

WINGED HUSSARS

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A joinable organisation for Players and DMs



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ON THE COVER

The commander inducts a new Winged Hussar.

Disclaimer: Joining any of these affiliations does not guarantee a safe job or a pension. It will increase the odds of finding adventure, facing danger and may lead you to fabulous wealth or an untimely demise!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Credits 1

Table of Contents..... 2

Introduction: Why add Affiliations to your game..... 3

 If you are a DM..... 3

 If you are a Player... 3

The Winged Hussars 4

Feat: Hard to kill 6

Winged Hussars DM section 7

 Plot Hooks: 7

 NPC Generators and NPCs 7

 Secrets:..... 7

 Adjusting the Winged Hussars 8

INTRODUCTION: WELCOME TO THE WINGED HUSSARS.

The **Winged Hussars** are an elite mercenary band famed for their griffon mounts and code of honour. If you need the best, the Winged Hussars are who you hire. This supplement introduces the Hussars as an affiliation that can be used by players and DMs.

What are **affiliations**? They are clans, guilds, institutions and organisations. A league of elite fighters. A ring of criminals. A group of believers united by faith. It can be a large structured organisation with a hierarchy, history, and rules, or a small posse bonded by a common goal.

By introducing an affiliation to your game, your party will be better able to connect to each other as they are united by a common purpose. Affiliations offer a clear motivation and narrative reason for players to work together and a focus for the DM to lean into.

Affiliations don't replace your current quest or adventures; they enhance it by putting players' goals into a wider context.

They are fuel for your games and add an extra layer that can be applied as thickly or thinly as the players and DM desire.

IF YOU ARE A DM...

For DMs, affiliations offer

- Story hooks, secrets, NPCs and NPC generators.
- Options for antagonists, plot hooks and world-building.
- An easy way for PCs to know and relate to each other.
- A way to introduce a certain style of gameplay or tone.
- A distinct identity and role within the world.
- Narrative conflicts for players to dive into or to mine for quests.
- Material that can be customised and adjusted to fit into existing campaigns.
- Material for themed one-shots and campaigns.

To DMs, the material here is modular. There are suggestions on adjusting the tone and premise of the Affiliations throughout.

The feats are designed to be thematic and useful but niche, however what works for one game may not fit yours. So please, take what you like and find useful and discard the bits that don't fit *your* game. Add stuff you think is cool, change or discard what doesn't fit.

IF YOU ARE A PLAYER...

For players, joining an affiliation gives your character

- A role and identity in the world.
- An exclusive feat.
- Goals and ambitions.
- A narrative reason for your character to work with the other player characters.
- Compelling narrative reasons to delve into dungeons, fight monsters and do all the things an adventurer is expected to do.
- An alternative to alignment, opening roleplaying opportunities for your character to interact and react to the world.

- Thematic cohesion with the rest of your group despite different classes, alignments or even different affiliations.
- Material to mine for side plots and back stories.

Like all additional game material, the options presented are at the discretion of the DM running your game. This goes double for the feats. Running a game is much more effort than playing, so do what you can to make your DM's life easier. If they don't think an option matches the tone of their game or would create more work for them, then don't pester them about it. Consider running a game for them instead!

STRUCTURE

This supplement is broken into two sections, the general section introduces the role and identity of the affiliation and focuses on

- Premise and Background.
- Purpose and Beliefs.
- Joining Requirements.
- Unique Feat.

The DM section focuses on material for running the affiliation and covers

- Plot Hooks.
- Secrets.
- NPCs.
- NPC Generators.
- Suggestions on adjusting the tone and premise.
- Using them as antagonists.

THIS IS A SAMPLE FROM A LONGER BOOK.

This supplement is an extract from a longer book, which adds nine joinable affiliations to your game of which the Winged Hussars are one. If you enjoy this material, please take a look at the full supplement.
<https://www.dmsguild.com/product/319178/Affiliations>



THE WINGED HUSSARS

An elite mercenary band famed for their griffon mounts and code of honour. The Winged Hussars have a long and proud history. They have broken armies, defended cities, razed strongholds and swung the tide in war. If you need the best, if you can afford them, if their honour allows them to accept the job then the Winged Hussars are who you hire.

The Winged Hussars are not a typical mercenary group. Centuries ago they were the royal guard to a long-forgotten kingdom. The kingdom has since crumbled to dust, but the Winged Hussars continue the traditions of the ancient order. This isn't some thuggish rabble but an elite fighting unit that expects its members to live up to it's glorious history. Of course, sometimes its traditions clash with the reality of being an army for hire and the Winged Hussars must balance maintaining its traditions and reputation and making sure its members get paid and the unit survives.

WHY ADD THE WINGED HUSSARS TO YOUR GAME:

- A useful ally or respected enemy.
- A good hook for players to fight together despite differences in alignment and ideology.
- Your players get to ride griffons!
- A way to bring in idealism vs pragmatism as a theme.

Quotes:

"Winged Hussars! We stand again on the edge. On one side honour and victory on the other glory and death. I see you in the saddles itching to be let loose. The time has come. As one. Charge!!!!"

"The siege lasted weeks. We were eating rats and drinking rain water. We were sick, tired, dying. The orcs had breached the walls. I was sure I was going to die, join the rest of my family in the afterlife. But then... The Winged Hussars arrived! They carved through the horde and saved the city. I joined them soon after."

"Glory and tradition don't pay the bills. Blood, sweat, toil, tears and hard work do that. Now you want to get paid? You want to swagger into town with a purse full of gold? Of course you do! So let's go earn our keep. First round is on me when we're done."

Purpose and Beliefs: As the inheritors of a centuries old tradition, the Hussars believe that by upholding chivalric tenants they honour the dead and glorious history of the unit. As a mercenary company, their purpose is to get paid.

Often their beliefs and purpose go hand in hand. A reputation for loyalty and honour is useful for a mercenary company after all, but there have been times in the past where its ideals have conflicted with employment. Its fine to have ideals when times are good but when times become hard where do you draw the line? How far should loyalty to an employer be given? How far will the Hussars go for gold? Afterall without gold, how can the unit be kept together? Weapons and mounts need to be maintained. The troops need to be



paid. Would you let centuries of history end, why not survive and regain its glory later?

These are the questions the Hussars sometimes face and how its' individual members answer these questions determines which of the two broad camps they fall into; **Idealists** and **Pragmatists**.

While some Hussars are firmly in one camp or the other, these positions are not fixed with many members switching based on the circumstances of the day.

Idealists: Fundamentally, Idealists believe in a code and that there is a right way to conduct themselves in war. They may or may not go along with the traditions of the Hussars, the ceremonial trappings of the long dead royal guard. They may or may not love to get paid for what they do. They may in fact be merciless and brutal in war and be willing to employ every dirty trick in the book to win but fundamentally every Idealist has a line in the sand they aren't willing to cross. What this line is exactly varies for each individual. For most Hussars, (including Pragmatists) attacking non-combatants crosses that line, for others it would be executing prisoners and to others, working for an employer who perpetrates injustices, even if the Hussars aren't directly involved.

Whatever the issue, an Idealist will have a line, a code, that they will adhere to above anything else. Even if that means disobeying an order. Even if that means losing an employer. Even if that means the Hussars cease to exist.

Pragmatists: Fundamentally, Pragmatists believe in the Winged Hussars, that the continued existence of the group is the most important thing. Their motivations can and do vary. For some it's the gold pure and simple. Others feel bound up in the history, to be a Hussar is to be part of a continuous chain that has participated in the rise and fall of kingdoms and to continue that chain is a privilege and honour. For others, the Hussars are family, for a few the only family they have, and any price is worth paying to keep that family going.

Joining Requirements: The Hussars are an elite unit and most candidates are already experienced combatants when they sign on. The Hussars aren't too concerned how that experience was gained so long as you can handle yourself and follow orders.

Occasionally the Hussars will accept less experienced soldiers, this is usually if the Hussars have suffered serious losses and need to rebuild their ranks quickly. Existing members can also vouch for new recruits and it's not unknown to have several generations of one family join the Hussars.

Regardless, new recruits are thrown into combat missions alongside veterans, who judge their worthiness.

If accepted the recruit will be dubbed a Hussar by the commanding officer in a ceremony similar to a knight being dubbed. The officer will touch the shoulders of kneeling recruits with their weapon, the recruit will rise a Hussar.

Sometimes this act is performed in a ceremonial fashion, and the recruit will recite an oath of loyalty, other times the act is performed on the battlefield.

Example oaths, these can be voiced by a recruit or phrased as a question by the commanding officer.

"I swear myself to the Winged Hussars. Pledge myself to their service. To fight alongside my brothers and sisters in arms and to forever be loyal to the Hussars and their mission."

"I pledge myself to the Hussars. My blood is now their blood, my strength their strength, my life their life."

"Do you pledge yourself to the Hussars? Swear to honour your brothers and sisters in arms? Swear to fight while strength lasts, to spit at death and give your life for the mission? You do? Then rise and walk proud, you are now a Hussar."

FEAT: HARD TO KILL

- Increase your constitution by one to a maximum of 20
- You stabilise on two death saves, not three.
- You regain consciousness and 1 hp upon stabilisation, you can't use this feature again until you finish a Long Rest.
- You gain proficiency in animal handling if you don't already possess it and expertise if you do.
- Gain access to a bonded griffon

The Hussars have been breeding, taming and training griffins for generations and most recruits don't get access to griffins straight away, the right must be earned, although exceptions can be made for proficient animal handlers and beast masters.

Once bonded to a griffon, the griffon will recognise Hussars and any allies, though it will usually allow only Winged Hussars to ride it. The griffon is as intelligent as

a horse and will respond to its name. If the Hussar is dismounted, the griffon will defend the Hussar and won't abandon him unless another Hussar mounts it or pulls it away. Griffins use modified stats from the Monster Manual.

BONDED GRIFFON

Large monstrosity, Winged Hussars

Armor Class 12 (14 when armoured)

Hit Points 59 (7d10+21)

Speed 30 ft. Fly 80 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	5 (-3)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages -

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Bonded Griffons are so in tune with their master that they can fluster and provoke openings against a foe, allowing their master to take advantage of the opening.

ACTION

The griffon attacks once with its beak.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Bonded Attack. When the griffon is within 5 feet of an enemy it gives the help action to its Hussar, thus giving advantage to its master on attacks. This applies if the Hussar is mounted or on foot. Only the master of the griffon gains Advantage from this ability.



WINGED HUSSARS DM SECTION

PLOT HOOKS:

- The Hussars are recovering from a pyrrhic victory in a major battle and must rebuild their numbers.
- A cold war is brewing between **Idealists** and **Pragmatists** over a contract for a corrupt lord.
- The Hussars are invited to travel to a foreign land. It's lucrative but they'll be fish out of water.
- An old rival begrudgingly seeks to aid the Hussars in their fight against an enemy, Baron Mucher.
- A Hussar seeks vengeance against a powerful lord. How far can the unit help without getting paid?
- The commander of the Hussars has been offered lands and title for a noble lord. He is unsure whether to take the offer, if he does the Hussars will need to decide on a new leader.

NPC GENERATORS AND NPCs

Winged Hussars					
D10	Race Table	Profession*	Demeanour	Motivation for joining	Rank
1	Human	Mage	Jolly	Escaped gaol	Rookie
2	Elf	Sapper	Stoic	Has a family member in the Riders	Regular
3	Dwarf	Priest/Preacher	Angry	Believes fighting is the only thing they are good at.	Light Calvary
4	Halfling/Gnome	Scout	Boastful	Naïve sense of adventure	Light Calvary
5	Half-orc	Healer	Stern	Always wanted to see the world.	Heavy Calvary
6	Human	Guerrilla Warfare	Prissy	Really loves Griffons.	Heavy Calvary
7	Half-Elf	Blacksmith	Mournful	Tragic life events	Standard Bearer
8	Human or Elf	Natural Leader	Flirty	Exiled noble	Sergeant
9	Tiefling	Bodyguard	Dangerous	Escaping a dangerous past	Lieutenant
10	Dragonborn or Tiefling	Elite Warrior	Professional	Just wants to kill people	Commander

*All Winged Hussars are combat ready; profession represents their specialism or additional expertise.

NPCs:

Siegfried: Lieutenant, was raised by the Hussars, Idealist.

"The Winged Hussars are an ancient order. We have a lot to live up to."

Siegfried (NG, Human, male, **Champion VGM**) is a young man, whose mother and uncle were both Hussars before him. His mother was killed in battle, his uncle is the current commander. Raised by the Hussars, to Siegfried, the Hussars is the only life he's ever known. As a result, he has become a warrior and a natural leader despite his young age. Many of the older Hussars see him as a sort of lucky mascot, though some resent his quick rise through the ranks and begrudge the perceived nepotism, despite Siegfried's lead from the front style.

Despite growing up in the Hussars and viewing the camps and soldiers as his family, Siegfried is an **Idealist**. He has an enamoured view of the Hussars and loves the legends of the unit. He will always back a righteous code of conduct.

SECRETS:

An atrocity that members of the Hussars committed has been covered up.

The stables and camps the Hussars house and breed their griffons are attacked. Someone betrayed their location to an enemy.

An assassin that killed a king and caused a war is a member of the Hussars.

A noble heir, whose lands were taken, and her family killed, is a Hussar. She doesn't know about her inheritance yet.

Personality traits: Siegfried is friendly but tough and enjoys the chivalric traditions. He acts like a chivalric knight rather than a sword for hire. Some Hussars think.

this naïve or stupid, but he is totally sincere. He can be a little aloof at times, partly as a result of his rank which separates him from the rest of the Hussars

Ideal: "How we get there is as important as the destination."

Bond: His Uncle, the commander and **Leen**.

Flaw: Has an overly idealistic of the Hussars, which if shattered would shake the foundations of his world view.

ASSOCIATED PLOT HOOKS:

- A clash occurs between Siegfried and Maya, escalating the Hussars to form factions.
- Siegfried discovers the commander, his uncle, is considering taking up lands and leaving the Hussars.
- Siegfried has offered to kill a hill giant free of charge and needs help to do so.
- Siegfried needs help to protect a princess, while most of the Hussars are elsewhere.

Maya: Lieutenant, a nihilist guerrilla turned soldier, Pragmatist.

“War is ugly and brutal. War is life distilled. I enjoy the strife, the challenge and spitting at death.”

Maya (TN, Elf, female, **Champion-VGM**) is cynical, nihilistic and a damn good soldier. She doesn't talk much of her past but has several stories of leading a group in guerrilla campaigns behind enemy lines. She has an aura of danger around her and her hawk-like gaze pierces straight to the soul. Maya is greatly respected by most Hussars for her skill in battle and her leadership. She specialises in ambushes and dirty tricks and will use whatever means to win.

Maya is a **Pragmatist**. She doesn't care about honour or tradition. She wants to get in, hit the enemy as hard as possible and get out. She's not evil, just realistic. This is a mercenary company after all.

Personality traits: Maya is professional in her interactions but is intensely loyal to Hussars who pull their weight and who earn her trust. She generally doesn't care about personal beliefs and won't judge others, so long as they pull their weight for the Hussars. Her one exception is slavers. Slavers she kills wherever she can.

Ideal: “Ideals don't win wars or get us coin.”

Bond: Maya is intensely bonded to the Hussars and the wider camp followers. She also cares deeply for her griffon mount, Artemis.

Flaw: Maya doesn't believe in anything and it's hard to rally an army without a vision.

ASSOCIATED PLOT HOOKS

- Maya has discovered the slaver who kidnapped her brother and seeks aid in rescuing him and killing the slaver.
- Maya's former guerrilla band have become bandits. Maya wants them to be brought into the Hussars as scouts, but the reports say they have killed unarmed travellers.
- Maya needs a team to scout an area ahead of an assault.
- Maya discovers the regicide assassin within the Hussars ranks. She wants to use his skills in service of the Hussars.

Leen Sergeant, a grizzled veteran and mother surrogate to the troops, Idealist.

“Reckon you need some fear to be properly brave, and if you are properly brave and stand with the unit that makes you a hero. Reckon a hero who is properly brave, who stands with his unit that's a true Hussar. So reckon you need some fear to be a true Hussar. Now dry your tears. It's time to stand.”

Leen (TN, female, Dwarf, **War Priest-VGM**) is a tough, uncompromising and widely respected sergeant. She trains recruits and marshals regulars, into becoming Hussars. Leen is an institution and is beloved by many Hussars for her no-nonsense approach. She is one of the most experienced Hussars and has served longer than almost anyone. She loves the unit dearly, considering many of its members family, and many of the younger members look up to her as a mother surrogate and a mentor. Atop her griffon, Swift, Leen is a formidable foe but the scars and lingering wounds of a dozen battlefields have taken a toll, and she walks with a noticeable limp.

Leen is completely indifferent to the chivalric traditions of the Hussars and in many ways appears to be a Pragmatist, caring about the well being of the unit above

all. In truth though, Leen is an **Idealist**. Leen wants her legacy, and by extension the Hussars, to be more than just brutal warfare, she wants to feel she made a difference.

Personality traits: Leen has a stern demeanour that gradually melts away to a restrained warmth. She takes a stoic joy in seeing others improve their skills but is still a soldier and she deeply respects the command structure and hierarchy.

Ideal: “To bring out the best in others leaves a legacy.”

Bond: Her fellow Hussars, especially some of the younger members, like Siegfried.

Flaw: Will follow most orders given to her by the chain of command, even if they lead to the kind of heinous situation she wishes to avoid.

ASSOCIATED PLOT HOOKS

- Help Leen trade for supplies for the Hussars without revealing that you are Hussars.
- Help Leen train new Hussars and see them through their first mission safely.
- Rescue Leen's squad from behind enemy lines after a botched mission. There isn't much time and many are wounded.
- Leen discovers the heir of a kingdom is a Hussar and wants the Hussars to help her recover her lands. Opinion is split on whether to help her without getting paid.

ADJUSTING THE WINGED HUSSARS

By default, The Winged Hussars are morally grey. They have a chivalrous veneer but are fundamentally mercenaries, who sometimes take on altruistic jobs and sometimes morally dubious ones. The Winged Hussars are an elite unit rather than an entire army. These are some suggestions to adjust the Hussars while keeping their core premise intact. You could also incorporate these ideas into a regular Hussars game, with good or evil viewpoints representing different groups within the wider unit.

IF THE WINGED HUSSARS ARE “MORE GOOD.”

The Winged Hussars are more like errant knights, who travel and fight for righteous causes and in support of the underdog. They are less concerned with getting paid and more concerned with fighting for justice.

- The chivalric code of conduct becomes paramount to the Hussars, they would rather die or disband than break it.
- Payment is not a chief concern for the Hussars and they only take jobs for righteous causes.
- Pragmatists and Idealists debate on when it is appropriate to allow mercy to enemies and a chance for redemption.

IF THE WINGED HUSSARS ARE “MORE EVIL.”

The Winged Hussars become a brutal mercenary company who don't care who they work for and will take any dirty job for the right price. They never show mercy to those that get in their way.

- The chivalric code only applies to treating your fellow Hussars right and, if they're lucky, the employer so long as they continue to pay.

- Payment becomes the chief concern for the Hussars, and they are prepared to betray contracts if a better offer comes along.
- Idealists and Pragmatists are focused on keeping the company together at all costs or making enough money to retire for good, respectively.

IF THE WINGED HUSSARS ARE “MORE INFLUENTIAL.”

The Winged Hussars aren't just an elite unit, they are now a fully-fledged army. They're no longer the tip of the spear, they are the whole spear and fully capable of invading kingdoms and garrisoning territory.

- The chivalric code applies not just to personal conduct in war but also determines when and which military campaigns the Hussars should launch.
- The Hussars' domain has expanded, and with it the responsibility to ensure all soldiers are paid, fed and quartered brings its own challenges and tensions.
- Idealists and Pragmatists debate on the tactics of war, is it acceptable to burn innocent villages to disrupt enemy food supplies?

IF THE WINGED HUSSARS ARE “LESS INFLUENTIAL.”

The Winged Hussars are an elite unit that needs to rebuild its numbers and reputation. They are formidable but the scale of their jobs is diminished, and they need to cultivate fame and a reputation.

- Without a fearsome reputation, the chivalric code is seen as an oddity and a detriment by many potential employers.
- Pay is a concern, but more than that the Hussars must build their reputation, and this encourages them to take the most dangerous and suicidal jobs.
- Hussars are focused on how dangerous the jobs are and whether the potential loss of Hussar life is worth it.

IF THE WINGED HUSSARS ARE ANTAGONISTS

As antagonists, The Winged Hussars favour overwhelming force with sudden, powerful strikes. They can field a combination of armoured warriors, scouts, clerics and wizards and make a formidable, well-rounded opponent.

- The Hussars favour aggressive but co-ordinated tactics and taking the fight to the enemy, they can fight defensively when needed and ensure their forces are never over-extended.
- They'll use the mobility and surprise their griffins provide to manoeuvre into the most favourable position before unleashing as much force as they can.
- The Hussars will protect their own and will withdraw to fight another day, especially if they have wounded.



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THE AFFILIATIONS

The Lightbearers: An order dedicated to defending humanity from devils, demons and the undead. Betrayed and diminished, they rebuild.

Coursers: Monster slayers who live for glory and the thrill of the hunt. Famed for their skill and raucous lifestyle.

Thoroughfare: A motley collection of travellers, rebels and dashing outlaws who steal from the rich and give to the poor. Usually.

The Winged Hussars: An elite mercenary band famed for their griffon mounts and code of honour. If you need the best, the Winged Hussars are who you hire.

The Flat Circle: A magical cabal who fight powerful beings and crazed magic users. Powerful but stretched thin, its enemies draw ever closer.

Sanctuary: Healers and defenders of the downtrodden, Sanctuary are a bastion of hope carving their own civilisation out in the wilderness.

Doctrine: Through adversity, self control. Through self control, power. So reads the Doctrine and the order of warriors and mystics dedicated to it.

Clan Taranis: Raiders, exiles and pirates. Taranis is feared and famous for its bravery, audacity and crude honour.

Pestle: A society of poisoners and political manipulators. Feared and infamous for assassinations and political machinations.



