macedonia. Along the way they wandered into the Alps, saw what is now Switzerland, and all four brothers were much taken by the place. Sadly, no details of such an epic journey by sea and land have come down to the current time, but the actual story must have been one of perils, hardship, and great daring! When they finally got back to Thessalonika, they again petitioned the king, this time for permission to take their families and go to the Alps to find land and settle there.

Permission was again granted to them, and so the four families went west and made it to Switzerland without any incidents mentioned in the oral tradition. Once there, though, the brothers explored westwards. In so doing they saw a less mountainous and more fertile land with green valleys that seemed better than the place they were about to settle, that being a part of what is now Canton Bern. As the families were in process of going into the better place, they saw an army clad in red cloaks entering and attacking the people who lived there. (This can only have been Caesar advancing into Gaul to conquer the land.) Seeing that, the brothers took their families back into the mountains in haste, and stayed put. Thus “Gygax” is considered an “ancient Swiss name.” I was informed it came from Greece, where the family was named “Gigantas,” giant in Greek.

My father told me that when he was a boy growing up in Seeberg, Bern, he heard about Gygax men who from as late as the 18th century who were, “too big to wear lederhosen, so instead wore kilts.” I’ve never quite puzzled that one out...

It is my understanding that there are still four “Castles” of the Gygax Family in Switzerland today, but I have not done the research needed to make this a factual statement.

### *Outdoor Adventures...*

My grandfather Hugh Abram Burdick owned two parcels of land some five miles east of Lake Geneva. “The Big Farm” was 120 acres of land sans buildings that were rented out for crop farming and pasturage. The smaller piece of land was “The Forty,” 40 acres of wooded hills with a central lowland that was marshy; its northern end culminating in a natural spring that emptied into a small creek that ran along the land there that belonged to another person. Getting to the place required a drive, or a walk, of over half a mile along a grassy lane off of Back Road, the narrow country artery that led to it. This tract of land was rented to a nearby farmer for pasturing a small herd of heifers—Holstein-Frisian dairy cattle.

I recall assisting my older brother mend the barbed wire fence that surrounded “The Forty,” and riding out there with my grandfather to gather dry cow patties into bushel baskets to fertilize his garden. Needless to say, not only were many family picnics held in this place, but it was the scene for much recreational outdoor activity involving my brother Hugh and his friends—older guys with .22 rifles with whom I was occasionally allowed to

accompany. In a few years those excursions involved my friends and me. My ninth birthday party took place there, and soon thereafter groups of us went “exploring” for a day or camping for one or more nights. The usual companions for such adventures were John Rasch and Don Kaye. At first we had only BB guns, but when I got my first .22 rifle for my 12th birthday, that weapon became a regular adjunct to tent, hand axe for wood cutting, and the rest of the camping gear. The tent was a necessity, as it seemed that our camping trips brought on rain during the night, and in a dry spell my mother would in jest suggest my friends and I go out and camp. After the first rain experience, we learned to have a good cache of dry firewood so we could cook our beloved campfire meals.

The number of rounds of ammunition fired off in plinking, at crows and other, smaller birds I am ashamed to say, was surely in the thousands. In the autumn, we would hunt pheasants there with shotguns, as there was a cleared field area of about five acres size where such game birds could be found. We eventually exploded some 50 sticks of dynamite there too, but I was in my 20s then.

Many a game of “enemy patrol” was played there, with one group heading off to establish a camp and lays an ambush, the others being the patrol seeking the location of the enemy. The only actual weapons used in such games were BB guns. When I was in my late teens, Don Kaye and I were reminiscing about the great fun we used to have out on “The Forty,” so we decided to have a challenge match there. Each of us dug out our Daisy “Red Ryder” BB gun, and off we went in Don’s Oldsmobile convertible.

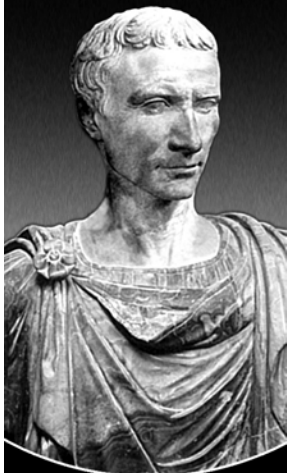
I won the coin toss, so I was the hunted, Don the hunter. I had five minutes to establish my position, and then he would come seeking me. I didn’t go far into the eastern trees, took a concealed position where I could observe Don. When he came after me I made my move across the marsh so as to get into the western woods. There I found a great position at the narrowest part of the open marsh, for surely Don would cross there when he didn’t find me to the east. All went exactly as planned, and as my “enemy” crossed the open ground I sent BB after BB at him. When hit the victim would honorably react according to the location—use only one arm, limp, or crawl “wounded.” Don came charging on, now quite aware of my position. He made it, got behind a tree, and nailed me with two shots.

What had happened to my shooting? Then I recalled getting angry one day at home and slamming the old BB gun at something. My bad temper had bent the barrel just enough to make the weapon useless. Don and I had a great laugh, his much heartier than mine.





WHEN CAESAR  
STOOD UPON THE  
BANKS OF THE  
RUBICON LOOKING  
SOUTH TO ROME,  
HE HESITATED.  
BEFORE HIM STOOD  
THE VAST, COMPLEX  
MECHANISM OF THE  
PAST, GLOWING  
WITH A HOST OF  
INTRICATELY WOVEN  
STRATAGEMS.  
WITH HIM, HE HAD  
BUT ONE LEGION,  
WEARY FROM EIGHT  
YEARS OF BRUTAL WAR  
WITH THE GAULS.  
BUT WHEN CALLED  
TO SURRENDER  
HIMSELF TO THE  
SENATE AND CERTAIN  
EXILE, HE DID NOT  
HESITATE.  
HE CALLED HIS  
LEGIONARIES TO  
CROSS INTO ITALY,  
TO CROSS  
THE RUBICON.  
AND AS HE DID SO,  
HE SAID ONLY THIS:  
ALEA IACTA EST!



**JULIUS CAESAR**

# ALEA IACTA EST



*"The Die is Cast" – An Editorial by Stephen Chenault*

## A Peek Inside

Last issue we promised to give you a look-see at the forthcoming/upcoming Castle Keepers Guide. I've pieced through a bit of it and tried to find something that would be new and give everyone a good idea of the scope that this book is aiming at. The NPC section proved just such a gem. Here is a topic that is rarely adequately explained in our genre – and by genre I mean games in general, not TLG specific – and a topic that there is a great deal of assumed knowledge on. Someone new to the game might find the subject a little confusing, what with hirelings, NPCs, monsters as NPCs etc. What is an NPC? This question and so many more are addressed by the CKG. And here's just a taste.

This will likely undergo some revision before the dust settles, thought it has settled in its final form to a large degree. So have a gander and I hope you enjoy what you read.

Steve

### Chapter VI

### NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

#### UNDERSTANDING THE NPC

A non-player character, or NPC, is a character played by the Castle Keeper that has a role in the adventure or game. There are four types of NPCs: the Adherent, Henchman, Hireling, and the Monster. All are discussed in detail below.

#### NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS DEFINED

The NPC is an essential part of any Castles & Crusades game, as the characters encounter them in almost every session. NPCs play a variety of roles from the barkeep at the tavern that passes on juicy rumors for a few coins, all the way to the well paid henchmen who drags the wounded character to safety and healing. The NPC is a multi-faceted tool that a Castle Keeper can use in an almost limitless number of circumstances. They can start games by supplying the characters with the where, why and what of an adventure. They can further adventures that have stalled by supplying yet even more information. They can heal wounded characters, they can attack them, and they can serve them or lord over them. NPCs serve as the catalyst for plot points, awarding characters for success or punishing them for misdeeds. That's the short list. There is almost no end to the descriptions for what an NPC can be used for so long as the CK understands the value of the tool at hand.

It is important to point out that NPCs are not limited to humans and demi-humans. Monsters, deities, and even sentient magic items are all non-player characters in the ongoing adventure and should all be treated as such. They can interact with the characters every bit as much as any henchmen or hireling. They have information that may be valuable, equipment and treasure that may be useful and suffer from morale like every other NPC. It should be noted that not every monster, deity, and sentient magic item is an NPC. The random goblin is not an NPC because he was skewered on the end of the barbarian's spear, he becomes an NPC if he is captured and begins interacting with the players.

This chapter deals with non-player characters. Below are general rules and guidelines for the creation and use of NPCs, including types of NPCs, their reactions and loyalty, and how to hire them and equip them. It should be noted that any NPC could be powerful at the Castle Keeper's discretion. Even the transient can be a retired class based NPC. Though he may have nothing beyond a brief encounter with the character he may be more than the characters realize.

#### CLASS BASED OR NON-CLASS BASED

**Class Based:** These NPCs possess the same abilities as characters as they are created using the one of the 13 classes from the Players Handbook, multi-classing rules from this book as well as any variant or dual classes developed by the Castle Keeper or presented here. They include all Henchmen, some Hirelings, many Adherents and on the rare occasion the creature. They are rangers, fighters, knights, druids, wizards etc.

**Non-Class Based NPCs:** The list of Non-Class Based NPCs is extensive and includes any NPC that is not based on a class. Hirelings are the most notable of these, but these also include Adherents and creatures. These NPCs generally play only minor, secondary, or tertiary roles in any game.

#### ADHERENTS

The Adherent is a class or a non-class based NPC who the characters encounter and interact with but is created and played entirely by the Castle Keeper. The list of Adherents is inexhaustible; it includes priests of orders, commoners, soldiery, barkeepers, guardsmen, shopkeepers, etc. The Adherent is an essential tool for the Castle Keeper to explain, facilitate, or hinder an adventure. They are most commonly used in role playing scenarios where players are attempting to find



information or building relationships for future gain. They are used at all levels of play.

## CREATING THE ADHERENT

The Castle Keeper needs to determine what type of Adherent the adventure needs, transient, or permanent. Transient Adherents are only meant to be brief encounters for the characters. Permanent Adherents are those meant to be a long standing NPC that the characters are going to interact with over a number of sessions. Use the following guidelines for non-class based Adherents. If for some reason the Adherent is class-based use the creation rules outlined for henchman to create them. Both types of Adherents share the following statistics:

**Saves:** This represents the saving throws and attributes check categories for adherents. Saving throws are made in the same manner as for characters, but with broader descriptors. Each adherent is given either physical (P), mental (M), both (P+M) or none (N) as its saving throw category. The category roughly equates to primary or secondary attributes and thus the base number needed to make a saving throw. Physical attributes are strength, constitution, and dexterity. Mental attributes are intelligence, wisdom, and charisma. An adherent with a physical saving throw category makes all saving throws or checks dealing with strength, dexterity, or constitution with a challenge base of 12, and all saving throws or checks dealing with intelligence, wisdom, or charisma with a challenge base of 18.

**Hit Die:** Generally Adherents have a d4 HD, though Castle Keeper's may want to give some transients a d6 or even a d8 depending on circumstances.

**Alignment:** Adherents are almost always neutral unless the adventure or scenario calls for something specific.

**Weapons:** Adherents are not trained in the use of nor have any real knowledge of weapons. If they are forced to fight and their morale holds up they will fight using whatever they can get their hands on.

**Abilities:** The Adherent has no abilities beyond that of their occupation. A tanner cannot hide in shadows; at best he can work over leather gear.

## DEVELOPING THE ADHERENT

An Adherent's role in the game is determined by how much development they require. The Transient requires little or no development, whereas the Permanent Adherent requires more personality and back ground information. Castle Keeper's must be prepared for these encounters. The more players interact with NPCs the more questions they ask and the more information the Castle Keeper needs to keep on hand. Keeping good notes or investing in the Non-Player Character Reference Sheets can prove very valuable.

## TRANSIENT ADHERENT

These Adherents require little or no work from the Castle Keeper beyond that outlined above in Creating the Adherent. Characters are likely to encounter them only once. There is little likelihood that the transient NPC will need to make any specific attribute checks or dice rolls.

**Example:** Angrod the dwarf and his party have arrived in the village of Petersboro north of the Darkenfold Forest. They have recent battled with a band of orcs on the Down and Angrod has had a large gash cut into his leather cuirass. He needs the cuirass repaired so he goes to the village tanner. While the tanner is working on the cuirass

Angrod asks him about the orcs in the area. Checking his notes the Castle Keeper sees that the tanner's name is Luth Merridoos. He is friendly and welcoming but does not know much beyond his own day to day affairs. He supplies his name and remarks that he knows nothing of the orcs, but can tell Angrod about all manner of leather goods. The dwarf pays Luth's fee and moves on.

In this example there was no reason for the Castle Keeper to have much beyond a name for the NPC.

## PERMANENT ADHERENT

Permanent Adherents require more time and development. A name, some background information, along with their personality helps augment the continual encounters characters are likely to have with them. Encounters with Permanent Adherents are not likely to involve conflict, so much like the Transient Adherents it is not necessary to develop their attributes beyond what is outlined above in Creating the Adherent. The Background & Personality Charts can be used to quickly generate a Permanent Adherent NPC.

**Example:** While Angrod visits the Tanner, Merrick, a young 3rd level paladin visits the Temple of St. Luther to consult with the head of his Order. There he meets the paladin Gilfalas, his senior by 10 years. Gilfalas has been in the service of St. Luther his entire life, joining the order at the age of 8 and serving a variety of paladins as he worked his way up the ranks. He is older, with gray hair and a short well-groomed beard. His blue eyes are kindly and his whole demeanor is one of calm patience. His large hands however denote one who has spent a life time wielding a sword and his slightly bow legged walk marks him as a horseman of old. Gilfalas is a very honest man and speaks in simple, short sentences without any pretense toward double speak, innuendo or implications. He means what he says and says what he means. He is a retired 14th level lawful good, human paladin with many campaigns under his belt. He has extensive knowledge of the surrounding countryside as well as versed in the arcane as his life's struggle against evil has forced him to know his enemy.

In this example the Castle Keeper developed more than enough information to play extensive role playing encounters with Gilfalas. Even though this NPC is obviously a class-based Adherent it is not necessary to fully flesh him out with attribute scores, hit points and armor class as the Castle Keeper does not intend for him to take an active role in the campaign, traveling with the characters and fighting at their side. If in the future Gilfalas was to take a more active role, fleshing him out with the necessary statistics would be only a matter of a few dice rolls.

## LOCATING ADHERENTS

Adherents comprise the vast majority of people who occupy the space around the player characters in cities, towns, villages, castles, strongholds etc. Finding specific Adherents takes a little more time and effort. If Angrod is looking for a Seer, he is not likely to find one in the village of Ends Meet with its population of a few hundred. However the town of Petersboro has over 5000 people and Angrod has a good chance of finding one there.

# Auld & Wyrmish

Wisdom from an Old Master by Mike Stewart

## Of Arms and Armor

This month's *Auld Wyrmish* is a little different from the norm. Rather than regaling the gentle reader with new rules or classes or other such paraphernalia, I'm going to focus instead on the **Castellan's Guide to Arms and Armor**, a book soon to be published by Troll Lord Games. As the author, I was asked if I could cut some of the more interesting bits to include in AW as a preview of the final work, and so here it is. I tried to focus on the less well-known armors & weapons in order to provide useful info to the reader of **Crusader** and their C&C game, even if they never pick up the full CGAA guide. Which you should do anyway!

Each piece of equipment listed below has several categories underneath its name and ends with a few sentences regarding the history and use of the pertinent item.

"Availability" reflects how likely a player character will be able to find the item in your average small town in a campaign setting. The percentile chance can be increased for those wishing to pay more; usually 2× the standard cost for an additional 10% chance (paid before the roll). A failed roll means the item isn't available in the locale.

"Optional" or "Intent" gives the Castle Keeper some idea of the use of the item and optional special rules to use in the game to better reflect its specialty in combat.

So, without further perambulation...on to the gear!

### Armor

#### Aketon (Padded Armor)

**% Coverage:** 70%

**Weight:** 10 lbs (2)

**Cost:** 5 gold pieces

**Availability:** 90%

**Armor Class:** +1 adjustment

**Optional:** Padded armor may be worn under metal armors with their Armor Class bonus adding

to the overall AC, but such would negate any DEX bonus the wearer might have (if any).

The Aketon (padded armor) is a cloth or canvas coat which covers the torso and limbs in a jacket style, with the coat either pulled on over the head or with an opening in the back as well as padded trousers descending to the ankles. This padded surcoat was originally designed either as a quick set of protection for a peasant going to war or as a noble's undergarment to pad the chafing caused by the wearing of metal armors. As such, this may be worn underneath a set of metal armor to gain additional protection but only at the cost of some maneuverability. An arming cap of the same material was worn under the helm, either alone or beneath a chain mail coif. The word "Aketon" to describe such armor was coined during the Crusades and is considered a French derivative of "cotton" (the most common material used to construct such armors).

#### Chain Mail, Birnie (Chain Mail Shirt)

**% Coverage:** 50%

**Weight:** 25 lbs (3)

**Cost:** 100 gold pieces; Bronze Chain Mail 75 gold pieces

**Availability:** 60%

**Armor Class:** +4 adjustment

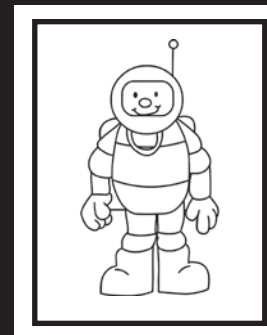
**Optional:** The Birnie may be worn underneath a breastplate and provides an additional +1 to Armor Class, +1 versus cutting weapons. As with all chain mails, this armor only grants +2 Armor Class versus mass weapons.

The chain mail Birnie is basically a sleeveless short coat of chain links.

The Birnie was a shorter version of the Byrnie, a chain mail hauberk cut down to provide only simple torso protection; it had no sleeves at all and reached only slightly below the groin. Its small size allowed it to be worn under rigid armor breastplates and thus increase protection for the warrior. Like other chain mails, the rings are usually steel and each ring is riveted shut. Butted chain mail (i.e. with rings not riveted together but



*In 1978, Mike Stewart became interested in roleplaying games and has never looked back. He is currently a post graduate student at the University of North Texas. When he grows up, he wants to be a spaceman.*





only closed so the ends meet without connecting) is not unheard of, as is mail made of bronze. Bronze chain mail costs 75 gold pieces (A) but only provides +3 Armor Class protection.

## Coat of Plates

**% Coverage:** 60%

**Weight:** 45 lbs. (4)

**Cost:** 100 gold pieces

**Availability:** 85%

**Armor Class:** +5 adjustment

**Optional:** If the wearer of a coat of plates is hit with a natural (i.e. unmodified) roll of 20 on the “to hit” die, the weapon does a number of points of additional damage equal to the attacker’s Dexterity modifier in addition to other modifiers and results. A coat of plates also provides only a +1 Armor Class versus attacks from mass weapons, though mass weapons do not do the above increased damage.



This armored surcoat reflects another attempt to unify metal and leather for greater protection while retaining flexibility. The coat of plates was constructed in a manner similar to ring mail armor. Unlike ring mail, the leather or heavy canvas coat was covered with metal plates sewn into pockets or riveted directly onto the material’s surface to provide greater protection to the wearer. These plates were rigid and depended on the gaps between plates to provide suitable flexibility; however, the greater flexibility provided inevitably resulted in larger gaps that a cutting or thrusting weapon might slip through.

## Leather, Cuirbouilli (Hide Armor)

**% Coverage:** 80%

**Weight:** 25 lbs. (4)

**Cost:** 20 gold pieces

**Availability:** 70%

**Armor Class:** +3 adjustment

**Optional:** Cuirbouilli armor is lightweight compared to metal and is the best protection simple leather can afford. However, The material is very rigid and so any Dexterity checks or saving throws are performed at a –1 while wearing the armor.

Cuirbouilli (Hide) armor is the maximum use of leather possible for personal defense in combat. Usually cured and boiled to increase rigidity (hence the French name “Cuirbouilli”), this armor gives maximum coverage with a minimum of weight. The main difference between “hide”-type armors and “strictly leather” armor is essentially its thickness. The great thickness of cuirbouilli results from boiling the hide of a very large animal (buffalo, elephant or even dragon) or layering several thicknesses of leather together to reach the needed rigidity. This provides significant protection without recourse to metals, though its rigidity and lack of flexibility is similar to the rigid metal armors.

## Chain Mail, Hauberk

**% Coverage:** 60%

**Weight:** 35 lbs. (4)/Bronze 45 lbs (5)

**Cost:** 150 gold pieces/Bronze 110 gold pieces

**Availability:** 70%

**Armor Class:** +5 adjustment/Bronze +4 adjustment

**Optional:** This armor provides its wearer a +2 Armor Class adjustment versus cutting weapons. As with all chain mails, this armor only grants +3 Armor Class versus mass weapons.

This original coat of chain mail was a single shirt pulled over the head and reached to the knees, split to the groin to allow the warrior wearing it to easily ride a horse. The sleeves were longer than a Birnie, going sometimes as far as the wrist. This form of mail was favored by the Norsemen and was the most versatile of chain mails for its relative lighter weight. As such, it was the predominant armor for the average knight through the 11th and 12th centuries. As with other chain mails, the rings are usually steel and each ring is riveted shut. Butted chain mail (i.e. with rings not riveted together but only closed so the ends meet without connecting) is not unheard of, as is mail made of bronze. A bronze chain mail hauberk costs 110 gold pieces but only provides +4 Armor Class protection.

## Leather, Laminar

**% Coverage:** 70%

**Weight:** 25 lbs. (2)

**Cost:** 55 gold pieces

**Availability:** 40%

**Armor Class:** +3 adjustment

**Optional:** Laminar armor gains a +1 to Armor Class versus mass and cutting weapons.

Laminar armor was another variant on the merging of metal and leather to create a rigid yet flexible defense. Similar to a coat of plates, the plates are made of leather and have a thin metal plate riveted flush upon the thicker leather plate and then attached to each other via leather thongs. There is no backing material as each plate connects directly to the others around it. Like ring mail, this makes it easy to repair but also easy to lose plates during a melee due to the cords being severed. This pattern was predominant in Asia but was also used for a time by warriors in Eastern Europe as well as Scandinavia.

## Ring Mail

**% Coverage:** 70%

**Weight:** 20 lbs (3)

**Cost:** 30 gold pieces

**Availability:** 70%

**Armor Class:** +3 adjustment

**Optional:** The predominant benefit to ring mail is its ease of construction. It also provides an extra +1 to Armor Class against mass weapons.

Ring mail is essentially a leather or heavy cloth surcoat with metal rings tied or riveted to the surface in a uniform pattern to provide additional defense to the wearer. This armor is extremely easy to construct (even easier than brigandine) and is a favorite for brigands and highwaymen. Ring mail is also a favorite for peasant levies on the battlefield. Although during combat the rings can be knocked off in the course of fighting, they are easily replaced by anyone with simple leatherworking skills.

## Leather Armor

**% Coverage:** 70%

**Weight:** 15 lbs (2)

**Cost:** 15 gold pieces

**Availability:** 70%

**Armor Class:** +2 adjustment

**Optional:** Leathern armors allow the wearer to perform many physical activities such as swimming or climbing with virtually no penalty to effectiveness (-1 to Attribute Checks).

Leather armors were another stopgap created by those of low means (usually the peasantry and other commoners) to provide themselves some small amount of protection in battle when called up by their feudal overlord. While not as protective as the metal armors, its flexibility and light weight should not be underrated in melee.

### Leather, Studded

**% Coverage:** 70%

**Weight:** 20 lbs (3)

**Cost:** 30 gold pieces

**Availability:** 60%

**Armor Class:** +3 adjustment

**Optional:** Leathern armors allow the wearer to perform many physical activities such as swimming with virtually no penalty to effectiveness (-1 to Attribute Checks).

This type of armor is similar to the leather armor (q.v.) but has the additional advantage of having metal “studs” riveted in a tight pattern across the surface of the leather in order to increase rigidity and protection. This increase in protection inevitably increases the weight and expense of the armor but otherwise performs as normal leather armor.

### Scale Mail

**% Coverage:** 80%

**Weight:** 30 lbs. (4)

**Cost:** 50 gold pieces

**Availability:** 40%

**Armor Class:** +4 adjustment

**Optional:** Scale mail provides its wearer with an additional +1 to Armor Class versus mass and cutting weapons.

Scale mail armor is similar to the coat of plates (q.v.) armor as both are built of metal plates attached to a soft leather or canvas backing to provide flexible protection. Unlike the coat of plates, these plates are attached in such a manner so they actually overlap each other in a “scales” pattern reminiscent of fish or reptile scales. This increases weight and reduces flexibility to a degree, but increases its overall protective capability. While commonly used in the Near East and Byzantine Empire, historians are divided on whether this armor was actually used in Medieval Europe or if its appearance in tapestries was simply a different method of drawing chain mail.

### Banded Mail

**% Coverage:** 70%

**Weight:** 40 lbs (4)

**Cost:** 250 gold pieces

**Availability:** 35%

**Armor Class:** +6 adjustment

**Optional:** Banded Armor grants a +1 Armor Class adjustment versus thrusting attacks.

The armor known as banded mail was commonly used in Medieval Europe at the end of the 12th century, but actually predates the Dark Ages as Roman soldiers occasionally wore a version of the armor in

the late Empire. Known then as “lorica segmentata”, this armor was usually limited to the torso and made of horizontal bronze or iron plates riveted to a soft leather or canvas backing. They covered the torso and slightly overlapped so that when removed it could collapse upon itself to a set of shorter plates as one went higher upon the torso.

### Chain Mail, Full Suit

**% Coverage:** 90%

**Weight:** 45 lbs. (4)

**Cost:** 200 gold pieces/Bronze 165 gold pieces

**Availability:** 35%

**Armor Class:** +6 adjustment/Bronze grants +5 adjustment

**Optional:** The Chain mail suit provides an extra +2 additional Armor Class adjustment versus cutting weapons. As with all chain mails, this armor only grants +3 Armor Class versus mass weapons.

The full suit of chain mail includes a hauberk, chaucers (legs), mittens (called mufflers) and a coif. It is possible to assemble this armor in pieces rather than purchase a full suit, but often the armor assembled in a piecemeal fashion will not fit together correctly, especially if different parts were created by different armorers or if the metal types are different. The coif may be separate from the hauberk in a full suit or it may be directly attached to the shirt if desired. Once assembled only the face is uncovered, with all the rest of the body encased in mail. Like all the chain mails, the rings are usually steel and each ring is riveted shut. Butted chain mail (i.e. with rings not riveted together but only closed so the ends meet without connecting) is not unheard of, as is mail made of bronze. Bronze chain mail suits cost 165 gold pieces but will only provide +5 Armor Class protection.





## Splint Mail

**% Coverage:** 75%

**Weight:** 45 lbs (4)

**Cost:** 200 gold pieces

**Availability:** 40%

**Armor Class:** +6 adjustment

**Optional:** Due to a lack of flexibility, splint mail incurs a -1 to hit adjustment for the wearer if using melee weapons.

Splint mail is a combination of plates and either chain or leather, similar to banded mail. However, the plates of a suit of splint mail are attached vertically to the body instead of horizontally as the banded mail suit assembly. This rigidity is not a problem with arms and legs as the vambraces and rearbraces (bicep and forearm guards) are solid in any event but the vertical plates across the torso prohibit movement or bending at the waist and so limit the wearer's ability to strike at opponents in melee combat. This armor was a precursor to banded mail; although cheaper, it is even heavier and so is not an armor of first choice for those who can afford better.

## Plate Mail

**% Coverage:** 90%

**Weight:** 45 lbs (4)

**Cost:** 600 gold pieces

**Availability:** 20%

**Armor Class:** +7 adjustment

**Optional:** Those unfamiliar with plate mail who wear it in battle suffer a -2 to hit adjustment on all attacks. An additional -1 is imposed on attacks if the armor has not been specifically tailored to the warrior wearing it. Such tailoring requires an armorer and a smithy/foundry, costs 30 gold pieces and takes 1D4 days; more if the wearer is larger or smaller than man size.

The evolution of armor in the 13th century reached its zenith with the development of plate (and) mail. This was a further advance over banded as it layered solid plates across the rigid bones of the body while allowing the flexible sections such as elbows/knees and waist full mobility by layering with chain mail. The articulation of plates made the armor expensive and so only great nobles and knights could afford such a panoply.

Despite stories of how cumbersome plate mail is, any warrior who trains regularly in a suit of plate mail which has been specifically tailored to him will take no penalties due to weight. Generally if the armor is worn for the amount of game time it takes for a warrior to advance one full level from the time they obtain the plate mail then the optional penalties are ignored (1/2 this time if the character has Constitution as a Prime). Please note that simply having a high Strength or Constitution is insufficient to avoid the penalties, as such abilities are irrelevant if one isn't used to the armor.

## Helms

### Barrel

**Weight:** 10 lbs. (1)

**Cost:** 15 gold pieces

**Availability:** 60%

**Armor Class:** +4 adjustment

**Optional:** The flat top of the barrel helm made for a location that when struck by a mass weapon would transmit the force of the blow directly to the wearer. As such, the barrel helm grants only a +3 versus mass weapons: A padded coif may be worn to neutralize this liability.

Unlike the earlier Spangenhelm, the barrel helm was the first in the Early Medieval period to be comprised entirely of steel plates (usually four or five) riveted together for unparalleled rigidity and protection. This helm was usually worn with a padded coif to reduce impact from mass weapons and on occasion a coif of chain mail. This insured several layers of protection for the vulnerable neck and other gaps around the helmet.

### Norman

**Weight:** 7 lbs (1)

**Cost:** 8 gold pieces

**Availability:** 70%

**Armor Class:** +3 adjustment

**Optional:** The Norman helm had a nose guard which was ostensibly to protect the nose from being broken but all too often it was the cause of such breakage. A warrior wearing a Norman helm who is struck by an opponent who rolls a natural (i.e. unadjusted) "20" on their attack dice does an additional 1-2 points of damage to the helm wearer.

The Norman helm was a bullet shaped helm which narrowed at the top but came over the sides of the head to cover the ears. A single metal bar protruded downward at the face of the helm to ostensibly protect the wearer's nose from breakage and to impede a sword stroke across the face. The name came from the warriors of Normandy who preferred the helm design over others in the 11th and 12th centuries.

### Spangenhelm

**Weight:** 4 lbs (1)

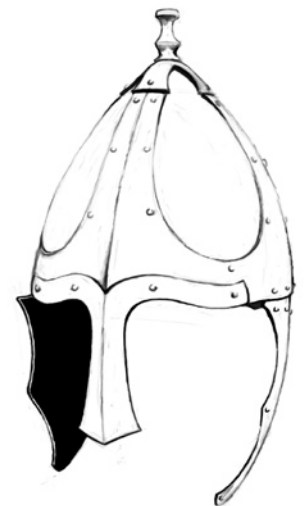
**Cost:** 10 gold pieces

**Availability:** 80%

**Armor Class:** +5 adjustment

**Optional:** The spangenhelm avoids the limitations of the Norman helm by use of cheek guards.

The spangenhelm was inspired by the helms of late Imperial Roman legionnaires and its use spread across Western Europe and Scandinavia. Basically a leather helmet with plates riveted on the top, it had a nose guard similar to the Norman helm. However, it also had hinged cheek guards which kept the nose from being broken by a sword cut as often as otherwise would happen with the Norman helm. It additionally comes down farther on the sides and back to cover most of the head and upper neck, though the throat is still exposed.



## Weapons

### Axe, Francisca

**Length:** 2.5 feet

**Weight:** 7 lbs

**Wield:** One Handed

**Cost:** 10 gold pieces

**Availability:** 80%

**Damage:** 1D8

**DMG/SIZ:** Small = 1D6, Large = 1D10

**Inflict:** Mass

**Intent:** Ease of production, may be thrown for 1D6 damage up to 10 feet +5 additional feet per Strength attribute bonus.

The Francisca hand axe was the standard hand weapon of the barbarian Franks who invaded the Roman Empire during the latter part of the 4th century. Its name refers to the Franks who wielded it, and was a mainstay of the unmounted warrior for centuries. Its simple construction makes it a preferred weapon of many peoples who are unschooled in weaponsmithing. In a fantasy campaign, any blacksmith could build one given a few days and the requisite iron, as no real skill is needed for their construction. It also may be thrown for short distances for damage as noted above.

### Axe, Danish

**Length:** 5-6 feet

**Weight:** 20 lbs (4)

**Wield:** Two handed

**Cost:** 20 gold pieces

**Availability:** 60%

**Damage:** 1D12

**DMG/SIZ:** Small 1D10/Large 3D6

**Inflict:** Mass

**Intent:** This was created as a “single kill” weapon which was also effective against armor.

The Danish (or great) axe was a massive double bladed war axe that required two hands to wield but could inflict considerable damage upon a victim. It was especially good at piercing simple armors and could even be used to dispatch horses in order to unhorse an opponent.

### Fauchard

**Length:** 8 feet

**Weight:** 6 lbs (5)

**Wield:** One or Two Handed

**Cost:** 6 gold pieces

**Availability:** 20%

**Damage:** 1D6

**DMG/SIZ:** Small 1D4/Large 1D8

**Inflict:** Cutting

**Intent:** This weapon, easily assembled from farm tools, can be used to unseat/unbalance an opponent. The wielder may elect in lieu of an attack to attempt such an unbalancing strike by rolling an attack as normal. If a hit is scored, the victim must make a saving throw versus Dexterity or lose their mounting/footing with falling damage determined by the Castle Keeper.

This pole-mounted weapon is similar to the glaive in concept but unlike the knife-edge of the glaive it has a curved scythe like blade attached to the shaft in a horizontal manner. By this mounting it creates a “hook” which is useful for dismounting horseman and otherwise pulling opponents off their feet.

### Glaive

**Length:** 6 to 7 feet

**Weight:** 15 lbs (5)

**Wield:** Two Handed

**Cost:** 8 gold pieces

**Availability:** 65%

**Damage:** 1D8

**DMG/SIZ:** Small 1D6/Large 1D10

**Inflict:** Cutting and Thrusting

**Intent:** Like the fauchard, it was a simple pole arm to be built; basically a knife on the end of a staff.

The glaive was another attempt to make simple weaponry which even a peasant could wield. Being a dagger on a pole, it has the thrusting advantage of a spear but a cutting edge as well. This allowed either a cutting or thrusting attack as the wielder desired. Unlike its cousin the fauchard it had no unhorsing capabilities.

### Maul

**Length:** 6 feet

**Weight:** 15 lbs (5)

**Wield:** Two Handed

**Cost:** 12 gold pieces

**Availability:** 50%

**Damage:** 1D10

**DMG/SIZ:** Small 1D8/Large 1D12

**Inflict:** Mass

**Intent:** The maul was especially useful in unhorsing opponents or otherwise knocking an opponent off his feet. A victim struck by a maul who takes damage (i.e. a successful hit) must make a Dexterity saving throw with a Challenge Level equal to the number of hit points of damage inflicted. Failure means the struck individual is knocked to the ground and must regain their feet before continuing fighting (1 round to return to standing position).

A derivative of the hammer, the maul was a huge two handed great hammer mounted on a five-foot wooden handle. It took great strength and stamina to wield effectively (Strength 15+) but could inflict grievous damage to armored and unarmored foes alike.



### Spear, Wolf (Boar Spear)

**Length:** 6-7 feet

**Weight:** 4 lbs (3)

**Wield:**

**Cost:** 3 gold pieces

**Availability:** 65%

**Damage:** 1D8

**DMG/SIZ:** Small 1D6/Large 1D10

**Inflict:** Thrusting

**Intent:** Designed for hunting, the wolf spear has a metal crossguard just behind the spearhead to prevent a pierced victim to move up the shaft to get in range to attack the spear's wielder.



The wolf spear, also known as a “boar spear”, was designed to hunt the wild creatures so named. In a killing frenzy, the beast would drive the spear point and shaft deeper into its own body in order to get in rage of the spearman and use its deadly teeth or tusks; therefore a steel crossbar was welded to the socket of the spearhead. This horizontal bar kept any victim pierced from using their wound and the spear haft to allow movement forward to the spear wielder. While usually relegated to hunting, they have on occasion found themselves used in battle; especially among forest folk.

## Sword, Broad

**Length:** 3 feet

**Weight:** 8 lbs (3)

**Wield:** One Handed

**Cost:** 12 gold pieces

**Availability:** 60%

**Damage:** 2D4

**DMG/SIZ:** Small 1D6/Large 1D10

**Inflict:** Hacking, Thrusting

**Intent:** Standard warrior’s sword of the Dark Ages and Early Medieval period.

The term “Broadsword” is actually a generic term for the standard medieval sword and was first coined by 19th century collectors. Despite this anachronism, it makes a good general term to describe the Early Medieval blades used by knights and warriors through the period.

## Sword, Scimitar

**Length:** 3 feet

**Weight:** 4 lbs (3)

**Wield:** One Handed

**Cost:** 15 gold pieces

**Availability:** 40%

**Damage:** 1D6

**DMG/SIZ:** Small 1D4/Large 1D8

**Inflict:** Cutting

**Intent:** Its weighted end allows the wielder a +1 to hit and damage versus chain type armors.

The scimitar was developed in the Near and Middle East around the time of the European Crusades (11-13th centuries). Somewhat crescent shaped, the design put more of the blade’s weight near the tip of the blade and thus provided more impact damage upon contact than a sword might otherwise provide. It was especially useful against linked armors such as chain mail and the above +1 to hit and damage versus metal armors reflects this.

## Trident

**Length:** 4-5 feet

**Weight:** 5 lbs (5)

**Wield:** One or Two Handed



**Cost:** 10 gold pieces

**Availability:** 40%; 60% on a coastline

**Damage:** 1D8

**DMG/SIZ:** Small 1D6/Large 1D10

**Inflict:** Thrusting

**Intent:** In the hands of a skilled wielder, a warrior can announce he is trying to “catch” the bladed weapon of an opponent in the tines. If the attack roll succeeds by a number greater than the Hit Dice/Level of the opponent, the blade is caught and with a successful Strength check by the trident wielder the blade weapon can be forced out of the hands of the opponent.

The trident was originally designed as a fisherman’s weapon, with the triple tines of the weapon helping to spear fish despite the refraction caused by light in the water allowing a mistake in the position of the target. It was later used as first an unusual weapon among Roman gladiators and then as a weapon to be found among the crews and marines of ocean going vessels during the later Roman Empire and Dark Ages Europe. The Trident may also be cast as a spear, with a range of 10 feet.

### Whip, Cat O' Nine Tails

**Length:** 6-8 feet

**Weight:** 1 lbs (2)

**Wield:** One Handed

**Cost:** 9 gold pieces

**Availability:** 50%

**Damage:** 1D3

**DMG/SIZ:** Small 1 hit point/Large 1D4

**Inflict:** Mass

**Intent:** The cat o’ nine tails was a weapon of judicial punishment and not really a weapon of war. However, a skilled wielder may bind the arm of an opponent with the lashes of the whip. The whip wielder makes an attack roll after announcing the intent to bind and if the resulting number is equal to or greater than the opponents Armor Class plus their Hit Dice or Level (whichever is greater) then the target’s weapon arm is bound. To be free of the tails, a Strength check by the victim must be successfully rolled.

The cat o’ nine tails is a collection of nine leather straps of 6-8 feet in length wound together at the base to create a handle. They may also have small metal barbs sewn into the ends or sides of the straps to provide additional tearing damage to any target being struck with them. As noted above, it is a instrument of torture and judicial punishment instead of a weapon per se. It may be used to inflict a small amount of damage to a victim as well as bind opponents during melee. However, the cat o’ nine tails is utterly useless against armor and does no damage at all against such.

### Guisarme

**Length:** 7-8 feet

**Weight:** 8 lbs (5)

**Wield:** Two Handed

**Cost:** 15 gold pieces

**Availability:** 50%

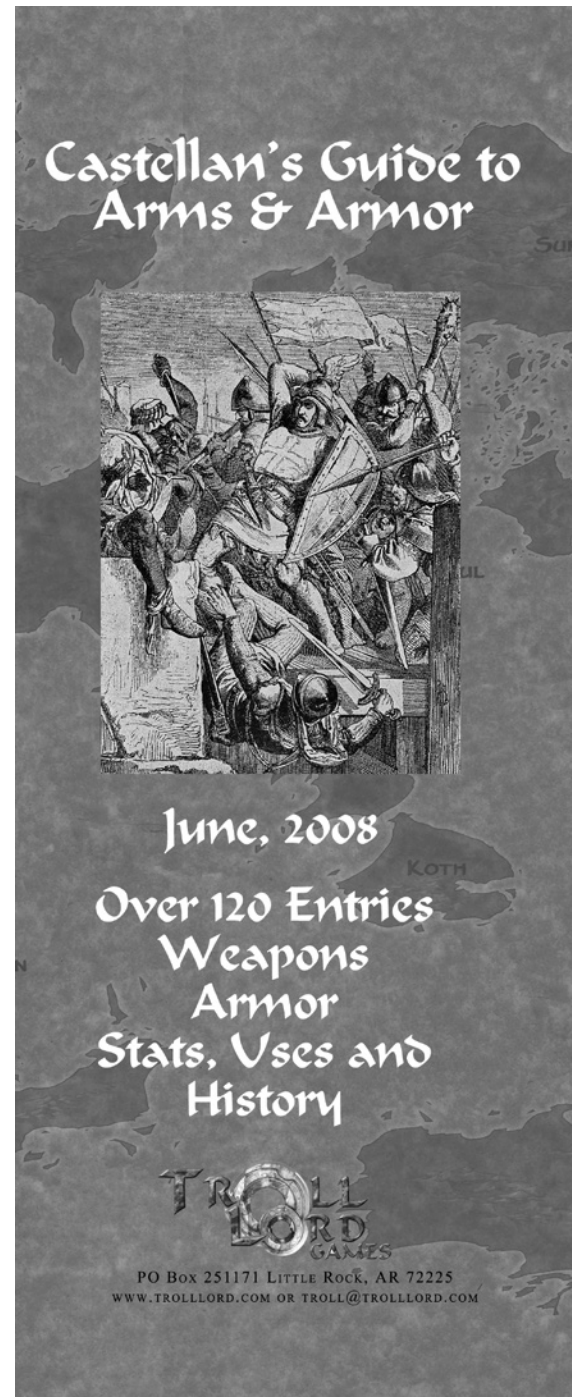
**Damage:** 2D4

**DMG/SIZ:** Small 1D6/Large 2D6

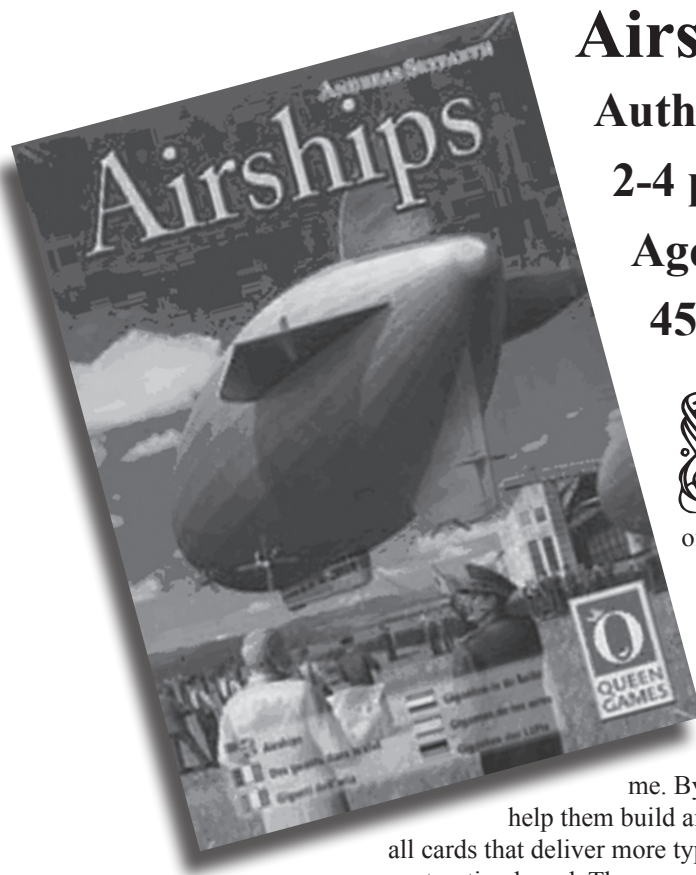
**Inflict:** Cutting, Thrusting

**Intent:** This weapon can be used to unseat a mounted opponent. The wielder may elect in lieu of an attack to attempt such an unbalancing strike by rolling an attack as normal. If a hit is scored, the victim must make a saving throw versus Dexterity or lose their mounting with falling damage determined by the Castle Keeper.

This weapon, also referred to as the gisarme and bisarme, was a pole arm used by the Byzantine Empire in the Dark Ages and Early Medieval period. The guisarme consisted of a long curved blade with a single edge on the concave side and a spear thrusting point opposite the cutting blade. Like the fauchard it may be used to unhorse opponents though it is unwieldy to use to unbalance opponents on foot.







# Airships

**Author: Andreas Seyfarth**

**2-4 players**

**Ages 10+**

**45-60 minutes play time**

I have a good friend, Tom Wham, his cartoons have appeared in this magazine from time to time. For as long as I have known him, he's had a keen interest in historical dirigibles. In the AIRSHIP game, he now has a fun game to play on one of his favorite interests.

From their rules: *The players build an airship company and attempt to score as many victory points as possible through the construction of airships. To do this the players have to acquire various expansion cards, such as Engineers, Financiers, and Engines, which improve their prospects in airship construction.*

The game plays differently every time, which is a huge plus for me. By rolling several different types of dice, the players acquire cards that help them build airships. The hangers, pilots, engines, and pieces of the airships are all cards that deliver more types of dice for the players to throw. The cards you own are placed on your own construction board. These cards tell you what type of dice you can roll. White, red, and black dice have averaging numbers on them. Each card shows the types of dice you can roll and the number you need to roll to acquire that card. When you successfully build an airship, you get that airship card and the points stated on the card. Some of the building cards have points on them as well and when you acquire a financier with points that card helps in the total points, you need for victory.

## Play of the Game

On each construction phase, a player chooses a card from the deck and places it on the larger board. The player can try either to build an airship or acquire a card from the main board. They do this by rolling the appropriate dice as seen on the cards. If they roll the number or higher, listed on the card, they take it and put it on their board. A fun feature of the game is if the attempt fails, the player gets a +1 chip for their board that can be added to any dice roll they wish. Another fun feature is the airship token you get if you are successful in building an airship card. This token can also be used to add a +1 to your dice rolls. You have to use this token quick because it can be taken away from you if someone else builds an airship before your next turn.

## Ending the Game

The game ends in one of two ways. If only one airship card is on each of the four airship-card areas the game is over. Alternatively, if the fourth construction phase of the Hindenburg is completed the game ends. In my twenty plus plays of the game, I've never seen the entire Hindenburg built. Usually, the person that's in the lead in points will build one of the few remaining airships and take the card to end the game.

When the game ends, each player adds up the golden star numbers on their cards and the one with the highest score wins the game. In case of a tie the one with the most airships wins the game.

Summation: The game pieces are well drawn. The play of the game is fast paced and interesting. The choices during the game are many and take some thought. The game is well worth having in anyone's game collection.



# The Angry Gamer

by Some Angry Troll Dude



!@#\*% MODERN WORLD

**I** can't stand the modern world. I need to go Amish. One of my favorite lines from any movie/book ever comes from *Mosquito Coast*. "If it's not washed up on a beach you don't need it." I love that line. It's a great movie too. Harrison Ford takes his family to Central America to start over; giving up all the trappings of the modern world...he thought it was crazy then. He should be writing now!

It's the 24th of September, and power at the TLG offices is out again, third time this month. Once for a week, the second time for a couple of days and they tell us it will be back on this afternoon of today. Well that's all well and good. I know the electric company isn't doing this on purpose. They don't want to spend hours on the phone getting yelled at by people who have been inconvenienced. If it was up to them there would never be another power outage again...ever, of that I'm certain.

What I'm also certain of is that the modern world just irritates me to the max! I get sucked into its gravy train of crap that it shovels my way all day every day. I clocked in early this morning, about 8 in the a.m., but was I working, no, not me. It's that season again (election time) and every idiot on the planet with an opinion about nothing is ranting and raving on the internet (Thanks for this, Mr. Gore!) and getting their message out via the 10,000,000 vehicles of information overload. Message boards, blogs, YouTube, 400 other video upload sites, emails, posting on the news threads and then worse of worse, being picked up by news portals. Oh my sweet lord. When TR ran against Parker he didn't have to worry about every lunatic with a thought shouting out to the world. He and the vast majority of the American citizens were immune to the ramblings of idiots because the idiots had nowhere to go but street corners where they were soon happily beaten with night sticks and tossed in the clink for disturbing the peace...which reminds me, if I see one more #(\*&^#@# movie about bad police officers my head is going to explode! I had the misfortune of watching DeNiro and Pacino's new movie the other day about good cops gone bad AGAIN. I can't wait until the cops in this country get tired of being made the goat of anyone with a bad script and say, "You know what guys, take care of it yourselves." If a man carrying a pointed stick or even a limp banana rushed DeNiro that man would wet himself in abject terror and be the first calling for police protection! That movie was obviously written by someone who had gotten a traffic ticket and was upset because

of it. No doubt he had to step out of the Mercedes he was driving too fast, wrinkle his Armani suite, and flash his Rolex while pulling out his elephant hide wallet to show his expired driver's license! Show me a movie about cops PROTECTING the citizens and I'll show you a blockbuster!! Wake up Holly 'crap' Wood. Can I say DIE HARD—anyway, I forgot my point...something about modern living.

At any rate now, unless you are very, very careful—and no one here at TLG is very careful about anything—then you can get sucked into the maelstrom of fecal material that has become the internet and be forced to listen to or read the ranting of a mad man—no the irony is not lost on the writer of this column—and that is like intellectual death. Thank you modernity.

Bad movies make me say and do things I shouldn't be doing. The computer continually makes me crazed as well. My phone drives me insane. I can't stand the electric locks on my truck. The lights in the house are forever going out. The clock is plugged to the wall. I'll give the icebox a passing grade, but the &\$^#@ icemaker is broke again—which we let sit for two weeks because the wife and I are too cheap to get it fixed. We just went without ice. Then it hit me like a thunderbolt! If somehow I could put water in some type of tray we could make ice in it and use that ice. We tried old tin cans, empty beer bottles, balloons and dice bags. But nothing worked. The magical ice maker was dead. There would never be ice again. The machine could not make it for us so we were done. We gnashed our teeth and pulled our hair but to little avail. Nevertheless, wait, there was a light and we followed it to a cupboard of unused kitchen fecal material and there we discovered two small trays with cup like indentations in them. We filled them with water and waited impatiently for them to change the water to ice. They worked perfectly! There was much rejoicing.

Ice trays. Two weeks to remember that ice trays exist.

What's my point? I don't know. But I'm pretty sure of two things:

1. that electricity makes us weak and stupid and
2. my gun doesn't need electricity!

Now to go sit in my yard and wait for the electricity to come back on!





# Constructing Castle Zagyg

by Steve Chenault & Mark Sandy

**B**uilding a castle, well to say it in the local jargon, it's a gullywasher. That's to say it isn't easy, or rather, it's down right hard. As many of you probably realize and a few of you who don't soon will, we released Gary Gygax's **Castle Zagyg Upper Works** at Gen Con 2008. Bringing this thing together took a whole lot of people doing a whole lot of work. Bringing it together before Gen Con took even more work. Also, it took an unusually large amount of concentration from the Trolls, a thing...concentrating...that we attempt to avoid at all costs. Jeffrey Talanian, Peter "20 Dollar" Bradley, Jason Walton, Mark Sandy, Patrick Nohen, John Browning, Cory M Caserta and myself put in some amazingly hard and long hours to get this put together. I thought I'd open the doors for a few minutes and let folks know the agony and the ecstasy of bringing you Castle Zagyg Upper Works.

To tell this story I'm going to start in the middle. About June 2008 in fact, it was in this month that Jeffrey began turning over the final manuscripts to us. These manuscripts consisted of all the material that he and Gary Gygax wrote and worked on before Gary's passing in March. These manuscripts represent the last projects that he worked on for Troll Lords and in my mind they represent something of his Requiem Mass. We owe a lot to Gary Gygax around here, not least of which is an enduring friendship that spanned the better part of a decade. I hope that our presentation of his work, this final piece of his work, and likely the final piece of work of Gary's TLG will ever work upon, does him proud and leaves you, the loyal gamer, with a kindly thought to that greatest of game designers.

Five books and a sixth of Illustrations, all wrapped up in a nice box: that was the target goal originally set for March of 2008. We missed it, and we knew we had by late 2007 so the retuned schedule of Gen Con seemed only natural. We had already set **StarSiege** for a Gen Con release, another box set, and later in the summer, about June time frame, we added **Towers of Adventure** to it as well. So we knew it was going to be a hard hitting run for our money to get the box set edited, laid out, arted up, printed, and packaged. But we also knew that time can be as ornery as it can be kind and we raced to make it by the show.

*(Important Note: About the time Jeff said he was finished with final edits, this would be June, I began to plan for failure and gave James M. Ward a call about doing a box set for us. He*

*and I worked out some details and he commenced to working. I contracted Jason Walton for some art and bought a cover from him. This was the aforementioned Towers of Adventure.)*

As I said, Jeff began turning over the finished manuscripts in June. He had spent the better part of early 2008 organizing all the City books for CZ and cleaning up tens of thousands of words of written text, bringing it into line with the monetary value system he and Gary finalized in December, as well as bringing all the text into line with C&C and the Castle Zagyg development. This was hard, long, difficult work and Jeff's thirty-seven (product) children slowed him only a little. But by the time he was able to tackle the final edits for CZ UW, Gary had left us and it was April/May. But he trooped through and turned those manuscripts over to us one every half week or so.

As soon as he did that I saved the files and rolled them along to Cory, our non-resident but fantastic editor. Cory knew that we were under the gun and that he had bunches of other editing jobs I had lined up so he had to hit each manuscript hard. This he did. He pummeled those things like a one-eyed boxer! Quick as Jeff would send him another one; he'd return it to me and back to Jeff for final insertion of edits and for Jeff to address editorial comments. This went on through June and July.

In the meanwhile, Peter and Jeff had last year concocted a plan to make each book with a black and white cover. I tend to ignore things I don't understand and so added that bit of desire to that great big pile of desires that come my way. That pile is generally untouched and can be found yonder behind the tool shed. When Mark called in late June and said he had an opening in the printer schedule I shouted to Peter to send me the covers. To that he said, "Err, Steve. What covers? You never approved the ideas of the b/w ones." I asked Peter how fast he could whip out some color covers for the books inside the box. He made some derogatory comments about various and sundry things, and fessed he could do it, but that he wasn't going to like doing it. So I set him on cover number one.

While all this was going on, I finished the layout for the box covers Peter had earlier sent over, arranging text, barcodes, and the like and sent that over to Mark. He printed off the test copies of the wraps that go around the boxes, top and bottom and we bundled them up and off to Diamond State Box here in Little

Rock. Patrick Nehlan runs that show and he took them in and prepared to run some test copies.

Meanwhile I turned my attention to **Towers of Adventure** and **StarSiege** and tried to wrap up **Shades of Mist** and **Crusader 11**. A bit of a flurry later and Peter sent me the cover of what turned out to be book three and I sent him the text for book one to lay out. He then worked on its layout and the cover for book two. About that time, Patrick called and said the top wraps were off by one-thirtyseconds of an inch and that certain lines on the top would fold over the sides and makes the whole look sloppy. Mark started an outside project since there was no UW to jump on yet. I sent him cover three as I knew book three would come soon; being the shortest, Peter would lay it out first and had him get started on that. Sure enough, book three arrived on my desk from Cory to Jeff to me and I sent that over to Peter, who then stopped working on book two layout and cover and started working on layout of book three. I went back to the drawing board to redo all manner of problems that cropped up on my desk, but I could tell from my broken swivel chair that things were getting a little chaotic.

Mark stopped working on the outside job, hammered out the covers for book three, and called with a supply shortage request...paper, ink, and blades for the cutter. Peter called and said he had another cover and the final guts to three, but needed to know what was on book four and Jeff called and asked for the final 22 illustrations in the book of illustrations. I imposed book three and got that over to Mark. Cory was hammering away at editing one or two, Patrick and one of his employees John Browning called and said he had a narrow opening to get these boxes in and done. While I was trying to figure out what the heck Jeff was talking about, Peter sent me the cover for book two he had just finished. I thought THAT'S IT. Perfect cover and commenced to relay out the cover for the boxes and unravel Jeff's request that he had sent in months ago and was looking for now. I shouted to Jason Walton, one of the fastest artists on the face of the earth and asked him if he thought he could belt out some illos I needed for this crazy box set. He said, "Sure Steve, send em over." Boom! The ride was a little more chaotic but we were rolling again.



About this time Jim sent over his first completed manuscript, that being book two (book one has no text). This was early July. I sent it to Cory to edit and told him to fast track this between two Gygax UW books, which he skillfully did. At this point, I saw the great potential for failure so I pulled Peter from UW and asked him to layout a box wrap for the Towers of Adventure and to layout some SS books, which were done but still in need of assembly. Peter complied and did a great cover layout with Jason's art in a snap and sent it back to me in a day or so. I was struggling with juggling all these tasks, making certain that everyone had tasks to do to keep the work flow going. And right now, mid July, I could see the following: Mark cutting and printing book three, Peter working on cover four, layout for two and some SS illos, Cory editing four, Jeff fixing some of one, Patrick waiting for us and me doing layout on the recently turned over towers two and box for UW.

As mid July slipped into late July we were about half way through with nothing and just started on everything. At this point Gen Con loomed and we were looking at a gulf of a whole lot of nothing for the show. I wandered into the Print Shop and talked to Mark for a bit. He kept nodding and saying, uh huh. Could be. Unimpressed with his ability to appreciate the situation I went back to my command module and began chastising everyone to work faster! They couldn't really work faster as they were already working at an insane pace with tremendous hours. But book two came over and we coupled it with book two cover and Mark began printing and cutting. Illustrations came over as did map requests from Jim for Towers. About this time I noticed we were missing a book from SS and gave Josh Chewning a call. He said he had it, but he wouldn't be able to get it to me until the next week as he was on the road. I said fine as we couldn't print it anyway. Cory wrapped five and Jeff wrapped up one and sent that my way and I turned them over to Peter. Peter starts laying out one and doing the cover for five. At which point I asked him what about the cover for one and he said he wasn't comfortable using even a variant of the old one (folio edition) so he wanted to do another, he had already done a sketch and it looked sweet. I put a final on the wraps for the boxes and turned that over to Mark who was printing book two, so he could get started on the box. Those wraps were taken down to Patrick in short order so he could manufacture them.

So July ended with a large truck load of supplies arriving and Mark and I restocking the print shop and about half the jobs done. I started laying out Towers book two that Cory had sent me and getting things ready for Gen Con. I do remember fielding a call from Jason in which he asked about when we were packing for Gen Con and I said something to the effect: "On the way to Gen Con!" He was not amused.

So as we rolled into August things began to get a bit harry. We were finished with two of six UW books, but still had three SS books and three Towers books to wrap. I had already told Mark to drop the runs to 110 so we could manage the whole mess better...

"Don't you think we should try to get a few of all them at the show?" I talked to Mark looking for advice but knowing I wasn't going to get any.



"Sure," was his reply. I doubt even William Wallace's speech would have inspired. He never really gets too excited. I remember going over to the print shop a few months ago. As I approached the doors I could hear both machines thundering away and the familiar sheeeeee shhhhink, sheeeeee shhhhink. It sounded like a true factory. I looked in and couldn't find Mark, but noticed the outside door was open. I wandered outside and there was Mark, sprawled out on an army cot like an old hound dog, sunning himself. Strangely enough, Todd's Boxer was stretched out on the cot with him. I said, "I guess I don't have to ask if you're enjoying the job." Mark laughed and asked if he needed to get up. I said, "Nope. Drive on."

Jim turned in the next manuscript for Tower as I finished laying out the first. I sent this to Cory to edit when Peter send over cover one and book four on the Upper Works project. I scanned book four, prepped the cover and sent these on to Mark, who began cranking out book four, the covers of which he had already printed and printing the covers of book one. I asked him if he was keeping it straight and he remarked that the costumers would let me know. I was unimpressed. So I called Peter, action man at this point as he was working 15 hour days and weekends too and asked where we were on StarSiege. I can't repeat what Peter said, not because it was vulgar but because it was real clever and I can't remember it, but suffice it to say that he hadn't started on it. So I started laying out book two of Towers when book four of SS came in, the one Josh hadn't finished. He also asked me if the broadsides were going in the box. What broadsides? We don't have them yet via email he said. I sent them. Ug Email. Cursed email.

Patrick called later that week and said the hot glue gun was down and that he would have to assemble all the boxes by hand (UW, Towers and the outside job we were doing earlier). As Peter turned over book one and started on cover five I finished book two of Towers and sent him book one of SS. He really wanted to lay this out as he had a cool design in mind...and he didn't fail, SS is one of the best layout jobs he's done...at that point I gathered art from Jason and sent it to Peter and Jason sent me even more, the missing 22 illos. These went to Jeff for content editing and tower three arrived from Cory which I began laying out.

Jim asked me for my articles for **Crusader 12** due out after Gen Con. I'm sure I said something but it didn't involve "I have them done." (*He actually promised to get them written during Gen Con. I was unimpressed. JMW*) Patrick called to let me know his right hand man John Browning had his hand broken in four places when a conveyer belt scooped it up and pulled it between a support rod and roller. Later I found out John's thumb was pulled back and over the top of his hand, breaking it and his palm. This slowed the box making down considerably.

So I hollered at Peter about covers for SS books and what we were going to do with them. We had a general idea but didn't know what color or texture we wanted. He shouts back WHITE WHITE WHITE. Not me I can't be that easy so he lays me out a simple, elegant frame and I flesh them out with titles and logos and the like. Sending these to Mark to print, Peter turns over cover five and book one of UW, finishes book one of Star Siege

and I finish book three of towers. Mark is printing something, I have no idea what and every thing seems to be going around and around in my head. All I can see are people opening boxes of StarSiege and pulling out books with covers of one game and the guts of others.

Suddenly it was the weekend before Gencon. We still had towers one to do, SS one, two and three to go and book five for UW and the illustration book. The last leg's the longest they say and we double-timed. Working all weekend we did layouts, covers, printing, cutting, and a whole lot of running back and forth. On Monday (departure date Tuesday), I sent Mark Crusader 11 and he started up on those. Patrick called with the hand crafted boxes and I shot down to pick them up and get him paid. Mark began printing StarSiege books and stacking them. Peter commenced on the final maps for the Towers book and sent those to me. On Monday night I laid out the final bit for Towers and on Tuesday a few hours before kick-off Mark printed and cut them.

Tuesday afternoon found me, Mark and Kim Hartsfield (who many of you met at Gen Con) looking at mountains of books, 100 copies each of a dozen or so and bunches of maps and inserts. Like an old deck hand (he was in the navy) Kim started packing boxes with the contents.

At that point Peter called me and said he was hitting the road early in the morning. I told him I would meet him there on Wednesday. He paused and said, "Oh yeah, something I meant to ask you. Did you get the dice for StarSiege?"

ARGHHHH!



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# TALES OF THE RINGS of CORASS

## THE AIHRDIAN CHRONICLES BEING THE 11<sup>TH</sup> NARRATIVE OF THE LAY OF THE LOTHIAN PRINCES'

*The Elven Warlord, Meltowg-Aet-Ohd, Prince of Lothian, has wandered the world in the Shadow of the Long Centuries. Bitter and filled with rage his life is one of unceasing war against the tower of Aufstrag and its great horned god. In his travels he learned of the Castle of Spires, its guardian Melius the Wise and its location in the Twilight Wood. He learned too that it held the gates to other worlds, where his kin had fled to and now dwelt. Returning from his travels he gathered with his small band on the Avishean Ridge, that is the Blacktooth in the Vulgate, where stood the Ineng Tree, from whose roots flowed a small creek of healing water. In drinking the waters, roads were opened for him, paths that led to the world's past. He has learned from wince came the Sentients and the Trolls. He has learned too that the Ineng Tree itself was a Troll of old who had grown roots into the stone and rock of the earth. He followed the Troll's tale, from its beginning at the feet of the All Father to the high roads of its life upon the feet of Gardrim Mountain where a great host of Sentients had gathered.*

**S**edgwick stopped his horse on a small hillock; he looked back, peering up the long low ridge, along the banks of the river, searching for that ancient tree where his Master lay in a dreamy sleep. The distance proved greater than his vision. He looked for a long while, into the faint and now failing light of the Winter Dark. The snow was deep upon the ground; the Shroud of Darkness broiled overhead, covering the world in a grim silence. His men filed past him leaving a long, dark trail in the snow. They rode single file, paying little heed to the world around them. Skilled rangers flanked them watching the forest with careful eyes. Nothing beyond the world of sorcery could slip past. The men were heavily armored, girded for a war they knew they could not win, but would not quit. Iron breast plates, shields and helms; swords, axes, long wolf spears, great bows; all this they carried, placing greater value in these weapons than all the gold in the world. The Vale Knights mingled with the mercenaries with little regard for status for as is known to all who bare the trappings of war, all men are equal on the field of battle.

Meltowg-Aet-Ohd saw a similar scene. Where his mind wandered there were no men, only a great host of trolls and they too bore the armaments of steel and iron. Deep in the recesses of Mount Gardrim Ineng had built a fortress and this fortress he stocked with all manner of creations that his hand cast from his mind's eye. He learned from the dwarf Upack to fashion things and this knowledge he passed on to the other Sentients who wandered to his fortress upon hearing the mournful note of his Horn of Gardrim. For this horn he fashioned for and of himself and he filled it with his own longing, his misspent desires of youthful lust that had wasted upon the banks of long ago. The Horn of Gardrim was massive and curled about itself and made music beyond anything the world had hitherto seen. The notes it sounded called to the other Sentients who were of a like mind and they came to him, some of their own accord others without knowing why or where they were traveling until after they arrived.

So it was that some time after Upack had fled Ineng's dungeons a great host of Sentients, twisted beyond design, filled with rage and lust, gathered, and looked to Ineng for leadership. For many seasons he stood and watched the wayward creatures come to his deep valleys and take root in the ground and along the high slopes. Some took to the slow moving glacial creek that ran the length of the valley, others to the rocky precipices that overlooked the whole region. To each his own design, for the Sentients of old as well as the trolls that came after, was ever, as they remain, an independent minded creation. The deep snows came and then melted off and still these Sentients came to the long valley, until at last it filled with a great forest of them.

Ineng had pondered the meaning of this gathering, but he could find none that he could use to his own design. So without thinking he took the horn up again and blew another mournful note upon it and it sounded long and deep in the valley and carried out and beyond the mountains and into the wide world. So great was the sound of the horn on this, its second note that it carried into the far reaches of the world lingering there for centuries without count. It is this note that the eldritch goblins seek, for they tell the stories of its passing and how it lingered in the deep places of the world and to find it and capture it brings the fortunate one knowledge of the trolls and how to control them.

Indeed upon hearing this second note a great chorus rose in the valley. The sound of rustling leaves and creaking branches, of bending bowls, and of the ground being torn and overturned. Ineng looked down to see the valley alive with sentients desirous of what he commanded. They began to shape themselves, first one, then the other, taking on the form of the All Father, or the closest proximity that they could manage. Taking shape they turned their minds to Ineng's clothing and armaments and in this he saw only mischief. He stood upon the high walk of his doorstep and shouted down to them, calling them by their name, that given to them by Upack's people. Trolls. "Trolls you are and trolls you must forever be." With that they

took on the guise of a race of peoples. But Ineng saw the chance for greater mischief and for reasons only the discontented could ever understand he set about teaching them the trade of making.

Some took to this new trade readily, clothing themselves in armaments. They labored away at impromptu forges, constructed wherever they found purchase. Some rose to prominence in the crafting of certain items, others learned different trades, each to his own design. In this way the first troll society was born, not unlike that dwarvish world that Ineng had seen in the dwarvish villages on the far western slopes of the mountains. There they lived for many years, despoiling the valley and spreading the filth of their labors along the slopes. They constructed walls along the valley rim, dammed the river in many places, built low roofed houses of stone, rooted up long stretches of granite and rock, tunneled, and minded for ores until at last their labors weighed down the land and earth.

For years without count the trolls lived and ruled in this valley. They came into contact with other creatures, giants, and beasts of wild abandon. Some ventured from the valley and were lost to their kin. Others traveled in groups and created settlements in far distant places. They began to propagate and their numbers grew. The wealth of Ineng grew great beyond measure and his vaults filled with treasures worked in wood and stone, iron and steel, gold and platinum, lined with jewels and other manufactories. He built a long stair, steep and winding to the mountain's top where the Horn of Gardrim stood. And this ledge he called the Morg Tul, which men after called the Mournful Note. Here he set that great horn upon a stand of gold. He was ever the greatest of the trollish smiths and ruled the trolls in despite.

In time the hammering, digging, as well as the torrents of water redirected into new waterways caused a great racket in those quiet days of the world's beginning, carrying even into the deep places of the earth. The noise entered the distant slumbers of an ancient dragon and woke him from his melancholy dreams. This wyrm, a dragon of old, bore the weight of eons upon his back. He was tired of the world and spent many long years in deep slumbers, resting upon the gold veins that lined his home. His dreams were sweet, pictured memories of his youth where the skies were clear and dark and his flights carried him over great regions of the world without disturbance. But now the banging of creation bore into him and he woke in a foul mood and temper. For a great while he listened to the strange racket, though he could not place its origin. At last it began to grate on him and remind him that he had not eaten in a great while. The hunger gnawed at him even as the sound echoed in his mind as a constant ringing.

At last he crawled forth from his den and the more he came to feel the sharp pang of the fresh mountain air the more rage came over him. The heat of his breast melted the stone it touched as he barreled from the entrance in an explosion of debris. His passage knocked out great chunks of the mountain as he took to the air. His wings unfolded, reluctantly bending, popping, and cracking like so much boiled leather. His tail snapped in the cloudy air and struck lightning from the sky, forks of which arced down and struck the mountain side and the thunder of it rolled on and over the valleys.

The sound of the dragon's coming was utterly new to the trolls. They heard it but could not place it. Some had seen dragons and been hounded by them, but not for many years. But none had seen a dragon in its full wrath, nor one so ancient. The sound caused them to pause and they looked up. Many of them, girded in their armaments, stood boldly forth, ready for what would come. Others,

more fearful stepped back, not knowing what would come. Ineng labored still at his forge for his hammer blows shook the earth with such sound that he could hear nothing of the dragon's wrath.

In the valley beyond the trolls looked to the skies as they saw the clouds torn asunder, churned like so much smoke as the dragon's rage burst through them. The wyrm came to the valley like a thunderbolt, his great maw opened wide, blasting a raging flame that scorched the earth in a broad swath. The trolls fell in dismay. Some died instantly, burnt to cinder, others caught afire lit up the darkened valley floor, others fled into the hills. The dragon swept up and out of the valley, circled the tall mountain and came back for another pass. This time he ran the length of the river and blasted it with his fiery breath vaporizing it instantly. As great gouts of steam rose into the air and the river flooded back into its basin the dragon rose up, high above the valley. Hovering for a moment he watched the trolls fleeing pell mell up and down the valley. He dropped then, like a stone. His speed grew faster than sound and he burst onto the valley in an explosive sonic blast that created more turmoil in the air and utter terror on the ground.

This last great calamity of sound found its way into Ineng's dungeons and startled him from his labors. Quieting the anger of his forge he listened. For awhile the blood rushed through his ears, pounding his mind, but at last it calmed and he could hear the lamentations of the trolls beyond his tunnels. Fear gripped him at first for little made trolls flee, but this soon passed and he lusted for what would come. His helm he took off the wall placed it on his head and his sword he took up, slashing it around him in a cutting fashion. He strode from the halls not knowing what to expect.

When Ineng came out onto the long walk of his doorstep he saw a scene of chaos. The valley was filled with steams, clouds of it flowing up the slopes of the ridges like water down a hill. The river was a raging torrent, the dams blasted and gone. Stone houses were in shambles and the forges of his trolls destroyed or burning. Here and there the bodies of a few trolls lay, smoldering like burnt trees. And on the edges of the valley or scattered about it in shocked dismay were hosts of trolls, some fighting unseen enemies, others wailing their death chants, still others standing still, watching in amazement. Everywhere there was mayhem.

Ineng was amazed, but not dismayed. He could not see so he turned, climbing up the long stairs to the mountain's top, even to the Morg Tul and he took up the Horn of Gardrim and blasted upon it. But this time he did not sound his notes to the heavens but rather he directed his rage into the valley. The sound of it thundered from the great horn and it shook the mountains top so that snow and ice cascaded in small avalanches to the earth below. The valley shook and rumbled at the force of his blow even as the fogs and mists were dispelled, scattering to the winds. He looked out over the empty valley to see the maelstrom of chaos, the debris of battle lay everywhere. The last of the trolls fled into the hinterlands.

"How now?" He shouted. "How now has this come to pass?" As he spoke, he saw the wyrm, lying in coils upon the far ridge. It was staring at him through half closed lids, its lips curled up over its fangs, hung on a jagged chunk of bone, made it seem as if it were snarling. Steam rose from all about the great beast as it melted the snow it chose as a bed and smoke drifted from its nostrils and snout.

Ineng approach cautiously. He had seen dragons before. Picked over their dead carcasses, but he had never fought one, nor even faced a living one in anger. He came before the dragon, standing motionless as a tree.



"What manner of beast art thou, bark-skin?" The dragon at last breathed. "You have a smell about you that is familiar, of the trees the Father likes so very much. But you don't act like a tree, rather like a beardingling or a mockery of one."

"I am named Ineng and I was Sentient before you were a hatchling dragon. I am master here and master of the Language and I have remade myself so that my roots no longer break the earth but command it. I am lord of this valley and king of this mountain. I rule an army of trolls."

"Innnneengggg." Long and low the dragon hissed the troll's name. "Your army has left you. Your valley in ruins and your mountain is . . . inviting."

Ineng knew fear in that moment for he saw in the dragon's eyes the malice and hatred for him. The echo of his horn lingered in the still places of the dragon's heart and filled the creature with the lust for destruction. In addition, the echo sounded in Ineng's own soul and he came to know the dragon's power, great beyond measure, and a pillar of strength unstoppable. And Ineng knew that to fight him was to invite death. He looked about him at the ruin of his kingdom and saw that all of his people had fled, leaving him to death's final fall. He cursed them quietly, laying a doom upon them that echoed Upack the dwarf's curse that lay upon his own brow.

"I cannot fight you dragon. You have given me fear and I do not want to die."

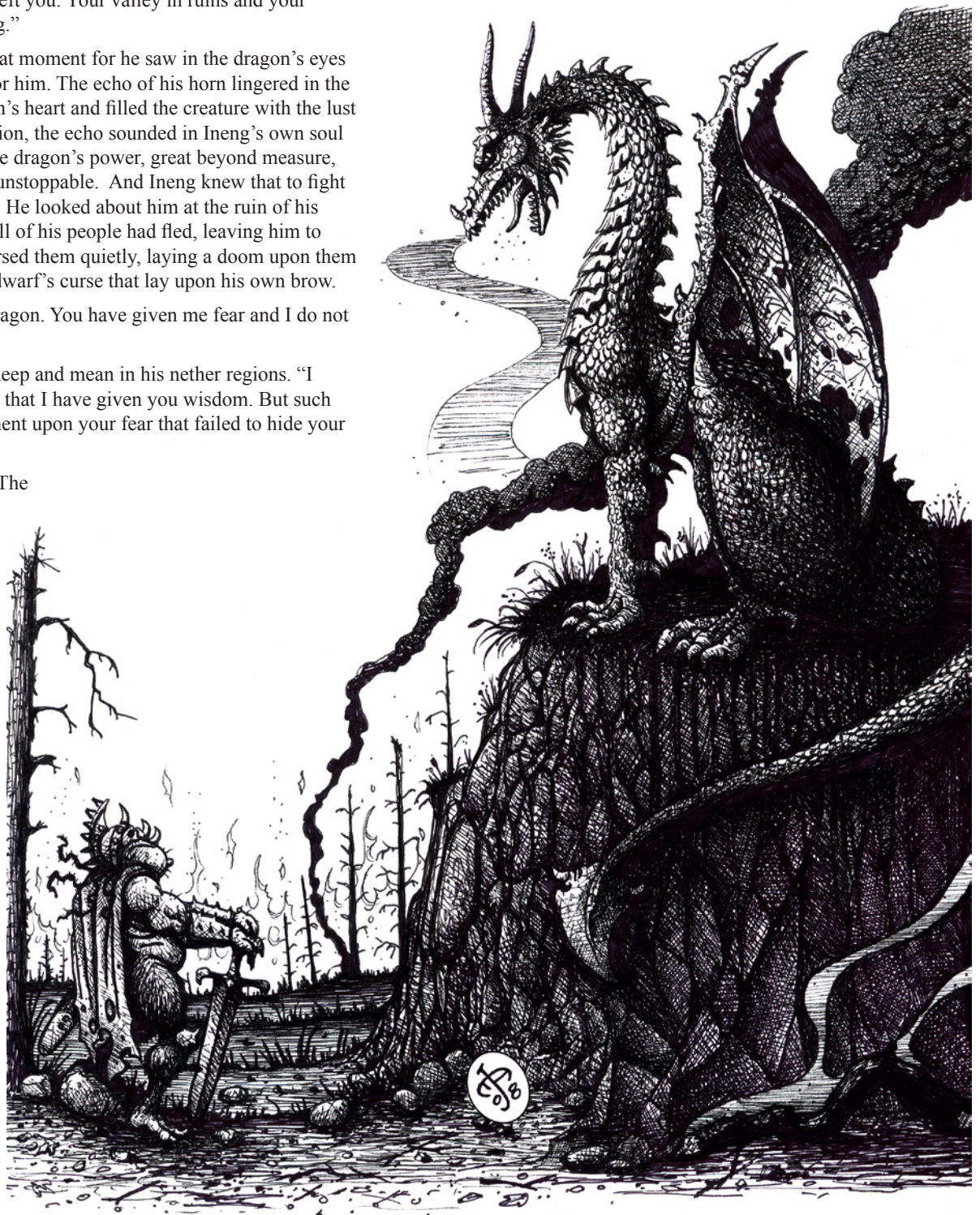
The wyrm growled, deep and mean in his nether regions. "I could lie to you and say that I have given you wisdom. But such a lie would be an ornament upon your fear that failed to hide your shame."

"What may I keep?" The troll bowed his head in sorrow and a great exhaustion came over him as he knew he was defeated.

"What you carry."

The troll looked at his hands. His right hand was empty as was his left. His helm and sword he wore, and that was all. He looked back at his caverns and dungeons, beyond the doorstep to the heights of the Morg Tul. There he saw the Horn of Gardrim, slight in the distance. He turned then to the dragon. He waited as if looking for his speech. At last he turned and left the valley, wandering into the east.

The wyrm watched him leave and even after the troll vanished he watched the horizon. Days passed that turned into weeks then months. The snows of a new winter fell before the dragon roused himself. He took flight and for some time visited terror upon the dwarves who dwelt still upon the western slopes of those mountains. He scattered that folk and feasted until he could eat no more. At last he returned to the caverns of Ineng and vanished into the darkness. In time of years the valley changed and the ruins of the trolls vanished into the rock and soil. The Morg Tul lay undisturbed and the entrance to the caverns a place of dread silence.



# TRIBUTE TO ROGUE'S GALLERY – CITY DWELLERS

By JOE DAMIANI

Fleshing out those pesky NPC's can be a pain, especially the unplanned recurring individuals. To help in a pinch, we present the following individuals to help you out.

## NAME: MIKON DABON "TRUTHSEER"

This NPC makes his living supporting troubled merchants in an urban setting. Where a merchant has been "taken" by a party of adventurers through spells or abilities, he will be often called in as a negotiator should that group return for trade. His skills and abilities have to do with the detection and counter to the use of charms, beguiling, or enhanced smooth talking by parties more interested in loot than fairness. When called in to support a merchant in need, the city watch is notified and sends support squads to the area should any trouble arise.

Mikon is an Elven character with light brown hair and piercing grey eyes that give characters the feeling that their soul is laid bare before his gaze. His hair is neatly tied back and his robes are meticulously clean; even on rainy and muddy days. His clothing is that of a wealthy merchant with conservative colors and a prominently displayed holy symbol at his neck. He is a cleric of a lawful good deity of justice and honesty common in the game region. As son of a master merchant, he learned some additional skills not typical to those of a clerical nature.

*Mikon (He is an 8th level lawful good cleric whose vital stats are HP 38, AC 12. His primary attributes are wisdom and dexterity. His attributes are strength 11, intelligence 12, wisdom 16, dexterity 10, constitution 9 and charisma 16. He wears a suit of +2 magical leather armor and carries a +1 mace.*

*Typical Spells: Level 0 – (5) – Detect Evil, Detect Chaos, Detect Magic (x2), First Aid. Level 1 – (5) – Cure Light Wounds, Command, Protection from Evil, Sanctuary, Sound Burst. Level 2 – (3) – Augury, Hold Person, Speak with Dead. Level 3 – Cure Serious Wounds, Dispel Magic, Locate Object. Level 4 – (2) – Discern Lies, Tongues.)*

**Special Defenses:** His natural Elven abilities are enhanced by a +10 bonus to resist any type of charm or spell effect that would impair his ability to negotiate in fairness.

**Master Negotiator:** Mikon is skilled in the art of discussion and agreement to terms in a business transaction. For him, negotiation is a class skill where he adds his level to an attribute check.

Negotiation is settled through a Charisma Attribute check against a Challenge Level equal to a defender charisma roll. Most merchants tend to purchase items at 50% and sell at 100% earning a living on the difference.

## NAME: LINUS D'ABREAU

### "LINUS THE RATTER"

This NPC has an establishment in a poor industrial area within the city region. His establishment consists of a small barn like structure with only half of the building entirely closed off from the elements. The remaining half is open sided with the roof providing protection from rain and sun.

The open section of has a series of kennels filled with short legged dogs barking terribly when a visitor enters the area. The filth and smell from the animals are unmistakable but otherwise the animals seem well tended. There are mounds of equipment including cages, traps, leather sacks and nets piled about the area.

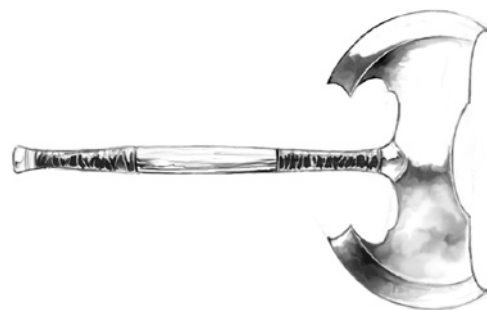
Linus D'Abreau is a slightly pale, thin human who wears the clothes of a workman in addition to a leather vest. The vest itself is remarkable due to the number of pockets and tool fasteners that allow Linus to be continuously prepared should he be called on to execute his trade. At any time he will have snares, traps, twine, and small tools required for eradicating any vermin infestation.

He is a man of few words stopping obviously of lower class who has a deep, gruff voice and a habit of replying "um-hmmm" before uttering a word. When he speaks, it is usually one word answers while he pauses to stroke the neck or feed one of his many rat killing dogs. Do to the nature of his craft, he will not immediately trust

Of note to those characters who are inclined to utilize poison, Linus has a side business supplying these types of unsavory wares to the more questionable residents of the town. Due to his use of poisons in his regular business, he is able to avoid any legal complications. The local thieves and assassin's guild will refer those in good standing and otherwise any PC's will have to perform their own investigations to find this source.

Linus can provide most common or uncommon poisons but nothing rare or extremely expensive.

*Linus (He is a 3rd level lawful evil human rogue whose vital stats are HP 9, AC 12. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity and constitution. His attributes are strength 10, intelligence 12, wisdom 10, dexterity 14, constitution 12 and charisma 8. He carries a +1 Dagger coated with venom (Save vs. poison at -5 or lose 3d6).*





# From The Dens

As many of you have probably heard Gygax Games has withdrawn all licenses from Troll Lord Games. This includes Gygaxian Fantasy Worlds, Gord the Rogue, King of England King of France, C&C Adventures as well as Castle Zagyg. There is no need to go into reasons or try to understand the current direction that all this is going. Its with us now and I would rather not dwell upon things that could have been.

It was a great previlige to work with Gary these past 10 years. He was a great business partner and an even better friend. We lived through some harrying moments together and had many a great time. We were something of kindred spirits Gary and I, both meat and potatoes men so to speak. I cannot tell you how much fun he brought to this business, and is probably a large reason I stayed in it. I was lost for many months after his passing and stood a bit directionless I think. I struggled to come to grips with what TLG and Gary legacy should be, what should TLG do to honor this man and our friendship. I knew that his steady hand at the helm was gone and didn't know what that meant for us here or me personally, but it came to me. At LGGC IV in June, only a few months after his passing. I was giving an interview for a local show (shout out to Kevin!) and while babbling on about Gary it struck me that his legacy is tied to TLG in that it is ours to honor him and remind people of the man he was, not necessarily the gamer, but the man who was behind the games. Gary was kind and generous, even in his temper. He was a good person, honest and forthright. He didn't speak with two thoughts, but with only one. His tremendous mirth shared space with his volcanic temper. He was quick to anger, quicker to forgive. Gary was a good man. By any stretch. He was a good man.

I am honored to have shared a plate at his table.

Gail Gygax, his wife, is heading up the Gygaxian enterprises now. She has always been a very gracious host to everyone from TLG and to me in particular. I enjoyed many a hearty meal at her table. For all those past kindnesses I thank her.

This is a note from Gail:

*"A fond farewell from Gail Gygax:*

*I want to thank all at Troll Lord Games for the joy, laughter, and support they gave my late husband these past eight years. Many of you are wondering what is in store for various worlds created by Gary. To that end, I have, with TLG's good wishes and blessings, embarked on a new journey.*

*Gygax Games will now take up the mantle as the vehicle for the continuation of Gary's unfinished works, plus the Lejendary Adventure™, Castle Zagyg™, and Gygaxian™ Fantasy Worlds product lines. There are lots of fun surprises ahead!*

*This does not preclude Gygax Games from working the Troll Lord Games and I hope to do so in the future. To that end, I look forward to seeing everyone in Lake Geneva in the summer of 2009 for the convention!*

*So to Steve, Davis, Mark and Peter – I thank you."*

And a thanks to Gail Gygax and all the kindness she has shown.

There's lots of work to do here at TLG. The C&C game hasn't even entered a complete stage yet as the CKG isn't finished. Tons of supplements, monster books, game aids and adventures are waiting for the light of day and need developing. There's much to do and we've got to get to doing it. Siege Engine is on the cusp of being born and we are working on a Swords and Sorcery brand as well. We've strengthened our partnership with James M. Ward, Tom Wham and other designers...are you reading this Mr. Kask?...and look forward to a very busy time in the months to come.

I hope you stay along for the ride.

Steve Chenault, October, 2008

# MONSTERS OF AIHRDE

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

*The world of Aihilde spins upon an earth-like axis of ancient civilizations where good and evil have struggled for countless years. It is a world bearing the markings of its past; where ancient evils slumber, stained with the power of eldritch wizardry; where gods dwell in bejeweled halls of wonderment, worshiped by men and women of all creeds; where dragons live in great dens of heaped treasure; where the new stands upon the ruins of the old in beds of ancient glory. Here, kingdoms have risen and fallen, ground to dust by war, famine, plague or time. Aihilde is a world reborn, and in the After Winter Dark heroes tread in iron, shod boots and wizards lean on crooked staffs to plunder the buried wealth and power of the ages. Here, the eternal struggle goes on, age after age, for Aihilde is a world of adventure, of undaunted heroes, untainted by the decadent philosophies of those meek who suffer in the shadows of lesser men. For here, the stone columns of history are wiped clean, awaiting the bold to carve their mark and gain entry to the halls of immortality.*



## COBLYNAU

**NO. APPEARING:** 1-10

**SIZE:** Small

**HD:** 3(d4)

**MOVE:** 10 ft., 30 ft. (fly)

**AC:** 14

**ATTACKS:** Blow gun (1d2 + poison), or by weapon (1d4 points of damage)

**SPECIAL:** Dusk Vision, Magic Stone, Poison, Spell-like Abilities

**SAVES:** M/P

**INT:** High

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral

**TYPE:** FEY

**TREASURE:** 5

**XP:** 70 +3

**T**he cobylnau are creatures that have long been associated with the world of fey. They are small creatures, ranging only about two feet in height. A wide head resembles a frog, and caps their thin torsos. They have wide, luminous yellow-orange eyes, and a small mouth lined with needle sharp teeth. A rash of feathers, long and colorful, crowns its head. When they become agitated, the feathers straighten and lay flat, covering their heads, neck, and shoulders. They have short but powerful legs and arms with lemur-like toes and fingers. Aside from their faces, palms and feet they are covered by dark fur, reddish brown, tan, and the like. They generally wear simple clothes, smocks, pants, long shirts and the like. They carry weapons, picks and hammers predominantly.

Cobylnau prefer to live in dark, cool places. Caves are common homes, but they far prefer the roots of large trees where

they construct elaborate dens of multiple tunnels and rooms. They are expert miners and are able to dig in almost any terrain. They are also found in caves and on rare occasions in the deep grasses of plains where they weave warrens from the grass. Adults farm out young ones to relatives. They do not mate for life, but rather travel in tight extended family groups that usually consist of cousins, nephews, and nieces. They live long lives, counting their age in centuries and not years.

These creatures are very secretive, keeping to themselves and associate with no other creatures unless pressed. They despise other fey, such as pixies, sprites, and grigs, finding them flighty and bothersome. They do not have any love for any of the demi-humans either. They are industrious in their own fashion, building and expanding their warrens, but they do not lend a hand to others unless pressed or given a great reason to do so.



**Combat:** Coblynau are not normally combative creatures. They avoid battle whenever they can. However when forced to fight they use their many spell like abilities to confound and confuse their enemy while they attempt to escape or kill them. They always attempt to lead pursuers away from the dens. They also use their blowguns to effect if given the opportunity. Their blowguns are very valuable, constructed only from the bones of unicorns, pegasus or other magical creatures.

**Magic Stones:** Once each day a coblynau can enchant a stone, giving the stone the temporary ability to dispel magic. He does this at a challenge level of 5. It takes the coblynau two rounds to enchant a stone and it will only last for 24 hours or for one application. If the stone is used successfully, or unsuccessfully, it loses its magical properties.

**Poison:** They are skilled herbalists, and if in their own environment they are able to locate the necessary ingredients to create poisons, some simply harmful, others deadly. They always carry a small bag of a variety of poisons on them. Consult the chart in the **Monsters & Treasure** on page 127 and roll a d6 to determine which type of poison they have. They are very fond of blow guns and almost always carry these with a plentiful supply of darts.

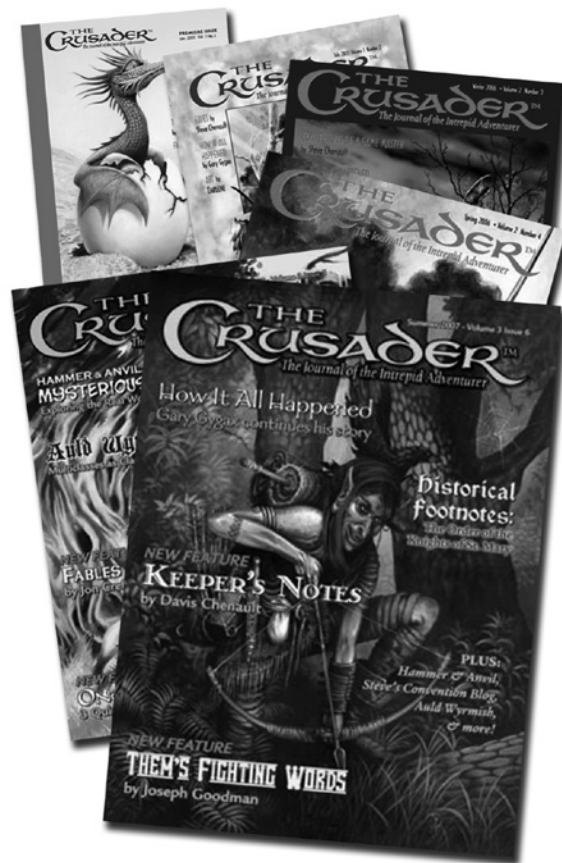
**Spell-like Abilities:** Coblynau can use the following abilities 3 times a day: animal messenger, freedom of movement, fly, invisibility, meld into stone, pass without trace, ventriloquism.

### Coblynau In Aihilde

*The coblynau are ancient creatures, coming to Aihilde in the Days before Days with the first of the Val-Eahrakun. The coblynau are not numerous, nor have they ever been so, for though they are slow to die, they do not breed often. Indeed many will go untold years without ever seeing any of their kindred. They are found throughout the world of Aihilde, but prefer the deeper jungles and forests of the south and central regions of the world.*

*They are very intelligent creatures, and are able to pass their memories down from generation to generation, so that even the very young are sometimes very wise. Many of the coblynau rate their wealth by their knowledge however, and they guard it jealously. They often keep the choicest of their memories and wisdoms for themselves, sharing them with their kin only for a price. They are able to pass on their memories to other species, but often only as vague images and thoughts. Many sages seek such creatures for answers to their undiscovered mysteries; but the price is often too high or perilous as the coblynau if angered or insulted may send its memories to a victim in such a way as to drive them mad. In this case the victim must make a successful intelligence save or suffer the effects of the insanity spell.*

*Wizards see them as familiars, as once bound, they are true to their word. They prize their ability to create magical stones as well, for many wizards use the coblynau's power to their own advantage in their sorcerous endeavors.*



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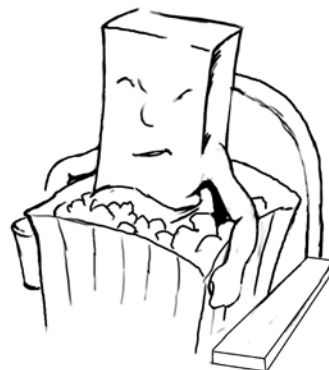
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