

MONGOOSE PUBLISHING PRESENTS

• Signs & Portents 85 • October 2010 • MGP 5585 •

# PS Signs & Portents

Also This Month: Conan - Gambling in the Hyborian Age • RuneQuest II - Adventures • News - Continued OOP Sale

Michael Moorcock's

# ELDRIC OF MELNIBONÉ

OUT NOW

# COMING THIS ISSUE

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# Editorial



So it's winter... long, cold, dark winter. Apparently in the UK we are forecast a very rough winter with lots of snow. Snow I like... this stupid sideways rain and bitter wind I don't enjoy!

OK ... rant over! On the plus side, before this beautiful English weather got so dire, we at Mongoose did get to have our annual day out... read all about it later in this issue.

Other than that the past month at Mongoose Towers has been pretty standard... long hours, lots of hard work and a ton of books out the door to the printers... awesome! Hopefully by next issue I shall have a few announcements for you!

Have a great month...

Charlie

# Credits

## Editor

Charlotte Law

## Managing Director

Matthew Sprange

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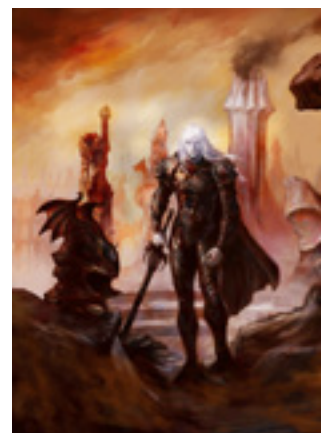
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# Mongoose News

By Matthew Sprange

## Corporation Open Day

Mongoose is once again throwing the doors of its HQ open to host Corporation Day!

This is a free to attend event based at our Swindon offices, with games of Corporation running throughout the day. Whether you are an experienced operative or just want to try the high-octane cyberpunk RPG for the first time, you are more than welcome.

As a special treat, we will not only have copies of the recently released Incorporated Volume 1 on sale, but also some very, very, very advance copies of The Mind Unbound, the brand new Comoros sourcebook that won't be appearing on general release until next year!

The Mongoose stall will also be open with all our usual goodies, and our staff will be on hand for you to get the lowdown on our forthcoming releases, and maybe some snippets of the forthcoming State of the Mongoose - if you want to be in the know, then this is the place to be!

You can find directions to our offices here;

<http://www.mongoosepublishing.com/pdf/officemap.pdf>

Doors open at 9am and we expect the day to finish around 6pm. It is completely free to attend, and we can guarantee you will have a great day's worth of gaming.

These are two of the games that will be running;

### Last Stand at the Panama Canal

Western Federation troops have all but claimed the region around the Panama Canal. The last line of defence is a band of battle weary guerrilla soldiers whose supplies and moral are rapidly diminishing. This area holds great tactical significance to the Federation and Comoros know this only too well. A specialist Division has been dispatched to help the guerrillas hold the line and prove to the Federation once again, that might does not make right.

### The Thief of Souls

Agent, this mission will take you deep into the heart of enemy territory, into the very heights of a rival Spire. Your access to resources will be curtailed, the enemy will think to blunt your fangs by taking your armaments. Fools, we trained you better than they can imagine; your mind is itself your greatest weapon. It is fitting then that the objective of your mission is to steal back one of our greatest minds, the cached psyche matrix of Agent Chiemeka Sesay, stolen from the Itoma Xenjin resurrection centre on Luna three days ago.

See you there!



# Extra News

# SALE

## OUT OF PRINT

Here at Mongoose we are planning oodles of new miniatures games for a 2011 release - and that means it is time to clear the warehouse of lots of boxes of older, now out of print goodies.

Our loss being your gain, we are proud to present a range of older Mongoose products, all at very keen prices that are going to keep you in gaming goodness for months to come!

Items on sale include;

SST Grizzly and Cougar Exosuits

Battlefield Evolution box sets

RuneQuest 1st edition

D&D 4th edition supplements

Babylon 5 RPG

2000AD graphic novels

Prices start from just 99p!

# The Awesometer

Generic events that get our hearts racing (or sometimes not) each and every month!

# AWESOME

Zee Twenty Three's

# TOP 5

Future Countries to Visit

- Russia – Rich in history and architecture with a nice pinch of COLD!
- Canada – Rich in safety and amazing views with a nice pinch of COLD!
- Netherlands – Rich in canals and sex shops with a nice pinch of Brownies!
- Egypt – Rich in ancient history and the Pyramids with a nice pinch of Lawlessness!
- Japan – Rich in art and technology with a nice pinch of public transport!



I'm a huge Fighting Game fan and this month see's the release of BlazBlue Continuum Shift for the Xbox 360 and PS3, anyone with an ounce of interest in fighting games should pick this badboy up on the 29th Oct.



Microsofts Kinect is out next month and while most people in the office cant wait, the buzz about this hardware is really grating... lets hope it delivers.

# GRUESOME

# The Timeline

A visual guide to get your tails wagging for future Mongoose releases

October: Wrath of the Magnamund Bestiary

November: Wraith Recon blown wide open

December: Cyb



# TRAV

# Quote of the Month

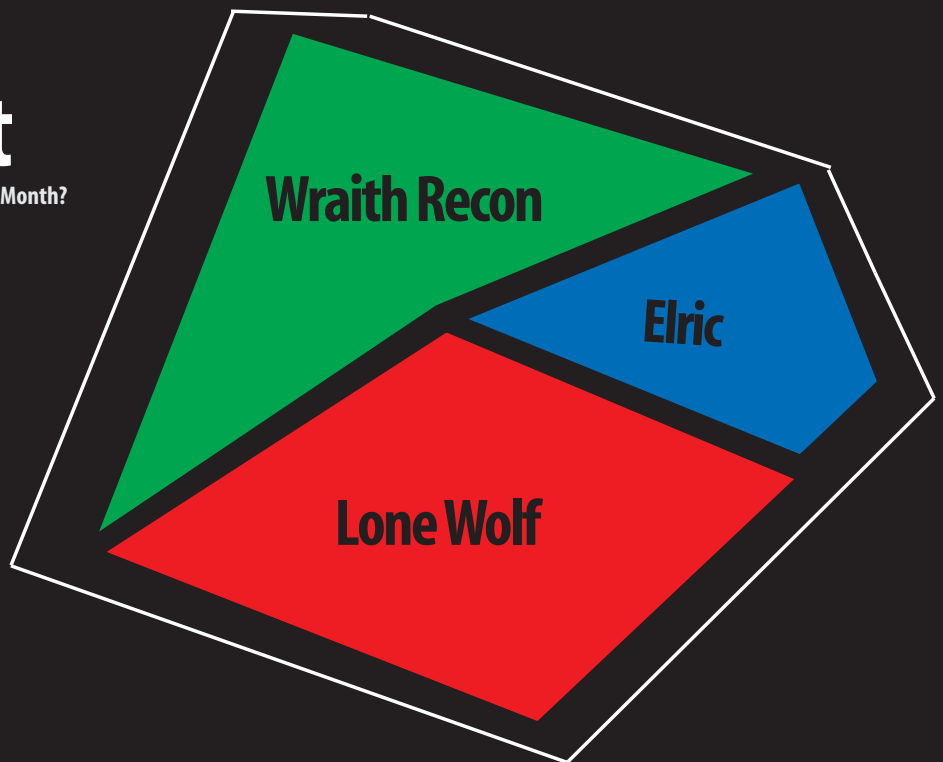
Which phrases have been flying around the office more than the dogs ball?

'All insects are pointless, especially Spiders'

Funny, the knowledge that people possess apparently translates into power... well the huge blockade of a man that said this quote should be now me quaking in his tiny boots at the sheer sight of that group of entomologists, how dare he hold onto a powerful physical presence while these people have nothing but their brains? :)

## The Time Chart

What have we been spending our time on at Mongoose this Month?



nergetics for Traveller

VELLER

January: More love for the new Elric line

Michael Moorcock  
**ELRIC**  
OF MELNIBONÉ

February: Paranoia gets some attention

**PARANOIA**  
**PARANOIA**

# October 10 Releases



Chthonian Stars  
Price: \$49.99  
Format: Hardback (220 pages)

Something approaches, a thing on an orbit from far away. Seemingly a large shard of dark matter, this object is known in obscure prophecy as the Chthonian Star. It is a thing that has been traveling through the universe on its oblique trajectory for millions, if not billions, of years. It is a part of the natural cycle of things, on its eon-long orbit. The Chthonian Star is the thing that caused the end of the dinosaurs, among other things. Now, again, it is awakening things long thought lost or dead, things that have slumbered awaiting its return.

Created by WildFire, the team behind the award-winning CthulhuTech, Chthonian Stars is an original setting for Traveller. It brings a Lovecraftian flair to the Traveller family of products, in a near future setting where mankind has expanded out into our solar system, where old things are beginning to awaken.

This is the core setting book, with everything a new players needs (other than the Traveller Core Rulebook). It includes robust setting material, including a look at the planets and colonies of our solar system, new technology and starships, and a peek behind the curtain at the occult history of our part of the galaxy. It also includes new optional rules for character generation, including point allocation and half-terms, and new rules for psychology and combat.

Crowded Hours is a compilation of the classic Avenger Enterprises Traveller adventures, including:

**The Windermann Incident:** Travelling by airship is supposed to be slow and boring, but this voyage is a lot more interesting than the passengers aboard Handley Aviatrix bargained for. With the passengers in the hands of hijackers, the crew helpless and Handley Aviatrix herself on a collision course with destruction, it falls to the travellers to save the airship and themselves. They must confront gunmen, treachery and airsick rodents at high altitude over an arctic sea.

**Fiddler's Green:** Overwhelmed by a revolution, the remnants of the Bularia Mounted Constabulary fight to keep open the only route out of the war zone. With the rebel army closing in on the last train to safety, the travellers can run or try to protect the refugees. Their stand might become a legend, or they may be buying a one-way ticket to Fiddler's Green, the legenday place where all dead troopers dismount.

**One Crowded Hour:** Aboard a misjumped liner, the situation is dire. The ship is out of control and careering towards a gas giant. There are not enough places aboard the shuttle for everyone, so the passengers and crew must take desperate measures to save the ship and themselves. They have little time remaining... one crowded hour of glorious endeavour to save the ship, or sixty minutes of frantic weaseling, conniving and treachery to grab a place on the lifeboat.

Crowded Hours  
Price: \$39.99  
Format: Hardback (240 pages)







Ex Cathedra  
 Price: \$34.99  
 Format: Softback (120 pages)

Les cathédrales sont plus que de simples édifices, ce sont des prières gravées dans la pierre, des hymnes à la beauté et au labeur acharné ; elles symbolisent la foi du peuple et le pouvoir de l'Eglise.

Mais bientôt, elles brûleront ! La folie et le chaos se sont emparés du monde, et seuls les moines-assassins de l'Ordre Secret peuvent rétablir la situation. Des foires de Champagne à Troyes jusqu'aux profondeurs de la terre, la chasse a déjà commencé... Mais à une époque où les lois et la raison se désagrègent, comment savoir si on est le chasseur ou la proie ?

Ex Cathedra contient trois aventures liées pour le cadre de jeu Deus Vult.

#### THE THIEVERY COMPETITION

Stealing the most valuable item in the city of Kratas is one thing, but protecting it from all the other thieves involved in the competition is another. Will the characters live through to the end?

#### DEADMAN'S CONTRACT

Hired as assassins, the characters are out to take the life of a very prominent figure to collect the blood money. Or will they turn and work for their target instead, to find out who wants him dead?

#### HUNTING THE IMPOSTOR

Secret societies, dark cults, Horror-worshippers—following a trail of seemingly unrelated incidents, the characters uncover an ancient secret buried deep below the city...

Kratas Adventures is a collection of three stand-alone adventures for Earthdawn Third Edition, providing challenges for Journeyman through Warden adepts. For use with the Kratas: City of Thieves sourcebook and the Earthdawn Third Edition core rulebooks.

Kratas Adventures  
 Price: \$24.99  
 Format: Softback (112 pages)



# October 10 Releases



The Little Black Books return! Harking back to the original release of Traveller in the 70's, the Little Black Books from Mongoose bring the latest version of Traveller to your gaming table in a handy and collectible size.

Concentrating on Rogue and Drifter careers, Scoundrel brings to life some of the most favoured characters in Traveller – those who avoid legitimate lines of work, who straddle the grey areas of the law. Expanding the Rogue and Drifter careers, Scoundrel shows you just how to survive in a universe that insists on everyone doing an honest day's work, without actually having to work for it. From confidence tricksters and gamblers to smugglers and thieves, Scoundrel is an essential companion for any Rogue or Drifter.

LBB6: Scoundrel  
Price: \$14.99  
Format: Softback (136 pages)



# Glorantha

## THE SECOND AGE

**MONGOOSE PUBLISHING**

[www.mongoosepublishing.com](http://www.mongoosepublishing.com)

# Cotswold Wildlife Park

By Charlotte Law

As has become an annual tradition at Mongoose Publishing, one sunny day in September we took an office trip to the Cotswold Wildlife Park. As is also tradition, Matthew dragged us all out of our beds early so that we could be there when the park opened, in order for him to embark on his yearly penguin bonding ritual. It is a strange thing to see Matthew with a group of penguins flocking to him... for some reason he seems to have a way with them.

We moved on to the Meerkats and Prairie Dogs, along with various other smaller animals. It was a good day for spotting elusive creatures. We saw the rather shy Jaguarundi for the first time, however, judging by the look that he was giving us, he fancied Mongoose for dinner!

Our visit to the Mongoose family that we sponsor was a somewhat sobering experience. Each of the little critters seemed to bear a striking resemblance to each of us... spooky!

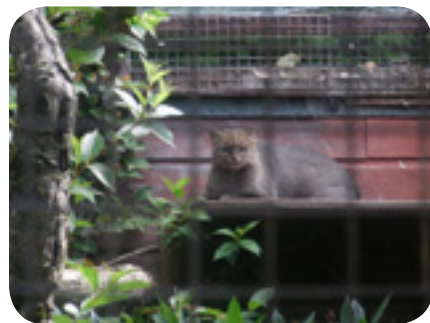
Unfortunately, in this industry, days off do not exist so business talk ensued, even whilst eating hot dogs! But we trundled on and worked our way through the wolf enclosure and on to the holy grail of animals to touch... the new Giraffe enclosure! What no one had bothered to tell me, when I was busy making plans to sneakily touch a Giraffe, was that the enclosure was not only giant, it was also surrounded by a moat! So despite the valiant efforts of the Mongoose gang, our attempts to coax the Giraffes over were in vain. Thank goodness that Matt had his 'kind, caring boss' hat on that day, as he still bought us ice creams anyway!

With Matt and I being the dirty smokers we had various stops along the way to blacken our lungs and enjoy looking at the cute animals, which was lucky as poor Sandrine was beginning to flag by the end of the day after keeping up with the route march.



**Prairie Dog senses the approaching Mongoose tribe**

**Jaguarundi sizes up its next meal**



**Charlie and Matt don't even stop talking business on a day out!**

**...Wolfy!**



**Alas the Giraffe would not come close enough for Charlie to touch!**

## The Mongoose Family



The highlight of the day for Matt was the Red Panda. Matt has been going to the Cotswold Wildlife Park since he was a little boy and has never seen the elusive Red Panda. Clearly this has been a problem for

many other people as it has led to the park taking away the box that the little guy used to hide in. So after years of believing that it didn't exist, Matt finally got to see it.

So a pretty good day out, with Will taking millions of photos per second, leaving us all refreshed and ready to get back to the grind.

# Cotswold Wildlife Park

perhaps we should be Lemur Publishing!



Matt was kind enough to buy the ice creams even without the Giraffe conquest

Matt's Yearly Penguin Bonding Ritual

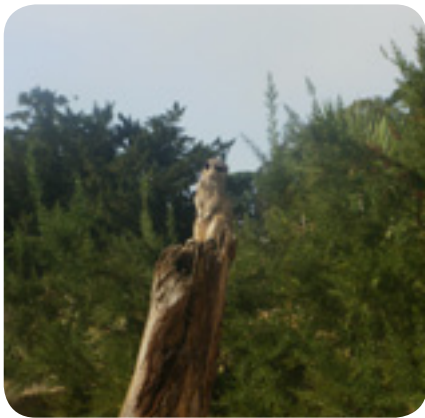


Pingus flock to Matt



Reservoir Mongooses





**Meerkat watchtower**



**Smoker's Corner**



**after 30 years of coming here,  
Matt finally saw the elusive red  
panda for the very first time!**

**Rhino didn't want to be  
touched either!**



**Sandrine started flagging  
towards the end**



# Ships for Traveller

By Andrew Welty

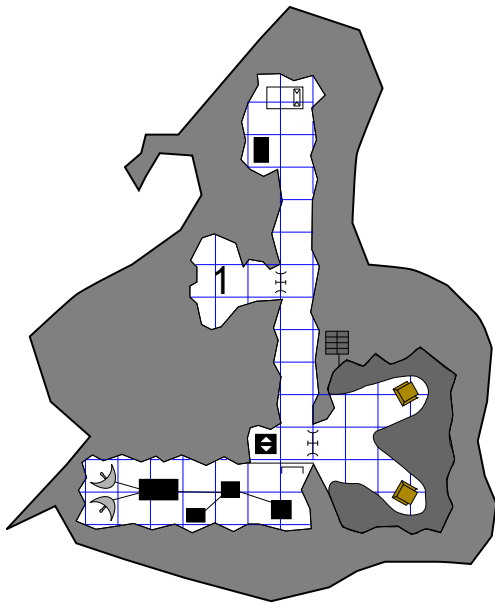
## Missile Defence System

Carved out of an asteroid these are an automated platform for defence. Looking just like a normal asteroid they lay in wait and strike with their missiles when an enemy ship is close by. Systems are kept powered down or in a low power mode until needed to reduce emissions that may be detected. Each one of these will be unique due to the nature of the asteroid hulls. The onboard countermeasures suite can disrupt the enemies sensors causing them problems even if the system doesn't get a chance to use its missiles. This is a Technology Level 13 design.

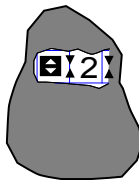
These systems can operate autonomously but a pilot/navigator will be placed on board when there is a need to relocate one.

Missile Defence System			Tons	Price (Mcr)
<b>Hull</b>	200 Tons	Hull 4		0.8
	Planetoid	Structure 4	40	
<b>Armour</b>	Crystaliron	4	10	1.6
	Integral	+2 = 6		
<b>Jump Drive</b>	None			
<b>Manoeuvre Drive</b>	A	Thrust 1	2	4
<b>Power Plant</b>	A		4	8
	Solar Panels		0.4	0.04
<b>Bridge</b>			10	1
<b>Computer</b>	Model 3	Rating 15		2.000
<b>Electronics</b>	Countermeasure	DM +1, DM +4 for countermeasures	7	6
<b>Weapons</b>	Bays	Large Missile Bay	101	24
<b>Ammunition</b>		192 missiles	16	
<b>Fuel</b>	4 tons	16 weeks of operation	4	
<b>Cargo</b>	1.6 tons		1.6	
<b>1 Staterooms</b>			4	0.5
<b>Software</b>	Manoeuvre/0			
	Fire Control/3	Rating 15		6
	Library			
<b>Maintenance Cost (monthly)</b>				0.00
<b>Life Support Cost (monthly)</b>				0.002
<b>Total Tonnage &amp; Cost</b>			200	53.94





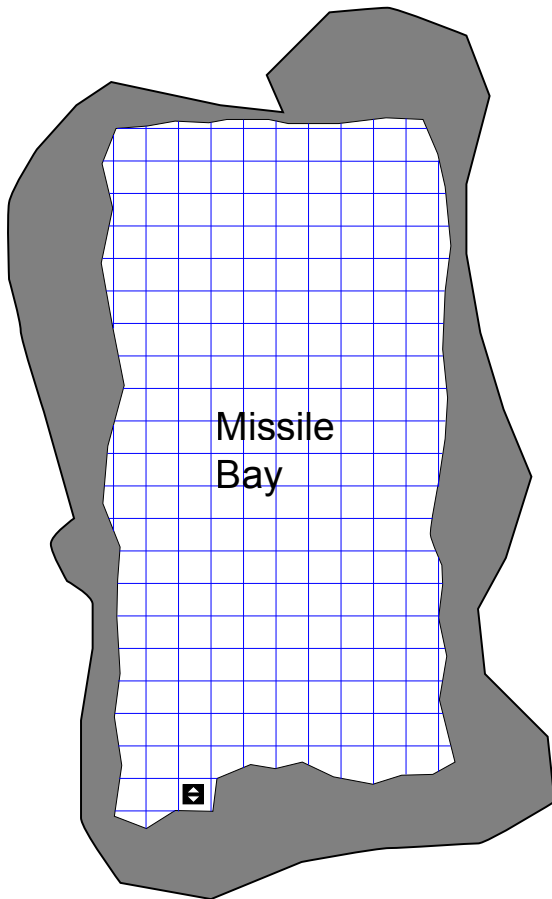
Upper Deck



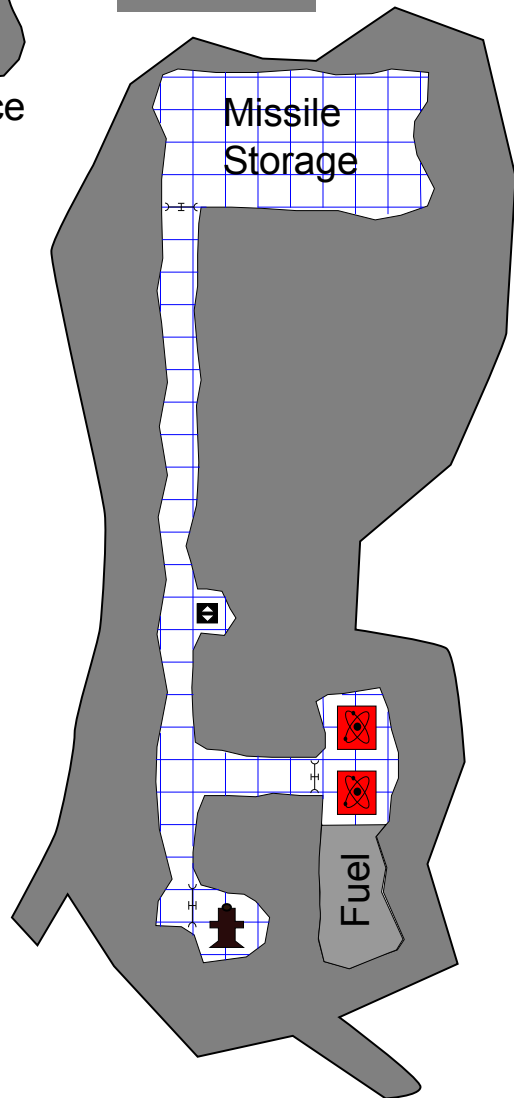
Surface

- 1. Cargo
- 2. Airlock

Chair		Fuel Processor	
Bed		Fusion Power Plant	
Locker		Jump Drive	
Access hatch		Manoeuvre Drive	
Hatch		Iris Valve	
Hatch Floor		Iris Valve Floor	
Hatch Ceiling		Iris Valve Ceiling	
Hatch Both		Iris Valve Both	
Low Berth		Sensors	
Escape Pod		Lift	



Mid Deck



Lower Deck

# Ships for Traveller

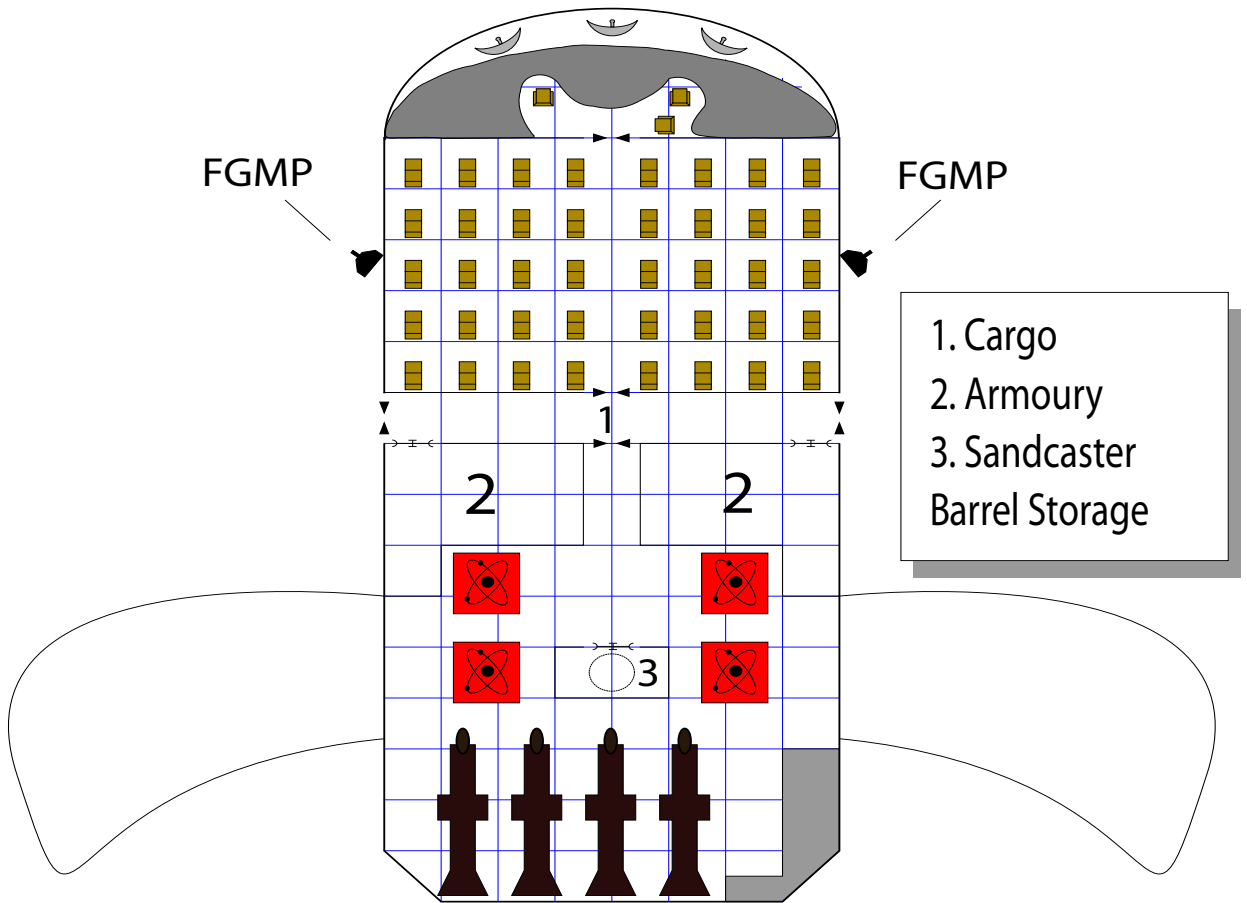
## Deployment Shuttle

This is used to quickly deploy up to 40 marines to where they need to go and protect them while doing so. The anti-personal weapons are used to clear the landing zone of hostile forces or obstructions. There are also ports on the sides that can be opened up so the marines can use their own weapons while remaining protected within the deployment shuttle. The aerofins can be retracted to fit into smaller landing zones and for easier storage. The deployment shuttle can be built at a Technology Level 12 shipyard with the anti-personal weapons supplied from elsewhere or added later.

The normal crew consists of a pilot and navigator/comms.

This is a standard design for which the 10% discount applies.

Deployment Shuttle			Tons	Price (Cr)
<b>Hull</b>	80 Tons	Hull 1		1,800,000
	Streamlined	Structure 1		180,000
	Aerofins		4	400,000
<b>Armour</b>	Crystaliron	10	8	720,000
<b>Manoeuvre Drive</b>	sV	Thrust 6	15	30,000,000
<b>Power Plant</b>	sV	Rating 6	9.9	24,000,000
<b>Bridge</b>	Control Cabin for 2		6	400,000
<b>Computer</b>	Model 3	Rating 15		2,000,000
<b>Electronics</b>	Basic Military	DM +0	2	1,000,000
<b>Weapons</b>	Hardpoint #1	Beam Laser / Sandcaster	1	1,750,000
	Anti-Personnel Mount	FGMP-14 x2		200,000
<b>Ammunition</b>		20 sandcaster barrels	1	
<b>Fuel</b>	1.5 tons	One week of operation	1.5	
<b>Cargo</b>	3.6 tons		3.6	
<b>Extras</b>	Acceleration Couches	40	20	1,200,000
	Armoury		8	2,000,000
<b>Software</b>	Manoeuvre/0			
	Fire Control/3	Rating 15		6,000,000
	Evade/2	Rating 15		2,000,000
	Library			
<b>Total Tonnage &amp; Cost</b>			80	66,285,000



- 1. Cargo
- 2. Armoury
- 3. Sandcaster Barrel Storage

Chair		Fuel Processor	
Bed		Fusion Power Plant	
Locker		Jump Drive	
Access hatch		Manoeuvre Drive	
Hatch		Iris Valve	
Hatch Floor		Iris Valve Floor	
Hatch Ceiling		Iris Valve Ceiling	
Hatch Both		Iris Valve Both	
Low Berth		Sensors	
Escape Pod		Lift	
Spinal Mount		Acceleration Couch	

# Ships for Traveller

By Ian Stead

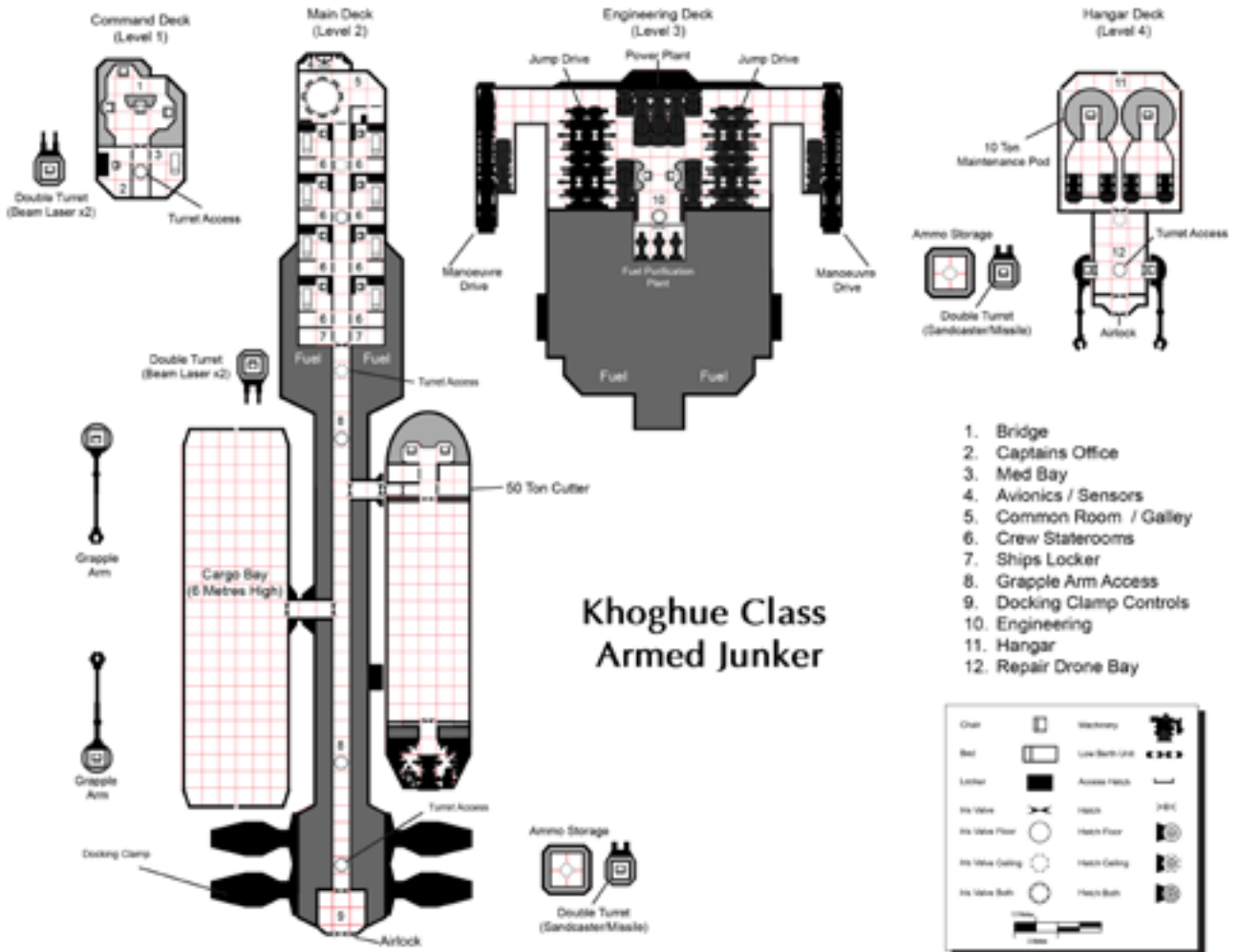
## Khoghue Armed Junker

Amongst Vargr traders dealing in junk is a common business, so ships like Khoghue help supply the trade. Junk can be a dangerous business so the Khoghue is armed with 4 beam lasers and two missile launchers turrets to deal with rivals, raiders and to perhaps make some 'junk' of its own. Endurance extending panels and additional crew comforts allow this ship to engage in long Salvage operations, especially in remote areas of space. Two maintenance pods are carried in a full sized hangar to assist in salvage operations. The distributed design is there to allow the ship to survive in the event of an explosion from dangerous salvage, like unexploded ordnance for example.

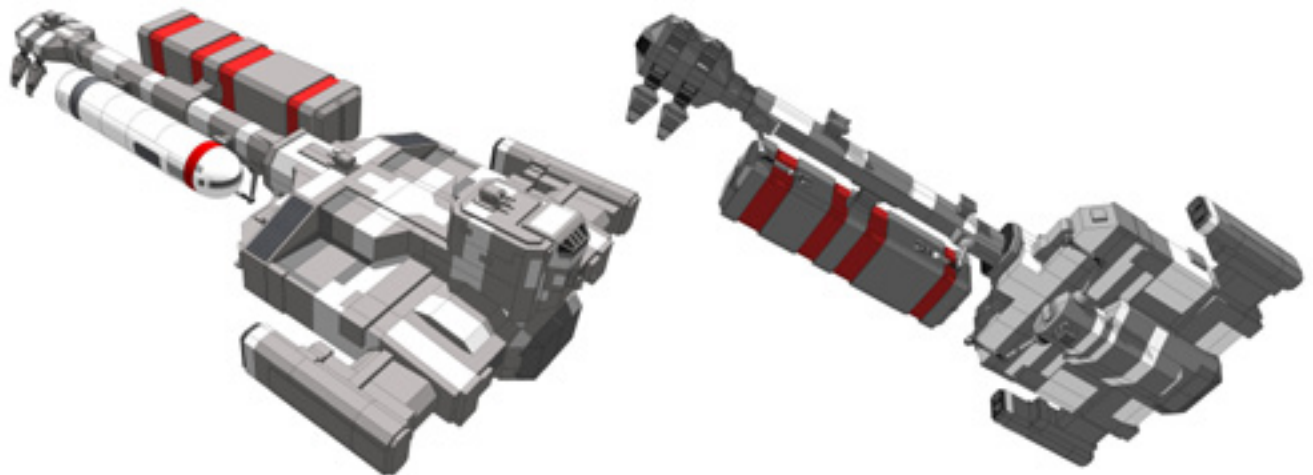
The large rear clamp has docking access ports for any hulk it pulls.

Normal crew consists of a Captain, 3 Pilots, Navigator, 3 Engineers and 4 Gunners. The Khoghue is a TL 12 Design.

Khoghue Armed Junker			Tons	Price (Mcr.)
<b>Hull</b>	500 Tons	Hull 10		28.8
		Structure 10		
		Distributed		
		Radiation Shielding		125
<b>Armour</b>	Crystaliron	4 Points	25	14.4
<b>Jump Drive E</b>		Jump 2	30	50
<b>Manoeuvr Drive E</b>		Thrust 2	9	20
<b>Power Plant E</b>			16	40
		Solar Panels	1.6	0.16
<b>Bridge</b>			20	2.50
<b>Computer</b>	Model 2	Rating 10		0.016
<b>Electronics</b>	Basic Civilian	-2 DM	1	0.005
<b>Weapons</b>	Hardpoint #1	Double Turret (Beam Laser/Beam Laser)	1	2.5
	Hardpoint #2	Double Turret (Beam Laser/Beam Laser)	1	2.5
	Hardpoint #3	Double Turret (Sandcaster/Missile)	1	1
	Hardpoint #4	Double Turret (Sandcaster/Missile)	1	1
<b>Ammunition</b>		24 Standard Missiles	2	
		40 Sandcaster Barrels	2	
<b>Fuel</b>	120 Tons	One Jump-2 and Four weeks of operation	120	
<b>Cargo</b>	122 Tons		122	
<b>8 Staterooms</b>			32	4
<b>Extras</b>				
	3 Fuel Processors	60 Tons / day	3	0.15
	Ship's Locker			
	Cutter	With Fuel Module	50	19.458
	Docking Clamp	One 2,000 Ton Capacity Clamp	20	4
	Grapple Arm	Four Grapple Arms	8	1.0000
	Repair Drones		5	1.0000
	2x Maintenance Pods	Full Hangar	26	11.03
	Luxuries		3	0.3
<b>Software</b>	Manoeuvr/0	Rating 0		
	Jump Control/2	Rating 10		0.2
	Evade/1	Rating 10		1
	Fire Control/2	Rating 10		4
	Auto Repair/1	Rating 10		5
	Library/0			
<b>Maintenance Cost (monthly)</b>				0.028
<b>Life Support Cost (monthly)</b>				0.018
<b>Total Tonnage &amp; Cost</b>			499.6	340.019



## Khoghue Class Armed Junker



# The UWC Wardens A preview

By Robert Glass & Matthew Grau

The third planet of the Sol system is the birthplace of human civilization. For thousands of years, humanity struggled to rise up from its origins as smart primates, learning the skills of tool use and mastering the destructive force of fire. As the centuries ticked by, human civilizations rose and fell. The Babylonians, Persians, Romans, British, and more than can be easily counted left their mark on the world. Each had some say in the direction mankind took. Each contributed social and technological advances and some few took great pains to stall these same advances. The Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution, and the Information Age all propelled mankind towards one inevitable outcome – its escape from the boundaries of its home planet. Throughout all this time even the most cynical person knew one thing with the utmost certainty – the Earth was their home and they were its master. Humans were the dominant species.

They were wrong.

As humanity started to spread out from Earth like a plague of locusts loosed upon the universe, they did not realize that something was coming from out in the dark beyond Saturn, beyond even the Kuiper Belt or the Oort Cloud. It has been orbiting through the universe since the earliest days – days long before the most basic microbes came to be in the primordial sludge of Earth's earliest oceans. This is not the first time it has been through humanity's home and it will not be the last. For decades now, its approach has been felt, though not by man himself. It has been felt by beings far older than man, that have been lying in deep slumber awaiting its return. Even the planets and moons can feel its coming and they are preparing. Its energies are triggering changes throughout the solar system.

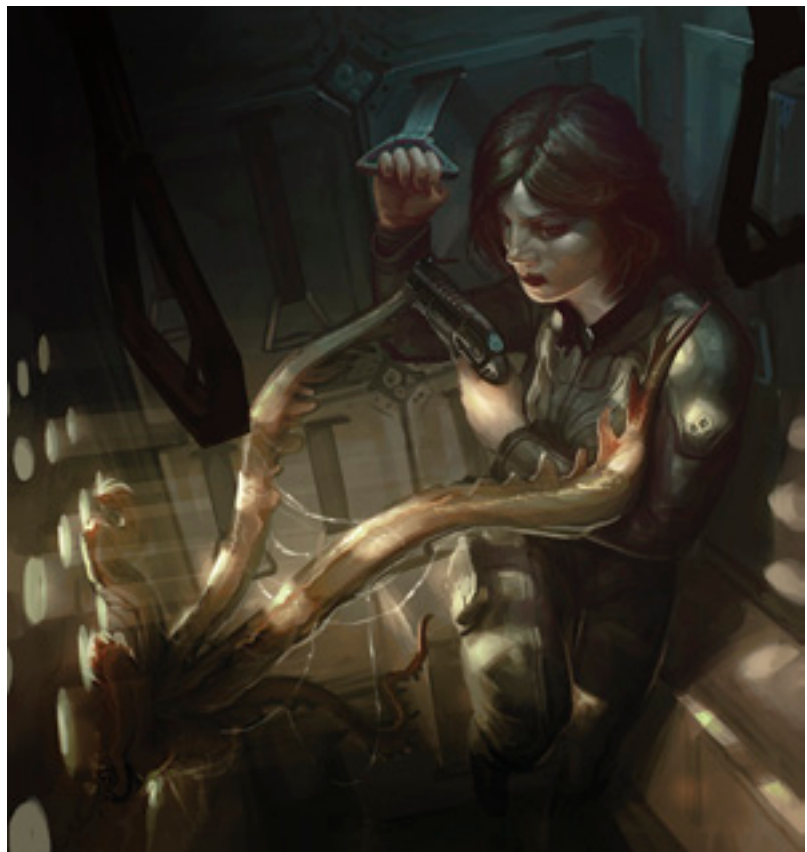
For nearly as long as men have gazed up into the night sky they have wondered if we were alone in the universe. That is a question that, at long last, is going to be answered. We are not alone – we never have been. In some places in the solar system the first evidence

of this has started to manifest. For the most part this evidence has been ignored. Stories of fantastical encounters with strange creatures that have started to filter in from the Kuiper Belt and other places have become nothing more than legends. Other things, such as the strange behavior of Pluto or the changing environment of Callisto, are nothing more to most people than scientific curiosities. Taken individually this is understandable, but these things are not separate oddities. The recent discovery of the strange object that is rapidly approaching our solar system has caused a precious few to tie these events together, though as of yet even these enlightened few truly grasp what it all means.

Once the Unified World Council started to discover that there was more going on in the solar system than meets the eye, they discovered they needed someone to investigate and ultimately deal with such

threats. There was no international agency, such as Interpol, that was in a position to be retooled to meet the current situation's needs, so the Unified World Council chose to create a new one that was fully suited for the task. This new agency was named simply the UWC Wardens.

The Wardens have been given three primary duties. First, they are charged with investigating all reports and manifestations of the unknown throughout the solar system. It is their job to find out what is going on for real, regardless of origin, and to gather the intelligence necessary to arm the Unified World Council to marshal the forces of Earth to stop it once and for all. Second, it is their responsibility to eliminate unknown or occult threats to the people of the solar system. Wherever people are in danger, from whatever endangers them, it is the Wardens who must be there to save them. Their third, last, and perhaps the most distasteful duty,





is to keep the unknown and occult a secret from the population at large. Wardens must censor and silence those who would expose the true happenings of the solar system to the masses, in an effort to prevent the widespread panic that would most assuredly occur should the truth be told. The only information that can be released to the people of the solar system is that approved by the Unified World Council – though that doesn't mean that accurate reports don't leak out for short periods of time, before being forever deleted by Warden technicians.

Not just anyone can become a Warden. Training is intense, similar to that given to top-notch specialized federal police or intelligence agencies, such as the United States' Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Israel's Mossad, or the former Soviet Union's Committee for State Security (KGB). Application requires that a person be of sound mind, in decent physical shape, and have some form of college degree, formal technical training, or military service. Once a person has passed the rigid psychological screening and physical readiness tests, they begin an intense six month training program – about 60% of trainees wash out during this period. The trainees are given not only

combat training, but also a basic knowledge of the occult and the inhuman enemies they must face, along with a basic education in cults. In addition, they are heavily trained according to their specialty, as specialists are required for the situation at hand.

There are three primary specialties in which Warden field agents are trained – Enforcer, Investigator, and Researcher. Enforcers focus on combat, trained in many different kinds of weapons in order to most effectively eliminate resistance. Investigators are the detectives of the Wardens, focused on processing information and evidence in order to draw conclusions. They are also trained to gain useful information out of people. Researchers are the book worms, educated in the occult and other disciplines which allow them to draw conclusions and sift through data for that which is useful.

Wardens are typically sent out into the field in teams of three to six. A small team is composed of one of each specialty, while a larger team typically has three Enforcers, two Investigators, and one Researcher. In areas of severe danger, Researchers are often relegated to remote stations where they can do their job in relative safety, while

the other, more combat capable agents deal with the immediate threats. However, teams are inherently interdependent, so the loss of one always threatens the integrity of the whole.

To no surprise, Warden have quite an array of resources at their disposal. They are given their own spaceships as transport, which usually house a team, support crew, and shuttles, as well as mobile labs and arsenals. They are allowed to carry sidearms and even submachineguns in their everyday investigations, and usually have access to assault rifles, explosives, and combat armor. However, it is part of their duty to keep things quiet and hidden, so it is rare that Wardens appear with anything that isn't readily concealable – unless the situation is already dire.

Since Wardens are not a widely advertised governmental agency, they maintain quiet offices in all civilized corners of the solar system. Some of these offices aren't much more than basic research facilities, labs, armories, and holding centers, while others boast more robust facilities. They are typically received with some level of open arms by the colonies they visit and it is

expected that the authorities in all parts of the solar system will cooperate, though this is not always the case. The solar system is a big place and those far enough out don't always feel that the law strictly applies in their case. The Wardens, however, are afforded nearly absolute authority by UWC charter, though they rarely have need to use it. In some cases, Wardens must also have the strength to enforce their authority, because the powers that be far out in the black won't just afford them the respect and latitude they deserve.

The Wardens maintain a network of space stations throughout the solar system, from which they stage their operations. Warden Prime, also known as simply the Eye, sits above the Earth. A gigantic monolith in the sky, this labyrinthian structure is the primary headquarters of the Wardens. Many rumors exist regarding the goings on there – everything from vaults of horrible creatures to archives of forbidden and maddening lore to horrifying experiments that could not be

performed under the watchful eye of any government. While it is the subject of much speculation, there are few that know the truth – all of these things, and more, are so. It is the madhouse that is the one beacon of hope between humanity and the things that stir under the influence of the Chthonian Star.

Beyond the Eye, Warden 1, also known as the Umbrella, floats in orbit around Saturn to service the outer planets and protect the precious agriculture of Titan. It is of similar size to the Eye, but designed as a gateway and emergency station for those missions going further out. However, given the way places like Callisto are changing, it is rapidly becoming retrofitted with advanced science technology for research and capture of specimens. To service the inner planets, Warden 2, unfortunately known as the Nugget, hovers in geosynchronous orbit above Mercury. It is a small station, hastily deployed to provide some kind of support to Mercury and Venus. The Lighthouse, more

formally known as Warden 4, sits far out in the Kuiper Belt, exploring, watching, and listening for anything that might be at the edges of the solar system. Those who are stationed here are a resilient sort, as they must be to endure that kind of isolation. The Lighthouse has become one of the primary stations for monitoring the approaching Chthonian Star and resources are regularly shipped out to it in order to study that celestial body better.

Work as a Warden is perilous, to say the least. They must travel from one side of the solar system to the other, while facing threats of which man was not meant to know. It can be, for lack of a better term, a very dark job. Wardens must undergo regular psychological screening, for the dangers they face readily erode one's grip on reality. Insanity is a price that agents must face, and one many are resigned to as their eventual fate. That or death, for many a Warden has met an unspeakable and violent end.





*Volume II of the epic  
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# Gambling Turning Coppers to Silver

By Bryan Steele

When times are tough, characters will inevitably turn to the desperation and chance of gambling. Risking their last few coins on a slim chance to increase their wealth, most characters are at the whim of the dice, cards or contests of bazaar skills – but some are practiced, talented and good at gambling.

Gambling, in all forms, is a risky way of trying to make money. Most people that partake in games of chance with other characters are betting on their luck or the hope that the game will fall into their existing skills. There are some ways to increase a character's chances however, leaving less to luck and more to skill and knowledge.

## The Gambling Skill

Some characters have a firm grasp of how games work, understanding all of the easiest ways to compete and win at several different forms of gambling. This general knowledge is represented by the Gambling skill.

This new skill represents a very general knowledge of how to win at gambling games and can be used by characters when the Games Master allows. It dilutes potentially several hours of dice rolling, card playing or competition to a single die roll; reducing its ability to create roleplaying moments but streamlining how gambling works in a game session.

Games Masters can always choose to have characters use this skill instead of trying to play specific games. It is a good option for games with Player Characters that are not involved with the gambling games or in scenarios where game sessions are pressed for time.

## Cheating

Most gambling games are not purely based on luck and a fast hand. Quick wit and sly tongue can easily turn the tables at a crucial moment. Thieves tend to

require all of these abilities in their chosen lifestyle, so playing and cheating in equal amounts at the gaming table can be very lucrative. It is not easy to do but cheating at most games can guarantee a win (or loss, depending on what the thief needs at the time) for the practiced gambling thief.

Cheating while gambling can be very different from game-to-game. From palming cards or flipping dice to spilling drinks, there are countless ways to cheat. It is up to each individual thief to decide how best to get one over on his competition while playing their games. Getting caught can be life threatening depending on who the thief is gambling with, so knowing what he is risking when he does is paramount.

The following entries are specific Hyborian age gambling games that Games Masters can introduce to Player Characters. Each entry describes the game, its rules in both narrative and game mechanic senses and how an unscrupulous player might be able to cheat in order to win at it.

## The Drinking Contest

The drinking contest is one of the easiest gambling contests; two or more contestants stand around a single table and quickly consume matching drinks until there is only one contestant left standing. For obvious reasons, this game can become messy very quickly.

After each drink is consumed by the contestants, they must first pass a Fortitude save based on the number of drinks they have finished to keep from vomiting. After a few drinks they will need to pass **additional** Fortitude saves to keep from passing out and eventually Will saves to have the strength to take the next drink. The following table shows the difficulties of these saves and when they must be taken.

Making money on a drinking contest comes in three forms – side betting, simple wager or playing for rounds. Side betting is where a character (not the drinking contestant) places a set amount of odds in favour of a specific contestant; so long as the contestant wins (or drinks a set number of drinks) the odds should be paid. A simple wager is where one contestant bets a set amount of money that he will outlast the other at the drinking table.

Playing for rounds is far more involved; as it requires a crowd to be watching. When a drinking contest is being played for rounds, the contestants are not just trying to outlast each other but are also racing the competition in how fast they can drink. The last person to finish their drink at the table must buy the next round of drinks for everyone involved in the contest

## Drinking Contest Saves

Number of Drinks	Fortitude Save (Vomit)	Fortitude Save (Pass Out)	Will Save (to Continue)
1	5	–	–
2	8	–	–
3	11	–	–
4	14	–	–
5	17	12	–
6	20	14	–
7	23	16	10
8	26	18	15
9	29	20	20
Each additional drink	+3	+2	+5

(including friends of the contestants!). To gauge how quickly a participant drinks, the character who passed the Fortitude save versus Vomiting by the highest margin is considered to have finished first.

**How to Cheat:** There is actually only one real way to cheat in a drinking contest; spill enough of the drinks to avoid getting drunk while not letting on that you are doing so. Letting drinks tip out of the corners of the mouth, sticking a thumb in an ale mug to pour flow down the arm and so on. Doing this requires the cheater to act as though he is not (DC 12 Bluff skill check) and do so discreetly (DC 14 Sleight of Hand skill check). If he passes these two checks, he has done enough to tip the odds in his favour, gaining +5 on all saving throws involving the drinking contest.

### The Dice Game

Rolling marked bits of wood, ivory or bone trying to acquire the highest, lowest or specific numerical score or set of symbols is one of the oldest games known in the Hyborian age. Most societies have their own version of how a dice rolling game works but a few common rules seem to cross cultural boundaries. There are games that try to match certain symbols, add up to high totals, grant re-rolls for additional betting and so forth. No matter how the individual dice game works, the way to win is a combination of luck and reading your opponents.

Playing a dice game in **Conan the Roleplaying Game** is the easiest type of gambling to play in game mechanics – roll some dice. As the players and Games Master will have dice on hand, they can choose a few matching dice and roll them against one another.

To determine who wins in a dice gambling game, the Games Master

must decide how the game must be played. The following are a few sample rules that Games Masters can use to create their own dice game, combining them to form his own interesting dice gambling mechanic.

- The highest total on the dice wins.
- The lowest total on the dice wins.
- Any dice showing the same result are discounted.
- A certain number of dice may be re-rolled.
- Dice are rolled in secret and bet on like a card hand.
- A certain dice combination automatically wins or loses.
- Each player must drop the highest or lowest die result.
- Each player must bet additional money when a specific result is rolled.

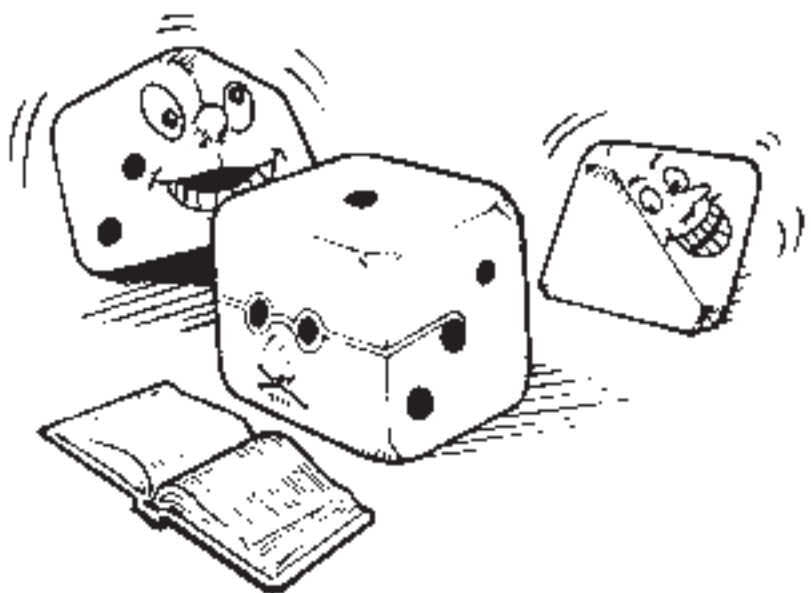
The Games Master can create his own dice gambling game using these rules or use one of the following that we have included as sample dice rolling games.

**Asgardian Gambit** – One of the oldest and simplest dice games in Hyboria, this game involves each player rolling one d6 and betting that he will be able

to beat the roll of the player sitting to his right. In Asgard, where this game originated, the player is allowed to punch any player that bets against him but does not beat his die.

**Islander Bones** – Each player rolls five d6s in secret. After the first roll they may look at their results. Everyone then bets on their current dice score (the total). Once first bets are in, each player can pay a previously decided amount (1/2 silver is common) per die to re-roll any number of dice but they must re-roll openly, keeping any dice they did not re-roll still secret. After this round of betting and re-rolling, a final betting round is made starting with the highest showing dice. All dice are then shown and the pot is taken by the player with the highest total score, with ties splitting the pot. The one exception to this is if someone manages to roll all five dice to come up as the 'Shark's Grin' – all 6s. This hand pushes the hand and the pot stays for another set of rolls.

**Seven Shemite Nights** – Each player rolls seven d6s in secret, looking at the results privately. All players then bet on their total score. All players then



# Gambling

## Turning Coppers to Silver

pass one of their dice to the player to the left, one die to the player on the right and one die to the player of their choice; all dice during the passing are open. Another round of betting takes place after the dice have been passed, starting with the player with the lowest showing score. After all bets are placed, dice are revealed and the total highest score wins.

**Wall-Eyed Packing** – Four d6s are thrown by each player, trying to acquire the highest score at the table. Betting takes place before the dice are rolled. The highest and lowest dice are discarded unless the rolling player pays an additional ante to keep his higher die, discarding the second-highest. Other players may choose to pay an additional ante to force a player to keep his **lowest** die, discarding the second-lowest, as well. The round is over when all players are left with two dice.

**Zingaran Aces** – Three d6s are thrown by each player, trying to acquire the lowest score at the table. Betting takes place before any dice are rolled, setting the ante. Any 1s that are rolled force that player to bet an additional amount equal to the ante.

**How to Cheat:** Using loaded dice, palming or shifting bad results to good ones or simply distracting others long enough to believably miscalculate the totals are all good ways to cheat in a dice game. This is not always the easiest thing to do but a crafty enough player would be able to. By passing a DC 18 Sleight of Hand or DC 22 Bluff check, the character can effectively

cheat at dice games. A cheating character can choose to either re-roll any one die that he throws at any time during the game, or can substitute a larger or smaller die in his dice rolled (a d8 or d4 instead of a d6). If this second option is used it is considered to that the character is still using the appropriate dice; he just is cheating to make them give the score he wants.

### The Card Game

Games using cards, or similarly marked pieces of wood, leather or clay, are very common in the mainland nations and cultures. Harder to play on a sailing ship or storm-ravaged coast, card gambling is a popular activity. Hours can be spent sitting around the same table, passing coins back and forth between the same four or five players until someone walks away with the total pot. Card games are lengthy gambling styles but they are some of the most lucrative if enough players join in the game.

Playing a card game in **Conan the Roleplaying Game** can be done in two distinct ways, both of which are detailed here. The first way is to have a standard deck of playing cards on hand, dealing them out to the players to actually play the game – with a few minor adjustments, of course. The second method is to leave the card game completely in the realm of skill checks and dice rolls. Both methods of card game gambling are useful depending on the wishes of the Games Master.

Before characters can determine who wins in a card gambling game, the

Games Master must decide the rules to the game and the method in which his players will be playing it. The following are a few sample rules that Games Masters can use to create their own card game, keeping in mind whether or not the players will be using their skills or some cards to play.

- The holder of the highest card total wins.
- The holder of the most matching symbols or numbers wins.
- Each player can exchange a number of cards with the dealer.
- Players cannot look at their cards before they make bets.
- Players can see each others' cards but not their own.
- The holder of a specific card wins or loses automatically.
- Players can give cards to one another.
- A sequence of card numbers wins over a normal hand.

The Games Master can create his own card gambling game using these rules or we have included a few sample Hyborian age card games as good examples.

**Corinthian Flop** – A simple game that deals three cards to each player; one face up and the rest face down (but not secret to the player). Betting and raising starts with the highest showing card. One of the other cards is then revealed and another round of betting takes place. The third card is revealed and the highest total wins.

**Night's Good Rounds** – Also called 'Rounds'. Each player is dealt five cards face down, known only to the player.

Betting takes place to the dealer's left. After the first round of betting, each player hands one card to the right and another round of betting takes place. After three cards are exchanged, the final bets are made and all cards are revealed. The winning hand is the one with the most matching numbers of colours.

**Siege** – Each player is dealt two cards face down, which they must not look at. They instead hold one of them up for the other players to see. Players bet that their cards, which they cannot see, will be the highest at the table. Before the cards are revealed, each player may choose to switch to his secret card immediately before. The highest card wins. In the case of a tie, the highest players also reveal their other card as a tie-breaker.

**Ten Days of Judgment** – This odd game deals 10 cards in a face down pile to each player. The dealer then flips over one additional card; this is the card to meet or exceed. The player to his right begins to flip cards over

from his pile until he comes up with a card that equals or is greater than the first card. Once that happens, all players bet against the next player being able to beat the new high card. This continues around the table until all players have revealed their pile completely (or cannot beat the current player's high card).

### **Playing a Game with Cards**

Playing a gambling game with cards is as easy as keeping a normal 52 card playing deck or two on hand to do so. This sort of gambling method might not take into consideration the characters' individual talents or skills but it can be a great game-within-a-game moment for a Games Master to surprise his players with.

### **Playing a Game with Skills**

Gambling in a card game with the characters' skills makes use of their individual talents or aptitudes instead of the luck or card skill of the player. Every character at the table of a card game is allowed to make three skill checks of Bluff, Diplomacy, Gambling,

Intimidate or Sense Motive. These checks are all DC 10 but the exact total of any successful skill checks should be noted. The player with the highest totals of all successful checks wins; this is the game mechanic explanation of bluffing, raising and otherwise reading their opponents.

**How to Cheat:** Cheating at a card game normally involves sleeving cards, marking cards from previous hands or simply knowing how to beat the other players using mathematics and trickery. Characters that wish to try cheating can make a Sleight of Hand skill check against the Spot checks of any other characters at the table watching for foul play. If he succeeds, he has two options based on how the Games Master is running the card game. If the game is actually being played with a deck of cards, the successfully cheating player may either look at all of his secret cards or count any two of his cards as +/- 1 of its real numerical value. If the successful cheating character is playing a game using skills, he may add +3 to all of his skill checks involved.

# Terror in the Wildlands

By Jawad Naeem

## Introduction:

This is an adventure for 4-6 players of ranks 5-10. It can be modified for use with more or less than the recommended number of players by making a few minor adjustments to the number of foes that the players will face. The players all need to have a reason to be part of a large trade caravan headed from Holmgard in Sommerlund to Port Bax in Durenor. This is a great opportunity for the players to role play their character backgrounds, and you should tell them to use it to the fullest extent. There could be any number of reasons a PC might have joined the caravan such as a desire to visit Durenor, wander the world, carry an important message for the King of Durenor, spy on szall and bandit activity in the Wildlands to anything the player can think of. The pc could even be a guard aboard the caravan itself!

## Plot Overview:

The PCs are part of a large trading caravan heading from Sommerlund to Durenor. To reach its destination, the caravan must pass through the treacherous area of the Wildlands. The caravan is made up mostly of merchants and their wares, and consists of large wagons carrying the trade goods. As the adventure begins the caravan will only have just reached the Wildlands. The caravan master Tane will be giving orders to his many guards and overseeing the caravan while the PCs will have an opportunity to get to know each other and various NPCs. Suddenly, disaster strikes as huge burrowcrawlers attack the caravan. The guards will be overwhelmed and it will be up to the pc's to save the day. After the PCs have dealt with the threat of the burrowcrawlers, the caravan master Tane will hold them in high regard and they will earn the praise

of all the merchants and other folk who make up the caravan.

Later that night when the caravan is stopped for the day and people are turning to sleep, the caravan will be visited by a company of szalls. They will strike up a conversation with the caravan master, who will call the pc's to help him deal with them. Assuming the PCs don't kill the szalls outright, it will turn out that the szalls have come with an offer for the humans. A fierce Gourgaz and its band of giaks have taken up residence in the Wildlands not far from where the caravan is, and is terrorizing the szalls forcing them to pay it tithe and to rob and kill travelers journeying in the Wildlands. The Gourgaz and its band are too strong for the szalls to overcome by themselves, and thus they need outside help. It will be up to the PCs to decide whether to help them defeat the Gourgaz or not.

If the PCs decide to help the szalls they will be assured of safe passage through the Wildlands assuming they defeat the Gourgaz. The szalls will lead the PCs to a small building made of stone blocks some distance away. The building is the lair of the Gourgaz, and there will be some giaks patrolling outside. It will be up to the PCs to devise a plan of entering, whether it be a full on daylight assault, sneaking in by night, or anything else. The szalls will aid the PCs if they choose to assault the lair. Either way the PCs will have tough fight on their hands as there are many giaks within the fortress, and the Gourgaz is a mighty foe.

If the PCs declined to aid the szalls, they will be ambushed later on by the giaks and their Gourgaz master. The PCs will have a tough fight on their hands as there are a large number of giaks, all

of whom are more than a match for the caravan guards, and they will have the Gourgaz to contend with as well.

Once the giaks and their master are dealt with the caravan moves on. However, only a few days later riders intercept the caravan. They are led by a Sommlending Knight of the Realm, who demands that the caravan hand over a noblewoman who is riding disguised as part of the caravan. The noblewoman has run away from home because she is in love with a merchant, but her father wishes her back at all cost. It will be up to the PCs to decide whether to let the Knight take the woman, or to protect her.

## Act 1: The Tourney.

*The early morning sun shines down upon the barren wastes of the Wildlands as the large caravan inches its way forward upon the bleak landscape. The caravan, which has just crossed the border of Sommerlund, consists mostly of large wagons each containing trade goods such as clothing, spices and herbs, all headed for Durenor. Each wagon is driven by its merchant owner or, in the case of wealthier merchants, by a hired teamster. The caravan master, a fellow named Tane, rides up and down the length of the caravan, bellowing orders and ensuring every wagon is in its proper place. Guardsmen ride on either side of the caravan, and on the front and at the back, alert for either bandits or the nefarious szalls that plague the Wildlands. There are eight guardsmen in total, and each rides a horse.*

This is a good time for the PCs to get to know each other. They will stand out in the caravan as they are not merchants, and thus it will be easier for them to tell each other apart. Allow them some time for role-playing, introducing themselves to each other and telling each other what exactly they are doing on the caravan. If any PCs are guards, allow them time from their duties to get to know the other party members. Once the PCs have

gotten immersed into some good role-playing, read from the following text:

*Suddenly a loud scream pierces the stillness of the morning. A woman jumps out from a wagon and starts frantically running from one wagon to the next, asking the occupants of each wagon something that you cannot quite overhear from the distance.*

The PCs will naturally want to know what the woman wants. Have them draw closer, upon doing so they will discover that the woman is hysterical. Calming her down is a diplomacy Test with a difficulty of 3. A Brother of the Crystal Star can use the Mind Charm discipline to calm her down instantly without any need for a Test. Alternatively, if the party has a Herbwarden of Bautar among its members the woman will automatically calm down upon seeing the Herbwarden.

Once the woman has calmed down she will speak: *"My little Meesee, she's been bitten by a snake. She's dying; help her I beg you, please save her!"*

If the PCs agree to help her she will take the PCs back to her wagon, which has been parked over to the side. Climbing inside the PCs will find themselves in a darkened interior, with the smell of spices heady in the air. A large man sits in the center of the wagon, cradling the body of a young female child in his arms. He looks up with a tear stricken face and the woman gestures at the PCs and says, *"They say they can help her."* She looks at you with hope glistening in her eyes.

There are two ways to save the girl; either a PC uses a vial of Antitoxin or a Herbwarden in the party uses the Healing Hands discipline. Using one or both of these methods, the poison will be removed and the girl will be cured. If this happens read from the following:

*Some color returns to the little girls face. She starts breathing loudly, her chest moving up and down rapidly. Her eyes flutter open and she looks at the man saying, "Papa?"*

The parents of the girl will be eternally grateful to the PCs and will offer them a ride on their wagon for the duration of the journey. Furthermore they will provide all meals during the journey, so the PCs will not have to use a meal of their own.

If the PCs did not have access to a vial of Antitoxin, or the Healing Hands discipline the girl will die within minutes. Her parents will start grieving, with the woman wailing loudly and the man sobbing quietly into his hands. Nothing the PCs can do will console them and the PCs would do well to leave them be. They will carry the corpse of their daughter all the way Port Bax, with the intention of burying her in the cemetery there.

### **Act 2: Burrowcrawler Attack!**

*The sun moves across the sky as the caravan continues making its way across the Lastlands. Soon it is late afternoon, and Tane comes riding down the length of the caravan inspecting the wagons. He shouts some orders to the guards, telling them to move forward near the front of the caravan. All seems to be going well when suddenly there is a loud scream from somewhere in the middle of the caravan. The scream is abruptly cut off, and is followed by the loud neighing of a horse.*

The scream is that of a guard, and it comes from the other side of the wagons. With the wagons in the way the PCs can't make out what is happening and why he screamed. Tane will yell for the guards while the wagons stop, as everyone tries to look at what happened. The PCs will most likely try to make their way towards the source of the noise. Whether they do or not, read from the following:

*The caravan stops slowly as traders climb aboard the roof of their wagons, trying to make out what is going on. The sound of Tane yelling out for the guards is drowned by the neighing of the horse, and then suddenly that too is cut off. As you make your way to source of the scream, the ground beneath your feet erupts and a massive worm like creature emerges from within! Its fanged maw seeks you out, and dagger like teeth move in for the kill..*

The worms are Burrowcrawlers and they have surrounded the caravan. There are three worms for every PC, though they are not grouped together. If the PCs are scattered around the caravan, have two to three worms attack them apiece. If the PCs are gathered together, have five worms attack them simultaneously while the rest attack the guards, Tane, and any NPC that has its feet on the ground. You do not need to manually run the combat between the guards and the worms; the guards will simply fend off the worms that are attacking them until the PCs come to finish them off. The guards are not used to fighting monsters, so you should run them as if they are overwhelmed by the attack and need the help of the PCs to survive. Furthermore, every four rounds a guard fights a Burrowcrawler, a guard will die. The PCs will realize they need to split up and aid as many beleaguered guards as they possibly can. Tane however, should survive the battle.

### **BURROWCRAWLERS: COMBAT SKILL 16 ENDURANCE 8**

-Burrowcrawlers are a plague to travelers everywhere. They resemble worms except they are huge, have tentacles and a maw filled with dagger like teeth. They seek to bite an opponent and then drag it into the ground, where they eat it at their leisure.

After combat is over Tane will come over and start inspecting the injuries of the guards and any merchant who got caught up in combat. He will congratulate the PCs on their deft handling of the situation and saving the caravan. The guards will offer their heartfelt gratitude for the PCs assistance, and any martially oriented PCs may well be asked for some pointers on how to wield a sword. Tane will pay the PCs 5 GC each, and ask them to be his guards for the duration of the caravan's journey, promising them an additional pay of 5 GC once the caravan reaches Port Bax. Tane will also tell them that he will be

# Terror in the Wildlands

willing to hire them on as guards on the caravan's journey back to Sommerlund. Various merchants who saw the PCs in action will also come up to them and heap praise upon them. This is an excellent time to insert an NPC from your own campaign into the mix and allow him or her to make introductions with the PCs, taking them on as patrons with the promise of future work once the caravan reaches its destination.

Once the PCs have had a chance to catch their breath and immerse themselves into some good role-playing with Tane and the other NPCs, read from the following:

*The day soon gives way to night and Tane calls for a halt. The caravan comes to a stop by a copse of trees, the wagons forming a large circle. Tane assigns guards at various points around the perimeter, while the merchants disembark from their wagons and begin lighting campfires and preparing food. Some pull out musical instruments and start playing them, while a few female members of the caravan start dancing in tune to the music. Soon, the sounds of revelry and merrymaking resound across the Wildlands.*

*Suddenly, a gruff voice pierces the darkness sharply, "WHO GOES THERE!" It seems like it comes from the area around the northernmost wagons. Already you can see Tane and some guards dropping their food and rushing there, weapons drawn.*

The PCs will naturally want to investigate what's going on. If they accepted the position of guards aboard the caravan, they will have no choice but to go after Tane as he calls out to them as he passes them by. Once they reach the area from where they heard the voice they will see a guard pointing at the gloom beyond the campfires with his sword, while Tane and the other guards crowd around him. All have weapons drawn and all appear jumpy. "Reveal yourself stranger!" cries out Tane to the darkness, his voice nervous and not a little bit jittery. Suddenly three small forms melt out of the darkness and come forward, as they enter the light of the campfires all can clearly see the three Szalls standing before them.

*The lead Szall raises its spear towards the sky as if saluting the gathered men, and speaks, "Greetings humans. We come in peace. We come seeking your aid."*

*It falls silent and Tane looks around, his gaze coming to rest over you. He beckons you over and says, "You seem to have some experience dealing with strange creatures. Ask these creatures what they want, and send them on their way."*

The Szalls in the Wildlands have come under some trouble lately. It so happened that a band of Giaks, led by a mighty Gourgaz traveled over from the Darklands and made the Wildlands their home. They constructed a fortress from massive stone blocks, and are robbing and murdering travelers passing through the area, which just happens to be one of the major trading routes taken by caravans and other travelers passing through the Wildlands. The land they have made their home originally belonged to the szalls, and they have been driven out by the giaks. The szalls are too scared of the Gourgaz to mount any serious counter offensive, and thus they decided among themselves to seek help from the humans passing through the Wildlands. The fortress of the Gourgaz lies only a few hours journey from the caravan; the szalls can guide anyone there relatively safely.

The lead Szall will relate all of this information in a broken accent if questioned about what it and its companions want. The Szalls may be small, but they don't take well to threats. If any of the PCs seek to bully them, they will shake their weapons menacingly and refuse to answer that PC's questions further.

Ultimately, the Szalls want help in defeating the Gourgaz and its Giak minions. They will say that the Giaks have already learned of the caravans presence, and will undoubtedly seek to attack and loot it as it journey's further into the Wildlands, and thus by helping them the humans are helping themselves. In return for their help the Szalls have little to offer save their

gratitude. They will agree to promise never to raid any caravan or any human passing through, though whether they will keep to this promise is anyone's guess. If there is any obviously martially oriented PC among the party, like an armor clad Knight or a weapon wielding Kai Lord, the Szalls will direct their pleas to him or her. Finally, the szalls have organized a raiding party of their own. They only need skilled humans in the vanguard to lead the attack, and take the fight directly to the Gourgaz.

At this point, after hearing all the Szalls have to say, Tane will turn towards the PCs and say, "Well its your choice whether you want to help them or not. I personally don't know whether to believe them.. This could be a trap to separate the guards from the caravan, which these creatures could then loot at will. But if what they are saying is true, then we have a much more serious problem to deal with. It might be better to deal with it before it becomes a problem to the caravan."

The decision to aid the Szalls lies with the PCs. Tane will not agree to send any of his own guards with the Szalls. If the PCs agree to help the szalls, continue on with Act 3. If they decline the Szalls, then skip to Act 4.

## **Act 3: The Fortress of Doom.**

*You gather your things and set off with the Szalls. Word has gotten around the caravan of your quest and many have gathered to wish you well. A Gourgaz is a terrible foe and all present know it. Assuming the szalls spoke the truth, most of the well wishers do not seem to think you will return in one piece. Tane has agreed to keep the caravan in its present location until you return. If you don't, he plans to take his chances and strike on anyway.*

*It is almost midnight when you finally strike off into the wilds. The Szalls lead the way in silence and they walk at a fast clip despite their short stature. It is impossible to make out anything in the night, with the moon hidden behind a cover of clouds the light of the stars offers the only light to guide your way.*



*The hours pace swiftly and dawn is breaking over the horizon when the szalls finally stop by a copse of trees. The lead Szall cups its hands over its mouth and sounds a whistle disguised as a birdcall. There is an answering whistle from the copse of trees and suddenly a small host of Szalls emerge from within. They greet the three szalls accompanying you in silence, and gaze over at you wonderingly. This is surely the Szall war party the Szalls told you about. There are six of them, all wield weapons, and appear focused enough at the task at hand.*

*The lead Szall gestures you forward past the copse of trees. It gestures at the distance, and as you gaze past his pointing finger you can make out the outline of a medium sized building made of large stone blocks upon the horizon. Two figures, which look like Giaks, are patrolling the area in front of the building.*

*"Lead us human. We go and we kill them all," says the Szall, hatred burning in its eyes.*

There are two real ways the PCs can hope to attack the fortress, they can attempt stealth, or they can make an all out attack. There are sparse clusters of trees and shrubs between their present location and the fortress, making stealth possible. If they attempt this, have them make a Test with a difficulty of 7. Kai Lords can use their Camouflage discipline to gain a bonus to this Test. A Brother of the Crystal Star can use the spell of Silence, if he has it, to gain a +3 bonus on this Test. A Magician of Dessi with the Elementalism discipline can summon a gnome, an earth elemental, which will burrow a tunnel underground till the fortresses entrance. By doing this the PCs bypass the need to make a Test and emerge *behind* the two Giaks patrolling the entrance. If they do this, the Test for stealth versus the two patrolling Giaks is only at a difficulty of 4. If the PCs are successful at stealth they can make a free attack on the Giaks, ignoring all damage dealt to them in the first round. If they fail the Test, they are spotted and one of the Giaks rushes inside the fortress to sound the alarm. Bow wielding or ranged attack magic wielding PCs can attempt a ranged attack against the Giaks, but if they fail

to kill them in the first round, one of the Giaks rushes inside to sound the alarm.

In lieu of the above the PCs can attempt an all out attack. If the PCs charge the two Giaks, both of them rush inside to sound the alarm. The Szalls follow the lead of the PCs, using stealth if the PCs are attempting it, or charging along with them if they attempt a charge.

If the alarm is sounded 12 Giaks rush out of the fortress soon after, fully geared for battle.

#### GIAKS:

COMBAT SKILL 13 ENDURANCE 16

-Giaks are the main troops of the Darklords of Helgedad. They form the backbone of any dark army that emerges from the Darklands, and are mostly found there. They are tough, resilient and a lifetime of conflict has ensured that they are more than a match for most humans.

The Szalls rush into battle against the Giaks along with the PCs, though they are no match for the Giaks one on one. However, they can have some measure of success if they gang up on the Giaks. You do not need to roll dice for the Szalls; you can run their combat narratively. Basically, every three Szalls will take on one Giak. If they do this they will kill it in four rounds of fighting, during which time the Giak is completely occupied with the szalls and cannot attack the PCs. Furthermore, one Szall will die per Giak attacked in the fourth round.

If the PCs used stealth or other means to dispatch the two Giaks patrolling the outside, they can sneak into the fortress. Once inside they will find themselves in a courtyard where five Giaks are practicing weapons training. Stealth is impossible at this point so they will be noticed. However, the PCs have the opportunity to rush them and gain the advantage. If they do this, ignore all

damage to the PCs during the first round of combat. Furthermore, the Giaks were using wooden swords to practice, so reduce their COMBAT SKILL by four. The sounds of combat will draw the remaining seven Giaks out of the fortress and into the courtyard, where combat proceeds as normal.

Once the Giaks are dispatched, it is up to the PCs to explore the fortress, find the Gourgaz and slay it. The courtyard leads to a large hallway joined to which are adjacent rooms. These rooms served as the barracks for the giaks. Empty straw beds line the filthy chamber, with the only other items of note being articles of ragged clothing, pieces of leather armor, and a few rusty swords and axes. The main hallway leads to raised stone steps, which in turn lead up to a large chamber. This chamber has a large, lush carpet covering its floor and bags of booty line the walls. At the end of the chamber lies a throne carved of solid stone, and sitting on the throne is the Gourgaz, dressed in plate armor with a massive black colored battle axe in its lap.

Once the PCs reach this room, read from the following:

*The Gourgaz raises its head, and stares right at you. All attempts at stealth are futile as the creature can smell you from its seat on the throne. Slowly, ponderously it rises from its throne, taking up the massive battleaxe in both its scaly hands. Its tail lashes to and fro like a frenzied serpent, and the Szalls with you tremble with fear. They stand still in the entryway to the chamber, refusing to go any further. You will have to face this creature alone...*

#### GOURGAZ:

COMBAT SKILL 18 ENDURANCE 35

-Strong, merciless and the perfect fighting machine, Gourgaz are a swamp dwelling race who have been harnessed by the Darklords as their commanders in battle. During times of war Gourgaz lead war bands of Giaks into battle. They usually cut swathes of destruction

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through anyone foolish enough to stand in their way using their massive black axes.

The Gourgaz doesn't waste any time on idle chatter or tactics. It just brutally rushes the PCs, secure in its armor and its battle prowess. This is a battle to the death, and PCs need to win if they are to have any hope of securing the Wildlands from this terror.

If the PCs are victorious they are free to explore the chamber. The sacks lining the walls contain the booty from the Gourgaz's raids upon travelers traveling the Wildlands. There are articles of fine clothing, silks, spices, weapons, armor, and jewels. All in all the entire haul is worth 300GC at the least, though the PCs will have to find a place to sell all the items and carry around the items in the interim.

The Szalls meanwhile will be very grateful that the PCs killed the Gourgaz that was terrorizing them. They will let the PCs take as much of the booty as they want without complaint and will offer to send one of their number to guide the caravan safely to Port Bax.

When the PCs return to the caravan they are greeted like heroes. The caravan member's heap lavish praise upon them and Tane slaps them all on the back heartily. "You did a great thing today, making this area safe for not just us but all future travelers".

Once the PCs are ready to move on, skip on to Act 5.

## **Act 4: Ambush!**

*The Szalls turn away in disappointment when you refuse to help them, and soon vanish away into the night. Tane shrugs and says to you, "Bah, they are untrustworthy creature. You did well by not going with them. It's better for you and for the caravan if you stay with us." Bidding you farewell for the night he walks away towards one of the campfires to finish his meal. Soon, the campfires die away and the merchants turn in to sleep for the night.*

*The next day dawn breaks bright and clear, and the caravan resumes its journey towards Port Bax. Tane leads from the front and has ordered all guards to keep be extra careful, in case the szalls were telling the truth. So far nothing seems out of place, and you can only hope it remains so.*

If any of the PCs have declared they are keeping an eye out for any hostile activity have them roll a Test with a difficulty of 5. If they succeed they spot a war party of Giaks cresting a small hill on the far right. They have only one round to make preparations before the Giaks charge. The charging giaks will be upon the caravan in two rounds, during which time the PCs can pick as many of as possible using ranged attacks. Behind the Giaks comes a Gourgaz, wielding a massive two handed axe made of black metal. The Giaks in the front grant cover to the Gourgaz, so it is impossible to hit it with any ranged attacks. If the PCs were unsuccessful with the spot Test, or they did not declare that they were keeping an eye out, then the Giaks catch everyone by surprise. They will be on the caravan in only one round.

As the Giaks charge Tane yells out to the guards to meet them in combat. The giaks go straight for any weapon wielding foe they can see, including the PCs. The guards are no match for the bloodthirsty Giaks, who will try to gang up on them with around two Giaks for every guard. Every four rounds the Giaks fight the guards, a guard dies. The guards can try to gang up on the Giaks but there are too many of them, if they see one of their own being overwhelmed they will swarm in to its aid. It will be up to the PCs to save the day! There are 14 Giaks in total and the Gourgaz. The Gourgaz will gauge the battle and go for the PC who kills the most Giaks in the shortest amount of time.

**GIAKS X14:**

**COMBAT SKILL 13 ENDURANCE 16**

**GOURGAZ:**

**COMBAT SKILL 22 ENDURANCE 35**

Once the battle is over and the PCs survive, the entire caravan will congratulate them, and offer them their heartfelt thanks for saving their lives. Tane will direct any wounded/dead guards and/or PCs into a hastily emptied wagon for proper care. Later, he will come up to the PCs and say, "I wish I could offer you some sort of reward for saving all our lives, but I don't have much money left. My thanks is all I can give."

Once the caravan is ready to move on, go on to Act 5.

## **Act 5: Troublesome Nuptials**

*The next few days pass by swiftly and uneventfully, and the caravan makes good headway towards its destination. It has passed Ragdaron and is more than three fourths of the way across the Wildlands. You are enjoying the warm sunshine of a particularly lovely morning when suddenly a guard rides up and yells for Tane. "Riders! Riders at the rear, and coming up fast!"*

*"What now?" Tane mouths, immediately wheeling his mount around and riding off of towards the rear, gesturing at you to follow him.*

Once the PCs are at the rear of the caravan they can make out six riders making their way towards the caravan. They are led by an intimidating figure clad in plate armor and a distinctive round steel helm, and bearing a shield with the crest of the House of Ulnar upon it. Any Sommlending PCs in the party will immediately recognize the figure as a Knight of Sommerlund. The remaining riders are clad in chain and do not bear any heraldry. Tane will ride out to meet the riders and will invite the PCs to come along. If they do so, read from the following:

*The lead rider pulls hard on his reigns and comes to a stop in front of Tane. The other riders do likewise. The lead rider raises the visor of his helm and speaks, "Good day to you. I am Sir Rothfurd of the House of Ulnar of fair Sommerlund. I am on most urgent business of Lord Valnek Harrington, esteemed nobleman of Sommerlund. I must speak with the caravan master of this caravan immediately."*

*Tane inclines his head and remarks, "Well met Sir Rothfurd. I am Tane, master of this caravan. Please tell me what I can do for you."*

*Sir Rothfurd takes off his helm revealing a face chiseled as if from granite, with high cheekbones and a jutting chin. His crystal clear blue eyes shine with intelligence, and he says, "The daughter of Lord Valnek, the lady Crystal, is aboard this caravan. She is disguised as a commoner, and rides with a merchant by the name of Taloran. She has run away from home and Lord Valnek requests her to be brought back at all cost."*

*"I know the man." Tane says hurriedly, and gestures at you. "She is in the sixth wagon from the rear. Go and bring her here."*

Crystal has indeed run away from home. Her father wished her to marry the son of another nobleman of Sommerlund, but Crystal is in love with the merchant Taloran. She wishes only to marry him and live out her days by his side.

The PCs can find Taloran's wagon easily by following Tane's directions. The merchant is riding on top and a beautiful woman is at his side. Even though mud streaks her face it does not hide her beauty nor signs of her obviously high birth. When the PCs approach he waves cheerfully and asks them what is going on. If the PCs inform him of the situation the woman, who is actually Crystal, throws her hands up in the air with and yells out, "I knew it! I knew father would not give up on me so easily. Oh Taloran, whatever shall we do?" They confer briefly in whispers, then they disembark and head straight for the company of riders.

*Crystal walks up to Sir Rothfurd and says, "I order you to return back home. I already told father I do not wish to marry Sigfreid. I am in love with Taloran and will only marry him."*

*Taloran nods his head and adds, "And I love her."*

*Sir Rothfurd sighs and shakes his head. "Nay my lady, this I cannot do. I am under strict orders to bring you back at all cost."*

*Sir Rothfurd gestures and the company of men dismount, and two of them head for Crystal. When they reach for her, Taloran draws a short sword from his belt and yells, "I will not let you take her!" At this, the men draw swords from their belts and unlike the merchant they seem to know how to use them*

*Crystal screams and turns to you with a pleading look in her eyes. "You saved the caravan twice, now I beg you to help me. Please do not let them take me."*

This situation presents a moral dilemma for the PCs. There is no right answer. One the one hand, a high ranking nobleman of Sommerlund requests that his wayward daughter be brought back to him. On the other hand, the daughter does not wish to be brought back, claiming that she is in love. The PCs can either stand aside and let Sir Rothfurd's men take her (after they have wounded and disarmed Taloran) or they can attempt to stop them.

This situation could easily come to blows and if so Sir Rothfurd will not hesitate to join in. Tane and the caravan guards will remain uninvolved either way. Fighting can be avoided by diplomacy but it will be

hard. No amount of Tests will dissuade Sir Rothfurd, but a Mind Charm spell will as long as it is cast discreetly so as not to rouse the suspicions of the men at arms. There are other ways mass bloodshed can be avoided. If there is a Knight in the party he can challenge sir Rothfurd to a duel, with the victor dictating terms. A Magician of Dessi or a Vakeros Battlemage can declare the duo to be under the protection of the Magi Regnanti, and thus be diplomatically immune. Whatever the case, if the PCs manage to prevent Sir Rothfurd from absconding with Crystal, she will ask for their help in safeguarding her in the future, which could result in any number of adventures for the PCs.

Sir ROTHFURD :  
COMBAT SKILL 20 ENDURANCE 32

MEN AT ARMS X5:  
COMBAT SKILL 15 ENDURANCE 22

Once the situation is resolved either way, read from the following:

*After only a few more days the caravan completes its journey and finally reaches Port Bax. The guards at the gates wave you in cheerfully, and the caravan stops inside, dispersing as the merchants each head to their respective destinations. Each merchant stops by to offer you once again their heartfelt thanks for saving their lives.*

*Tane comes by and repeats his offer of hiring you as guards for the journey back to Sommerlund, which will happen in two weeks time. Until then, Port Bax lies before you, its dusty streets and well swept cobbles filled with adventure and opportunity. It is up to you to make of it what you will.*

The End.

Although no two megacorporations are exactly alike, there are enough similarities between them to allow a study of one to serve as a study of all.

The following general survey of the history, organisation and activities of SuSAG will serve to illustrate how megacorporations operate and delineate their powers and limitations.

### HISTORY

Schunamann und Sohn, AG, LIC was founded in 252 by Gustav Schunamann, a professor of biochemical engineering and his son Reinhardt, a doctor of medicine.

A few years earlier, the elder Schunamann had resigned his position at the Imperial University to pursue private research. The result of this research was the discovery of a radically new technique for the isolation of various forms of the psionic drug, psioniline.

Schunamann patented the process and licensed it to several manufacturing concerns. By 252, using the royalties which had accumulated, the Schunamanns purchased a near bankrupt pharmaceuticals company which carried an old Sylean charter (and was thus entitled to a limited Imperial charter automatically) and renamed it Schunamann und Sohn AG, LIC (retaining the archaic AG).

Shortly afterward, Schunamann announced a new, more efficient process (which he had evidently discovered years before) and the new company, (commonly known as SuSAG) rapidly drove almost all competing drugs off the market.

The company's early years were stormy ones. The Imperial University brought suit against SuSAG, charging that Schunamann had developed his processes

while at the university, and thus they belonged to the government. Other firms brought numerous other lawsuits.

SuSAG defended itself successfully from all these attacks, but they instilled in SuSAG and the Schunamann family a corporate paranoia which was to heavily color the firm's actions for the first two centuries of its existence. This paranoia, although it has lessened over the centuries, can still be detected in some of SuSAG's actions to this day.

*Perhaps because he was a researcher at heart, Gustav established a policy of devoting large sums to exploratory research, and SuSAG's well-equipped laboratories rapidly attracted some of the best minds in the Imperium, another characteristic of SuSAG which persists to this day. Gustav's heavy emphasis on research brought the company numerous new products and manufacturing processes, which laid a strong foundation for the company's future growth. The discoveries were not always in the field of pharmaceuticals, however, and the company began to diversify into medical products in general, and later into related areas such as chemistry and genetic engineering. The deep-set paranoia of the early years prevented SuSAG from selling or licensing any of its discoveries to other companies. Many good ideas languished in the company files for years, because SuSAG did not have the resources to develop them, but did not want any other company to benefit from them.*

SuSAG's dominance of the psi drug market caused it to be hardest hit by the PsionicsSuppressions of 800 to 826. The manufacture and sale of all psionic drugs was declared illegal, all manufacturing plants within the Imperium closed down, and all stockpiles confiscated. Although

SuSAG had considerably diversified its activities by this time, the suppressions nearly destroyed the company.

The massive loss of revenue forced a number of emergency measures on the company, including sizable loans from other megacorporations. As part of the arrangements, large blocks of SuSAG stock were transferred to the other firms. Up until that time, the Schunamann family had retained over 75% of SuSAG stock, and the forced transfer caused considerable loss of revenue to the family. Eventually, some of this stock was reclaimed, but significant amounts are still retained by others, most notably Hortalez et Cie (9%), GSbAG (5%), and Sternmetal Horizons LIC. (3%). The resulting change in the composition of the board of directors was ultimately beneficial for SuSAG, since it diluted the paranoid tendencies of the Schunamann family, which had dominated the board up to that time.

Although it took decades to recover from the damage done by the loss of the Psionic Suppressions, SuSAG resumed a slow, steady growth, gradually expanding into new markets, such as synthetics, industrial chemicals, and (most controversially) chemical and biological warfare agents for the Imperial military.

SuSAG is responsible for a number of major advances in anagathic research, and is one of the largest suppliers of anagathic drugs in the Imperium. In addition, through a number of factories located outside the Imperium (owned by a chain of subsidiary companies), SuSAG has continued the manufacture of psionic drugs, some of which illicitly find their way back into the Imperium, where they bring premium prices because of their quality and purity.

SuSAG does not engage in smuggling of these drugs into the Imperium.

Throughout its development, SuSAG made it a policy to purchase control of numerous subsidiary companies. Often it was cheaper for SuSAG to acquire an existing company in order to move operations into a new region of space or to move into a new field. Often SuSAG would buy a company to engage in operations to which SuSAG did not wish to have its name associated. The firms outside the Imperium which manufacture psionic drugs are owned through a long and complex chain of holding companies, dummy corporations, and interlocking directorates.

To catalog the activities of SuSAG and all its subsidiary companies would take more space than is available here. Basically, it can be said that if it's done, SuSAG owns at least one company that does it. Major subsidiary companies are under the control of the board of directors; lesser companies are under the control of the divisional vice-presidents or the regional general managers.

## ORGANIZATION

SuSAG is organised in a similar fashion to most other limited Imperial corporations, that is, there is a board of directors, a president, and numerous vice-presidents. One vice-president is responsible for the control of one of the seven divisions of the company: the pharmaceuticals division, the medical and surgical products division, the industrial chemicals division, the gendering division, the CBW (chemical and bacteriological warfare) division, the research division, and the extra-imperial division.

Each divisional vice-president has a number of executive assistants which are not directly in the chain of command. These assist in the administration and operation of the division, but do not set policy. Under the divisional vice-presidents are the division's numerous regional general managers. The most important operating officers of SuSAG, these RGMs and their assistants control the operations of a SuSAG division inside

a particular region of space. A region may range in size from a few systems in the heavily populated regions of the Imperium around Core sector, to several subsectors in more sparsely populated regions.

Note that the boundaries of a region belonging to one division often do not completely coincide with those of another.

In frontier regions, one person may occupy the position of RGM for several divisions. In more densely populated areas, there are several RGMs, who may consult with one another, but only have authority over their own division's activities. This system could lead to inter-divisional rivalry, but seldom does, since each SuSAG division rarely competes directly with another. Many times, however, subsidiary companies will be working at cross-purposes, sometimes actually engaging in trade wars with other SuSAG subsidiaries. Naturally, these are ended as soon as they are discovered, but with an entity as large as SuSAG, it is difficult to keep track of who is and who is not on your side.

### Advertising

An overall advertising policy is set by the board of directors. Individual divisions each have an advertising executive, responsible for overseeing the advertising for that division. Subsidiary companies co-ordinate their advertising efforts with those of SuSAG.

### Security

Many megacorporations contract out all but the most important security measures to independent security companies. SuSAG maintains an unusually large and well-equipped corporate security force which handles all aspects of their security requirements.

There are many reasons behind this.

Many of SuSAG's products are compact, extremely valuable, and easily resold on the black market. Because of the value of their manufacturing processes, SuSAG

manufacturing plants and research installations are often the target of industrial espionage by rival firms. SuSAG's CBW installations are often the subject of raids by terrorists seeking to steal CBW weaponry or sabotage by anti-CBW activists. The company's unreservedly poor reputation for safety, particularly in its CBW plants, causes a great deal of vandalism at all SuSAG installations.

These factors, combined with the company's extreme distrust of any outside agency, explain SuSAG's extensive security establishment.

Most security forces are under the direct control of the various RGMs, and operate only in the region to which they are assigned. The board of directors, however, maintains several units of wide-ranging trouble-shooters who are assigned to particular sensitive areas of very important installations, Mercenaries. In spite of its desire to keep everything in house, SuSAG often hires mercenary units for actions with which it does not wish its name (or that of a subsidiary associated. By company policy, mercenaries can only be hired on the authority of the RGM, but this is usually done through several intermediaries (usually SuSAG security personnel).

## THE DIVISIONS

The operations of SuSAG's various divisions are outlined below.

### Pharmaceuticals Division

This division manufactures and markets medical drugs for treatment and prevention of various pathological conditions, therapeutic drugs such as anagathics, veterinary and horticultural drugs, and surgical drugs such as anesthetics and muscle-relaxants.

### Medical and Surgical Products Division

This division manufactures and markets non-pharmaceutical medical and surgical products such as diagnostic equipment,

surgical instruments and supplies, and prosthetic devices such as replacement limbs.

## Industrial Chemicals Division

This division manufactures chemicals used by other companies in manufacturing processes. Several subsidiary companies provide chemicals of extreme purity for scientific applications.

## Geneering Division

This division manufactures gendered organisms for specific industrial and agricultural applications.

## CBW Division

This division manufactures chemical and bacteriological weapons and defenses exclusively for the Imperial military and its allies. Despite the fact that all such plants are located on isolated, uninhabitable worlds, this division has a very poor reputation for safety.

## Research Division

This division is not engaged in manufacturing, but conducts a constant search for new products and new ways of making old products.

## Extra-imperial Division

This division is in charge of all SuSAG activities outside the Imperium, which includes those of all SuSAG subsidiary companies. Many of these activities would be illegal if carried out inside the Imperium, such as the manufacture of psionic drugs.

Because of the lack of reliable protection for its installations and products, SuSAG security teams assigned to extra-Imperial duties are as heavily equipped as most planetary military forces. They are often assigned company starships for the protection of extremely valuable facilities (such as the psi drug factories.)

## POLICIES AND GOALS

SuSAG's main goals are to make money, retain its position of power relative to other megacorporations, retain its control

of its current markets, develop new markets for old products, and develop and market new products (nothing really surprising).

SuSAG has a great desire to improve its poor public image, and spends billions of credits annually on advertising with this in mind.

SuSAG facilities engaged in the manufacture of extremely valuable or dangerous products (such as its pharmaceutical, psi and CBW plants) are located in remote and sparsely populated areas whenever possible. This was done to minimize potential deaths in the case of an accident, and to facilitate protection of the plants and their products. Psi drug plants are especially vulnerable because of the high value of their product on the black market, and receive especially high levels of protection by corporate security. CBW plants are usually assigned units of the Imperial military for protection, but company security at these plants is also heavy.

## CORPORATE/GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The Imperium has the power to tax megacorporations and regulate certain of their actions. SuSAG's power, in certain areas, is probably equal to the Imperium. Active hostilities, however, would be bad for business.

SuSAG maintains that a stable interstellar government is good for business, and that keeping the Imperium in power is in their own best interests.

For this reason, SuSAG never actively opposes the Imperium, or works for its downfall. This does not mean that no SuSAG division ever violates the law, merely that they keep violations to a minimum, and try not to get caught.

Outside the Imperium, SuSAG still exercises restraint in opposing Imperial interests.

## Local Governments

By Imperial law, SuSAG is required to comply with whatever local laws are in effect. As a general rule, SuSAG prefers not to overtly oppose a legitimate planetary government. Usually, the firm has sufficient covert influence to persuade a government to exempt it from most restrictions.

Unlike most other megacorporations, few worlds are under SuSAG's direct control. This is due to a company policy, promulgated to help SuSAG's public image. Corporate control of a world is usually resented by the populace, and in SuSAG's case, this could lead to outright rebellion. However, SuSAG retains covert political and economic control of a number of worlds throughout the Imperium and beyond, through subsidiaries.

## SUSAG IN THE SPINWARD MARCHES

SuSAG's presence in the Spinward Marches sector dates from the acquisition of a chemical facility on Mora in 427. Expansion proceeded rapidly, and all divisions were active in the Marches by 600. Massive stockpiles of CBW Weaponry and Countermeasures were sold to the Imperium at the start of the Third Frontier War (none were used), and at the war's end a CBW plant was established on Shirene (Lunion 0505).

SuSAG has other major facilities in the Rhylanor (Rhylanor 0306), Fornice (Morn 0605), and Trin (Trin's Veil 0805) systems. SuSAG subsidiaries have facilities at most non-Zhodani systems.

Each SuSAG division maintains offices at A and B starports in the Marches.

SuSAG maintains no offices and owns no subsidiaries in territories under Zhodani control, but some trade was done before the recent war.

The extra-imperial division maintains a large psi drug manufacturing facility at Tarsus (District 268 0308), as well as other (non-psi drug) facilities in the Zamine (Darrian 0401), and Collace (District 268 0407) systems.

District 268 is considered an important enough region to rate an RGM all its own.

### SUSAG IN THE SOLOMANI RIM

SuSAG has an extensive presence in the Rim, dating from the acquisition of Inidu (Concord 0806) from its original owners

in 425, just before the admission of the Easter Concord into the Imperium.

All divisions of SuSAG are active in the Rim, and its offices can be found at all A and B starports in Imperial space.

Inidu is owned by SuSAG's R&D division, and the populace is employed by SuSAG.

The Extra Imperial division, through subsidiary companies, has installations on dozens of worlds within the Solomani Confederation. SuSAG's affiliation with these companies is kept hidden from the

public at large, because of the bad feeling that would be generated by an Imperial firm controlling Solomani companies. Manufacture of psi drugs is illegal in the Solomani Confederation, and SuSAG runs no psi drug plants there (although, as with the Imperium, smuggled SuSAG psi drugs are sold on the black market).

### CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this brief look at SuSAG will help referees to run player interactions with all megacorporations.



# Sieges in the World of Clockwork & Chivalry

By Peter Cakebread and Ken Walton

## Introduction

The English Civil War was characterised by the proliferation of siege warfare (there were 300+ sieges in total), and the *Clockwork & Chivalry* world is no different. Up and down the country, houses, towns, cities and castles are, or have been, besieged – some by the Royalists, some by the Parliamentarians. Some of these sieges have lasted years, such as the Siege of Plimouth; others have been vast affairs requiring many men and resources (over 30,000 men besieged York and more than that, perhaps 35,000 besieged Gloucester); some besieged places have seen many reversals, property changing hands numerous times, back and forth, as the war over a piece of contested territory has swung one way or the other, forces taking it in turns to invest themselves around a strategic prize; and sometimes sieges have been won, or abandoned, quickly – a successful assault or robust defence putting paid to longer term plans.

Sieges are often as much a means of tying down a numerically superior army than anything else – in England where defences are not that modern or extensive (compared to on the European continental mainland, where countries have been involved in a bitter conflict for decades), truly decisive victories are usually decided by field armies on the open battlefield. Both sides claim that such open warfare is still their preferred method of settling matters. However, as the Civil War has ground to a stalemate, both sides exhausted after Naseby and cautious due to the level of casualties Alchemical and Clockwork weapons can cause, slow burning sieges are par for the course, a means of signalling the war is ongoing, despite the lull in the manoeuvring of the field armies. Siege warfare is no soft option, however – the lives of those involved, civilian or soldier, are often lost or ruined; and, like many features of the Civil War, sieges are the source of varied, dramatic and sometimes peculiar happenings.

This article explores the rich gaming opportunities that siege warfare provides, as well as giving some background information useful when running games where Adventurers encounter a siege in progress.

## The Lie of the Land

The time it takes to organise forces and undertake a campaign in the seventeenth century means that often a force will have some time to prepare itself for a siege. This will involve the gathering of men, arms, supplies and equipment; the fortification and strengthening of defences; and possibly the widespread evacuation and demolition of suburbs to create a defensible space (e.g., in Stafford hundreds of people were displaced as the orders came to clear and destroy all the buildings within musket range of the town walls). Of course there was as much destruction within the town or city, as earth and building supplies were scavenged to supplement the defences (the very foundations of buildings might be undermined in the quest to gather such materials).

In the end, success might be a matter of numerical superiority; who has the best access to supplies or means of preventing access (if, for instance, the besieged town is coastal and can be supplied from the sea it may be able to last out forever. If the attacker has access to ships with which a blockade can be imposed the defenders advantage can be neutralised); whether the ravages of disease can be avoided; and the resolution of the parties involved. But the defences, dispositions, weapons of war and expertise of those wielding them will all play their parts.

## Cannon

Although potentially useful, seventeenth century cannon often cause more noise than damage. Usually ammunition is very scarce, the fire inaccurate and the pieces prone to unreliability. When the might

barrage was unleashed against Hull, which involved several Royalist batteries, including the mighty guns “Gog” and “Magog”, only three casualties were caused (a woman and two children). Nevertheless the hurling of a few rounds per day at a defender can become a regular nerve-racking trial – such a barrage can shake morale and cause panic. In addition, a lucky shot might even take a life, breach a wall or light a fire (wooden buildings are constantly in danger of being engulfed by flames), or worse still, a powder store might be hit. Such events can cause havoc and help change the final outcome of a siege.



towns. Such actions mean that the ensuing conflict might range around a large area, pickets guarding hastily constructed embankments and street fighting and skirmishing might break out where such scratch-built defences are breached. In essence, such an arrangement might lead to a series of pitched battles, possibly over a considerable number of days. Other sieges take place around heavily fortified, easily defensible locations like castles or fortified manors – perhaps the attacker might never even attempt to breach such a strong position, relying on hunger, disease and desertion to do the job instead.

Whatever the location of the siege, aside from natural and pre-existing defences, new defences will often be erected on both sides of the siege-lines, for the attacker does not want to be caught unaware either – defenders often sally forth to teach an attacker a lesson, to relieve boredom, to take a strategic advantage, or even



in an attempt to lift a siege. Banks and ditches might be dug; sharpened staves are set, ready to deter charging cavalry; fences are erected to provide cover, or pulled down to allow enfilading fire. Don't underestimate the sophistication of such defences – although it is only the new Clockwork technology that offers any automated building, both sides are capable of deploying fortifications, trenches, redoubts, batteries and raised approaches on a grand scale – all of which makes the boldest attacker think twice before launching a direct assault on a, even heavily outnumbered, defender.



Clampe's map of the Siege of Newark - note the ring of defences around the town.

## Sniping

The use of skilled snipers can be demoralising and deadly (for both attackers and defenders). While a numerous foe might be merely harassed by such fire, a scant force might find themselves decimated over time to a point that they feel they can no longer continue. As in most things pertaining to the Civil War there is no fast rule to the use of snipers – some forces have few men armed with appropriate weapons, or skilled enough to use them effectively, and certainly there were no dedicated units of snipers as such. The inaccuracy of musket fire means such warfare is in its infancy. Nevertheless, the first recorded British victim of a sniper was the Parliamentarian Lord Brooke in 1643, and there are certainly tales of effective sniping – such as the deadly fire from Lady Charlotte's snipers defending Lathom House.

## Petards

Grenades might be used when assaulting, although they were rare and of limited use. Petards were also employed – essentially an explosive charge which would be attached to a target (often tower doors etc.) and then exploded. A petard consists of a wooden backplate, a metal container with a hole for a fuse and a few pounds of gunpowder. The petardier's assistant is expected to run through the enemy's fire (which is often horrendous) and attach the thing (by screwing in a hook to the surface to be blown then suspending the petard), light a fuse (with a slow match lit at both ends), and, if still alive, retire to a safe distance. The attackers might cause a breach in the defences this way although they might be unlucky and become victims of an explosion themselves – the charges are notoriously unstable. The petardier himself is not expected to make the dash; as a gunpowder expert, he is far too valuable. On the other hand such means could be very effective – Farnham Castle fell after the doors were blown in by a petard, the attacking Parliamentarians finding a way to breach the walls even though they had no artillery. Any would-be petard setter should note that it is better to run back to one's own lines in a zig-zag – the metal container tends to fly toward the defenders' lines as the gunpowder (hopefully) takes its toll in the opposite direction.

*Rules:* The fuse of a petard takes 1D3+3 turns to burn through (secret Games Master roll). Anything to which the petard is attached will take 8D8 damage. The canister shoots out of the back with a range of 10m; anyone within range must make a successful Evade roll (+20% if the player has already stated his intention to zig-zag). Anyone hit by the canister takes 2D6 damage to a single random location. If the petard was not successfully attached, anyone and anything within 15m takes 3D6 damage to all hit locations.

## Tunnels

Tunnels might serve a variety of purposes. Many castles have secret tunnels already in existence that provide an emergency

exit, a means of sneaking in goods and reinforcements and a means of maintaining some general freedom of movement. Some sieges are conducted with limited enthusiasm (in reality, although those concerned would deny it to any superior officers), but others are vigorous affairs. Tunnels might be built to find an entrance into an area, or often to create a chamber to set a charge so that walls can be undermined, etc. Petardiers were responsible for supervising the setting of such explosives. A defender might well build their own tunnels to counter the attacker's – which can lead to the grim tunnel fighting and counter-measure explosions more commonly associated with the First World War; for instance, in York a mine was set by the attackers which was packed with explosives but the defenders managed to stop the attack by digging their own tunnel which cut off the attackers' tunnel.

## Sieges and the Rules of War

Seventeenth century warfare was characterised by a whole set of accepted agreements about how to resolve a siege and what treatment a surrendering or defeated force might expect at the hands of the victors. There are general principles which govern such affairs as well as a variety of patterns of negotiations which might vary according to the commanders involved. Generally there will be quarter offered to a defender if they surrender. This opportunity might be offered more than once as the siege progresses. There also might be arrangements made for allowing movement in and out of the besieged area – for instance, women and children might be permitted to leave, or might be forced to stay. Some of the negotiations are long and drawn out affairs. Indeed, some defenders dissembled and quibbled while negotiating purely for the purpose of stretching out the siege in the hope of a relieving force arriving or to maximise the inconvenience to the attacking army. But there is a danger – too much prevarication, or fighting too hard a defence and then surrendering might mean that, when the

# Sieges in the World of Clockwork & Chivalry

inevitable comes, no quarter is given. For the besieged there is often a difficult choice, particularly if they have little hope of holding out or being relieved. It may be that by declining the opportunity to surrender, the defenders risk greater reprisals when the inevitable capitulation occurs – but for a defending commanding officer, there is the risk of being tried as a traitor by his own side if he does surrender. Charles I executed some of his commanders for surrendering their positions, it is doubtful that Rupert would take a much more lenient view of such cowardice. The Parliamentarians might take an equally harsh line. For example, when the Parliamentarian Commander, Captain Thomas Steele, Governor of Beeston Castle, surrendered (after having been surprised by a night-time assault by an enemy Captain, Thomas Sandford, with a mere eight men), he was tried and shot for his failure to hold the castle. Cromwell is certainly not to be crossed, and failure will no doubt be rewarded with demotion and shame, and possibly military trial and execution.

On the other hand, the personality of the commanding officer of the conquering force, and the amount of authority he can bring to bear on his troops are equally, if not more, important. A sadistic commander or an unruly mob will possibly sack a town and put the occupants to the sword – particularly if they are separated from the inhabitants by matters of religion or geography as well as politics. Quarter in such a case might only be offered to the defending commander himself, or perhaps the Lady of the house. Conversely, quarter might be offered to all the regular troops, in return for an oath that they would not take up arms (for the losing side) again, while the senior officers might be bound as “prisoners of mercy”. A town might escape being sacked in return for a sum of money. Frustration at an unsuccessful siege could have dire consequences. The Earl of Derby was so annoyed that Lancaster surrendered to the Parliamentarians without a shot being fired that he laid siege to the castle. Annoyed that the defenders persisted in their resistance he set fire to the town, killing two hundred civilians in

the process. This came to be known as a “cavalier attitude”.

Whatever the fate of a surrendering force, the location of the siege itself might be the subject of extensive reprisals. Castles were often “slighted” – their walls weakened, or even pulled down, to prevent them being used for defensive purposes ever again. Cromwell favours taking down the whole of one wall and letting the elements do the rest of the job for him, any castle given this treatment doesn’t tend to last long and remains uninhabitable henceforth.

## Conditions under siege

Starvation and disease are often the cause of more casualties than military action itself. Often conditions within a siege become very grim, for soldiers and civilians alike. Sometimes there is some freedom of movement in and out (for women and children) but this is often denied. There seems little point to most attackers in allowing such a state of affairs as it prolongs the siege which is rarely in the attackers’ interests (with the exception of those secretly hoping to sit out the war in this manner). Military encampments are often overcrowded and always unhygienic. Plague, small pox and measles can all spread through besieged towns causing havoc, the unburied dead adding to the lack of sanitation and further increasing the spread of illness. But the more prolific killers are “camp fever” or typhus, dysentery (caused from the often tainted water supplies) and general fevers from damp, chill and overcrowded conditions – whole forces can be laid low by such conditions, many of which are debilitating, if not deadly (Cromwell himself has shown signs of suffering from ague after time spent campaigning in the Fens).

Food can be an even deadlier problem. First thatch might be stripped from houses to feed the horses, but it is then only a matter of time before the horses themselves are killed to feed the soldiery. Before long the soldiers would be reduced to eating dogs, the civilians to eating cats, rats, mice and mutton-fat candles. It’s grim stuff, this siege warfare!

## The Lessons of History

Aside from using the ideas in the Clockwork and Chivalry sourcebooks and supplements, there are many examples of historical incidents which can feed into adventure seeds and encounter situations. There are examples of women, usually expected to be subservient, leading a brave defence of their lands (often while their husbands are away fighting elsewhere). For instance, the defence of Lathom House was led by Lady Charlotte, the Countess of Derby, who refused all demands to yield (although she prevaricated in order to buy time to improve the defences) stating that although “a woman and a stranger, divorced from her friends and robbed of her estate, she was ready to receive their utmost violence, trusting in God for protection and deliverance.”



Lady Charlotte who led the successful defence of Lathom House (The first siege of Lathom House, it fell the second time when she was not in command) proclaiming that “they should never take her, nor any of her friends alive.”

Or there are examples of “enemies” meeting in the pub, through the use of tunnels to and from a castle, then returning to their opposing lines. Of course, officers might take a dim view of their men consorting in such a manner, but not be above dining with their own counterpart on the opposing side (after all, it may well be that such a fellow represents the nearest thing they have to a contemporary that they see as a social equal).

It is worth seeking out these historical snippets and real-life tales. Tales such as the master gunnery of “One-Eyed” Jack Thompson who fired his cannon from the rooftops defending Colchester from the Parliamentarians; or of the covenant taken in Plimouth whereby the soldiery

swore to fight to the last; or of the massive cannon the king ordered with which to break the Siege of Gloucester, only to have it immediately explode when fired (his crew never having fired such a large piece before). Nearly every siege has some curious example or morsel of interest – and there were plenty of them – so mine the history of the English Civil War to give extra flavour to your descriptions of a siege or rich background detail to your Adventurer.

## Clockwork and Alchemy

As much fun as it is running adventures which take into account the history of sieges in the Civil War, in the *Clockwork & Chivalry* world there are abundant opportunities for Clockwork technology and Alchemical magick to have an affect on the proceedings.

If the Royalist are besieging, they may find it more effective to get an Alchemist to unleash an Elemental against their opponents' defence; the Parliamentarian attacker might wish to find a mechanical means of breaking a siege – perhaps a mole-drill under the walls or, if they are very lucky, a Leviathan ploughing through them. A Royalist defence led by an Alchemist might last an age, Strength potions bolstering the defending troops as they sally forth. Of course a Parliamentarian defender utilising Clockwork might be able to bring in supplies using Striding Boots. Most importantly, some of the uses of Magick and Clockwork have yet to come into their own – Adventurers following such professions will no doubt have an abundance of ideas for novel uses for their skills.

Of course, some of these applications have unintended consequences. One rather dubious attempt at a mechanical solution to break a siege is the Clockwork petard, essentially gunpowder strapped to the front of a Clockwork Mule with a lit fuse, pointed at a target. This device is usually ineffective, as its targets are rarely in a straight and even line from the point at which it is released. Another is the attempt by Alchemist defenders to cast a plague miasma on a besieging enemy's camp;

unfortunately the movement of spies and civilians through the lines resulted in the town becoming infected as well, causing an even greater humanitarian disaster (although the Parliamentarians are no longer interested in occupying the place). The grim effects of Clockwork and Alchemy on static warfare are explored in depth in the forthcoming *No Man's Land* – the third instalment of the epic Kingdom and Commonwealth campaign for Clockwork and Chivalry.

## The Clockwork Mole-drill

- Cost: 210,000 shillings
- Complexity: 5
- Size: 30
- Hit Points: 15
- Speed: 8m only (underground)
- Armour: 5
- Weapons: 1D10 ramming, 6D8+8 drilling

The Clockwork Mole-drill, one of the more unusual vehicles to come out of the Cambridge weapon shops, is a cigar-shaped vehicle with a drill at the front, capable of travelling beneath the ground. The vehicle requires a crew of two, both of whom are needed to struggle with the difficult task of keeping the vehicle heading in a straight line, keeping the vertical and horizontal control wheels centred by brute force as the machine ploughs through different consistencies of soil and rock. There is also space for two passengers. Navigation must be done by compass bearing, as there is no way to see out once the main hatch is closed; this can easily be thrown off by the proximity of magnetic ore-bearing rocks, making longer journeys something of a gamble. Estimation of depth is by dead reckoning, using a spirit level to figure out the angle of descent/ascent with actual speed usually a wild guess. Travel time is about two hours, depending on the hardness of the medium through which the vehicle is travelling. There are pedals for the two passengers which can theoretically rewind the vehicle to allow a further thirty minutes travel, though with two pilots steering and two peddling, the air becomes stuffy very

quickly as suffocating miasmas build up in the chamber.

The first prototype build in Cambridge was lost underground, and it is assumed that the crew asphyxiated before they could get the machine back to the surface. The second prototype was stolen (readers/players of *The Alchemist's Wife* will know by whom). There are rumours that one or more Clockwork Mole-drills have seen action in the Debatable Lands, having been built in the Birmingham workshops of the Parliamentarian renegade Sir John Gell (see the forthcoming adventure, *No Man's Land*).

## A World of Adventure

For an Adventuring party there are a whole host of opportunities for role playing in a besieged or besieging encampment (or combination of the two). There is plenty of scope for treachery and deceipts; courageous and honourable behaviour; conflict and subversion; and a whole host of other shenanigans that are the bread-and-butter of adventuring types.

## Negotiators

There are plenty of opportunities for players who enjoy diplomacy and negotiation. Perhaps they find themselves embroiled in negotiation between townspeople and the military (there are lots of examples of the defending army being politically at odds with the townsfolk with whom they are sharing a besieged space – Oxford, even though it is the Royalist capital, has an overwhelmingly Parliamentarian citizenry outside of the colleges); perhaps they are negotiating on one or both sides of the military as they thrash out the terms of the engagement, terms for surrender or terms for a truce; or perhaps they have another diplomatic mission - perhaps to persuade a Faction to join or leave the struggle. Such negotiations are fraught with rules of etiquette, and perhaps danger; a successful negotiator might find themselves a target for assassination by an enemy who wishes talks to fail. Negotiations that go badly

# Sieges in the World of Clockwork & Chivalry

can take a bitter turn – at Colchester, the defenders' refusal to release important Parliamentarians in exchange for lowlier Royalists led to the frustrated New Model Army officer demanding the execution of a proportion (one in fifteen of one group; one in ten of another; and one in five of the last) of the Royalist prisoners. The doomed men were selected by lots – a terrible atrocity that the defenders did not replicate.

## Messengers and Spies

Messengers are often employed to take news out of a besieged place, or to bring news in. Often such news may lift or dash spirits, perhaps telling of a relief force on the way or the defeat of nearby friendly forces. Even where supplies are impossible to obtain, a message might be sneaked in or out (a messenger sneaked out ten such messages from the Siege of Portsmouth, all sewn into the hem of his coat). Spies might be employed to gauge the mood behind the enemy lines and perhaps indulge in sabotage or propaganda to weaken an enemies resolve or open a gate to allow an invader to enter.

Female Adventurers might find they have more success slipping through encampments without being apprehended as possible Spies or traitors than their male counterparts (some men simply didn't believe women capable of such acts), and depending on the security of the siege-lines and the rules of movement agreed between the combatants, they may find it easier to move in and out of a besieged area. However, all messengers and Spies run terrible risks. At Colchester a small boy snuck out with a message but was caught by the Parliamentarians. He was tortured

with burning matches, but did not reveal his message, telling his captors only that he had been instructed to be hanged rather than reveal anything.

## Raiders

Adventurers might find themselves caught up in a raid, either as a part of a raiding party or on the defending side. Often both attackers and defenders would launch raids against the opposing sides hoping to take out key targets (such as a tower, powder store, baggage, gun battery, etc.). The raid might primarily employ stealth or overwhelming force, but will always attempt to utilise the element of surprise. Such raids can change the entire outlook for a besieged town. For instance, at Hull the Royalist attackers lost their primary fort to a raid in the first week of the siege and several great siege cannon a few weeks later – factors which caused the attackers to give up and search for more vulnerable prey elsewhere. However, at Colchester the unlucky Royalists sallied out in force; initially successful, they ran out of powder and were cut off for a time, the surviving units eventually managing to limp back into Colchester, having suffered many casualties.

## Ad Infinitum

The only limit to the adventuring opportunities in a siege are the imaginations of the players and games master. The following table gives some further suggested occurrences, but the actual adventure hook could be anything – the need to steal/acquire/kidnap an item/some information/a person from behind siege-lines; the need to earn some money as a mercenary fighting for one

side or the other; the feeling of duty to a cause/patron/friend; the need to protect a family member; the desire for promotion; and a host of sub-quests and side-plots. Concentrate on evoking the desperation and grimness of life behind a siege line and the opportunities for Adventurers to “make a difference” and you are sure to have a rewarding game.

## Siege Events Table

The following table can be used to determine events during a siege. It may be used daily or weekly depending on your style of play. Roll 2D20 and consult the table below. Most of the events are applicable to both attacker and defender alike, although some are more appropriate to one group than another (in which case simply re-roll the result). These events are in addition to other siege effects (such as the depletion of food over time, planned encounters and events, etc) and feel free to ignore any that contradict Adventurer actions (so, for instance, if an Adventurer is in charge of a defence they are not bound to negotiate, such a decision will remain at the player's discretion).

Note that many of these events can affect Righteousness Points; see “Fluctuations in Righteousness Points” in *Clockwork & Chivalry Core Worldbook*, p.60. The Games Master may like to keep track of the RPs of the opposing commanders, and possibly have a general RP score for the different Factions (soldiers, civilians) etc., taking part in the siege, as a measure of their general morale. If RPs of commander or soldiers falls low enough, they may give up, but a commander with high RPs may be able to fire his troops to greater efforts (assuming they belong to the same Faction).

2-12 – **No event this time.**

13 – **Rumours.** Rumours sweep the place of the necessity to surrender immediately (and of an ultimatum that if such a surrender does not take place no quarter will be given).

14 – **Rumours.** Rumours of a relief/reinforcement column approaching sweep the place, strengthening resolve not to surrender.

15 – **Rumours.** Rumours sweep the place of atrocities carried out by the enemy. Resolve not to surrender hardens.

16 – **Bad News.** The morale of the recipients goes down as they hear of a local defeat (whether the message is true or false).

17 – **Good News.** News of a nearby victory heartens the camp (whether true or not).

18 – **Disease.** A Miasma has taken grip of the area (GM's discretion or roll 1D4 – 1-Ague; 2-Black death; 3-Flux; 4-Small Pox.

19 – **Food is spoiled.** Part of the food stocks have been contaminated and are unusable (2-40% of the total food store).

20 – **Water is contaminated.** One source of water is temporarily unavailable.

21 – **Saboteurs.** A saboteur has (roll 1D6) – 1 - started a whispering campaign to undermine morale; 2 - spiked a cannon; 3 - started a fire; 4 - assassinated a senior officer; 5 - spoiled some food/drink; 6 - stolen a prestigious item (e.g., a battle standard) which is now being displayed by the enemy.

22 – **Raiders.** A successful raid has been launched (objective/casualties at GM's discretion).

23 – **Raiders.** An unsuccessful raid has been launched (men taken prisoner/casualties at GM's discretion)

24 – **Artillery is damaged.** A cannon is no longer operable (having split, fallen from its mounting, been captured, etc.).

25 – **Artillery successful.** An artillery shot has caused consternation in the enemy camp (killing an officer, setting fire to a powder keg, weakening a wall, etc).

26 – **A powder store explodes.** 50% chance of fire starting and 1D20 casualties.

27 – **Spy.** A Spy has been caught and is to be shot the next morning.

28 – **Spy.** A Spy has infiltrated the camp and opens a door/gate for the enemy to enter.

29 – **A boost to the besiegers.** A force joins the besiegers (numbers at GM's discretion, as appropriate to scale of siege).

30 – **A boost to the defenders.** A relief force arrives (numbers at GM's discretion, as appropriate to scale of siege).

31 – **Sniper.** A sniper has managed to shoot an enemy officer.

32 – **Desertion.** 1-20% of the defending forces have slipped away.

33 – **Desertion.** 1-20% of the attacking forces have slipped away.

34 – **Council of War.** Negotiations are requested.

35 – **Council of War.** The besieger offers more generous terms of surrender.

36 – **Council of War.** The besieger offers less generous terms of surrender.

37 – **Council of War.** The besieger refuses terms of surrender, stating "no quarter will be given."

38 – **Drunkenness.** A large cache of alcohol is found and the camp falls into drunkenness.

39 – **An eventful time.** Roll twice on the table ignoring any rolls of 39 or 40.

40 – **A very eventful time.** Roll three times ignoring any rolls of 39 or 40.

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