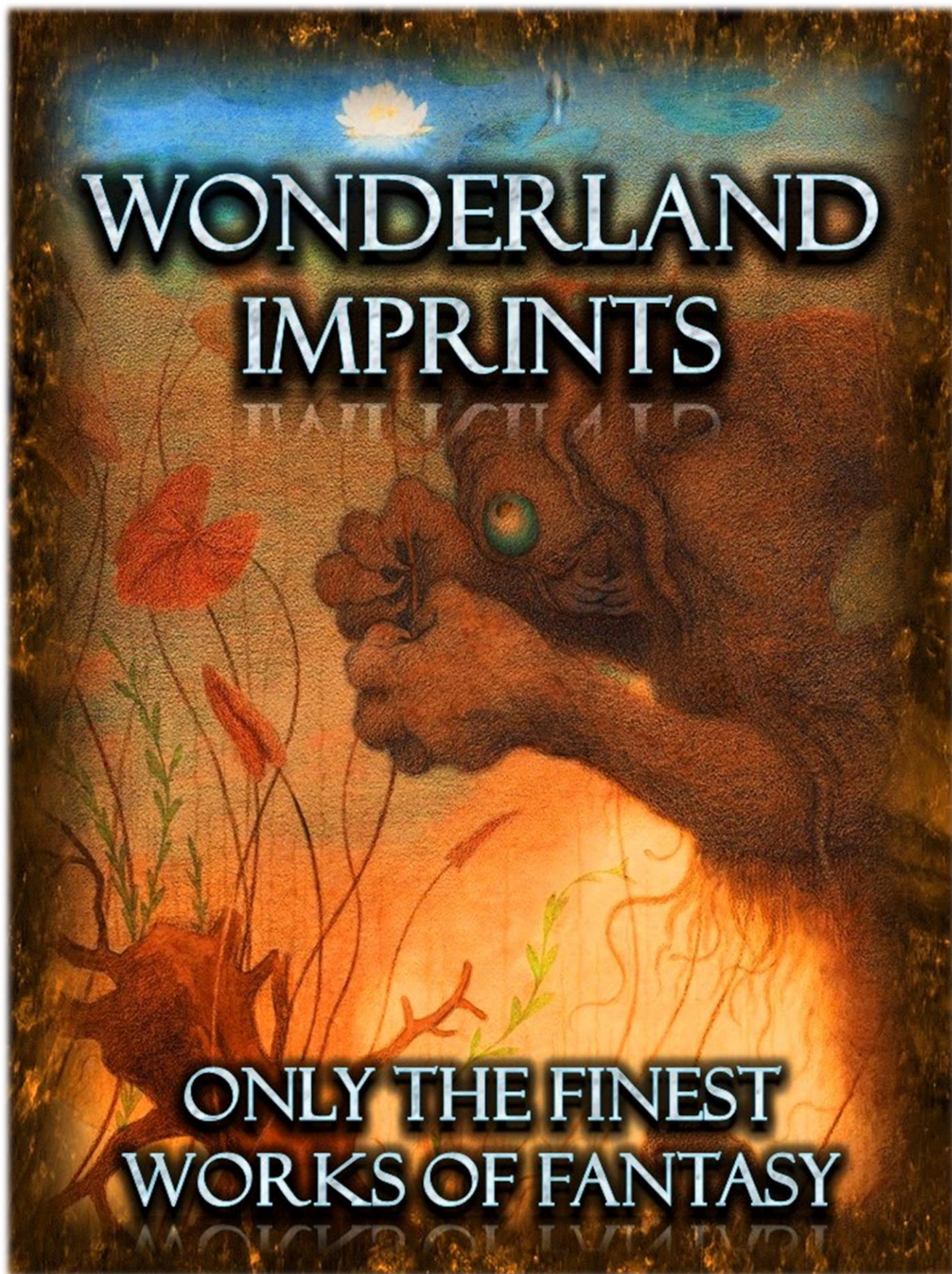


CAPTAINS OF THE SCARLET TABARD



KENT DAVID KELLY



Captains of the Scarlet Tabard

**An Old School Supplement
For Fantasy Role-Playing Games**

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Only the Finest Works of Fantasy

OSR

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The screenshot shows a crowdfunding page for 'Bundle of Holding' on PledgeMusic. The page features a dark header with the title 'Bundle of Holding' and a 'BUY NOW' button. Below the header, there is a section titled 'Here's what others have paid for our bundle' which contains a table with the following data:

NUMBER OF BUNDLES SOLD	1,153
TOTAL CONTRIBUTED	\$20,424.74
THRESHOLD (LEVEL-UP) PRICE	\$17.71

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Artoria Pia Fidelis



Description

***Wrath and ruin,
Gold for blood,
Enemy of evil,
The Order of the Scarlet
Stands forever in defiance.
In vigilance we stand,
In valor we fight!
Long live Lord Artorius,
And all glory to Grimrook!***

A sequel to the 2018 mercenary soldier supplement *The Order of the Scarlet Tabard*, CAPTAINS is a companion volume which unveils the secrets of the most famous mercenary company to rise within the World of Oldskull. Herein, you will learn of the Order's history, tactics, ranks, and organization, with capsule descriptions of all the most grizzled and doughty mercenary captains that the Free City State of Grimrook dares to offer. You'll learn of the Order's grinning half-ogre battering ram, the deadly oil-wielding "Burninators," dogs of war, terrifying treasure carters, master halberdiers, dungeon falcons, shield walls, and more.

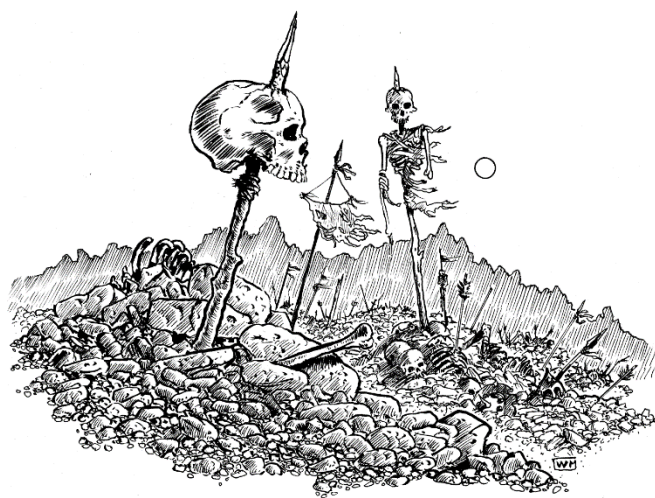
Those ever-reliable men-at-arms who keep your heroes alive as they delve through dungeons deep are back in force, proving that men-at-arms are always exciting and entertaining, never boring. If you've never yet thought of mercenaries as being epic supporting players, the you've never seen the Order in action!

Your campaign's adventuring parties can maximize their survivability (and fun) by just plunking down a few gold coins in the name of these infamous Redshirts ... men and women o' the scarlet — ready to fight

and die, one for all — in their glorious pursuit of hard-won lucre and a reason to be remembered for the ages. Point these PC-hired NPCs toward your world's orcs and ogres and let the bloody mayhem unfold!

This supplement has been written to honor the generous contributors who participated in the highly successful 2019 Castle Oldskull / Bundle of Holding charity and funding drive. Participants raised over \$2,000 for the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, generating over \$22,000 in total sales of more than 6 million pages' worth of Castle Oldskull gaming lore. In recognition of their spirit, all of the NPCs featured in this volume are partly inspired by the user names of the top-funding contributors. Ladies and gentlemen of the Bundle, consider yourselves immortalized in the Chronicles of Oldskull!

This e-supplement will always be set to Pay What You Want. Please feel free to "tip" the author, or to pay nothing at all. Whatever you decide, please download, plug the Order into your game world, and enjoy!



Grimmest Resolution,

Improbable Glory:

A Brief History of the

Order

Strange it was to these gallant and sparkling cavaliers of Spain to look upon this handful of men upon the hill, the thin lines of bowmen, the knots of knights and men-at-arms with armor rusted and discolored from long service, and to learn that these were indeed the soldiers whose fame and prowess had been the camp-fire talk of every army in Christendom.

Very still and silent they stood, leaning upon their bows, while their leaders took counsel together in front of them. No clang of bugle rose from their stern ranks, but in the centre waved the leopards of England, on the right the ensign of their Company with the roses of Loring, and on the left, over three score of Welsh bowmen, there floated the red banner of Merlin with the boars'-heads of the Buttesthorns.

Gravely and sedately they stood beneath the morning sun, waiting for the onslaught of their foemen ...

— *The White Company*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

ravaged lands of mythic Tyrrhenia. The Order is based upon the (idealized) late medieval and early Renaissance concept of the *Company of Adventure* (or in Italian, *Compagnia di Ventura*, a “Venture Company”): a free-spirited fighting force which battles in the name of the highest bidder, while adhering to a quasi-democratic code of brotherhood and honor. More particularly, the Order is inspired by the tales and exploits surrounding the “White Company” (*Compagnia Bianca del Falco*) as led into battles throughout Italy by Sir John Hawkwood during the mid- to late 14th Century.

The Order’s earliest pre-origins date all the way back to the Empyrean Age (c. 350 AD), when the Empyreans (peoples of the mythic Roman Empire) were beset on all sides by ill-omened tragedies which caused the grand Imperium to splinter under the weight of incessant tides of war, plague, dragon raids, monstrous migrations, chaos magic, and “natural” calamity. Many say that through many merciless centuries of conquest, the Empyreans — despite all of their civil and cultural advances — violently disrupted the worship of the Old Gods. Each land they came into contact with was brutally changed, its spirit ravaged and forced to serve the larger conglomerated whole of the Imperium. Many temples were razed and burned; shrines and even sacred tombs were destroyed. Regional history was erased in many ways. As the Imperium’s armies marched and conquered, converting the vanquished peoples of Oldskull to the Empyrean mode of worship, the powers of the displaced ancient deities began to wane. In the name of self-survival the weakened gods of the Achaean, Asgardian, Celtic, Golgothan, Helvetian, and Khomite mythoi worked together to bring forth monstrous powers and deific blights — both holy and unholy — in furious defiance of mortal Empyrean supremacy.

The Order of the Scarlet Tabard is a significant and storied for-hire mercenary force, based in the Free City State of Grimrook, serving treasure hunters and fiend slayers throughout the monster-



While these mythic forces tore at the Imperium's outermost borderlands, the chaotic gods of trickery and deceit (Loviatar, Eris, Loki, Dolos, and Set foremost among them) worked to weaken the Empyrean hegemony from within. Festering resentments between clans, castes, and factions were worsened by the incessant subliminal god-fears which were sown into the people's dreams by these Dissenting Ones. Particularly effective "rupture-dreams" of this deceitful nature included unspoken fears of exile and disenfranchisement; grudges held between tribes and races, who were forced into dishonest peace pacts by their Empyrean conquerors; and the ever-nettlesome issue of Empyrean citizenry.

That seemingly harmless last point, actually, served to bring about the Imperium's ultimate undoing. Only born denizens of Magna Roma (mythic Rome, later known as Grimrook) could enjoy the full wealth and benefits of Empyrean citizenship. The many other subjugated Tyrrhenians were regarded as "lessers" or "*inferiori*," destined to fill the more menial or martial roles, which in turn frequently resulted in misery, poverty, or untimely death. And the conquered peoples of the borderlands could never dream of any form of high citizenry at all; they were merely sacrificial servitors to the Imperium and nothing more. Resentments cultivated by this cruel regime grew into hatreds that fueled provincial rivalries, waves of exile, betrayal, rebellion, and outright civil war.

Tensions involving the hindrances of citizenship impacted the Imperium's legions in a particularly insidious manner. The most prized, well-equipped, favored, and elite troops were citizen-soldiers born of Magna Roma. But the Imperium had become so vast that these troops could never serve upon every emerging war-front on a timely basis. They were outnumbered and frequently too distant from the many battlefields (with simultaneous battles fought in lands which could be thousands of miles apart). Even the great spells of arch-clerics and archmagi could only assuage the most dire and pressing needs demanding immediate stationing of the elite homelander legions. More and more, Empyrean generals and tribunes relied upon local troops and levies; and naturally these disrespected soldier-thralls were frequently poorly trained, ill-equipped, and demoralized by the monstrous might represented by seemingly endless tides of the Imperium's rising enemies.

By the time of the Draconian Scourges (c. 375-415 AD), losses were such that the Imperium's generals were compelled to ally with capable foreign barbarians who dwelt

beyond the Empyrean borders. These stalwart tribal warbands came to be known as the *Foederati*, or Treaty-Tribes. Promises of full citizenship for all barbarian warriors who fought under the banner of Empyrea (rather, all those who survived) spelled victory in many otherwise unwinnable conflicts along the Imperium's war-torn borderlands.



Fulfilled oaths of *Foederati* citizenship created alliances. It also created a trend of utter dependency upon the *Foederati* themselves. Over time, despite victories against insurgents, the incoming masses of “barbarian-citizens” made the situations in the outer Empyrean provinces even worse. The peoples who were native to the defended lands were incapable of rising in status to the same degree as the *Foederati*, and the *Foederati* in turn felt entitled to the lands which they had fought for and saved from monstrous incursions. Rape, theft, property destruction, and other vile crimes became commonplace between the unsupported and disparate provincial factions.

Violent disputes between *Foederati* warbands, homelander Empyrean legions, and the native borderland peoples continued for decades and served to fracture the Imperium from within. By c. 470 AD — despite waning blights from the

Dissenting Ones and gods of other lands — the realm of Tyrrhenia was a disunified and scattered realm, replete with city states that were ruled by rival barbarian warlords. And by the mid-500s, even as humanoid invasions and plagues arose to scour the lands once again, the greater Imperium had already fallen into ultimate decay. Even mighty Magna Roma was no longer a national capital; it was simply an isolated coastal city fighting to defend itself and nothing more.

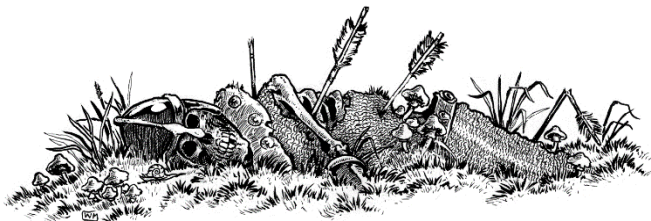
Each divided city survived on its own through a fragile combination of balanced power, martial rivalry, exploitative trade with disadvantaged and lesser towns, and political manipulation. The might of the divided Tyrrhenian warlords was tenuously balanced by “Elder Councils,” consisting of influential urban patricians who could trace their lineage back to the great families of Magna Roma. The barbarian-blooded warlords held most of the military might, but the Elders held religious power ... and the golden purse strings (as well as the hearts of many of the cities’ wealthiest people).

By 600 AD, each insular Tyrrhenian city state fielded two competing armies: a “federated” legion of pure-blooded cityfolk, enfranchised by the Elders; and a “scarlet” legion made up of the warlords’ socially-disenfranchised warriors, who frequently fought more for reward than for loyalty. (And who could blame them? After all, these “scarlet ones” were specifically prevented from attaining the higher ranks of citizenship which led to wealth, privilege, and influence.)

Naturally, there were significant trade and political rivalries (c. 620-700 AD) between the Tyrrhenian cities during this era of regional upheaval. Whenever one city was beset by humanoids or monsters, two nearby neighbors would exploit the situation by raising prices for needed food, goods, and medicine. Martial assistance

would be offered in the form of “scarlet” mercenaries ... for a price. Worse, when two cities went to war with one another, the federated legions would only fight in a limited manner while the “scarlets” were bribed into suffering the greater hardships (and loss of life and limb). More than once (c. 700-800 AD), an entire Tyrrhenian city was razed when the raging scarlet ones and the pure-bloods went to war amongst themselves, leaving only a smoking ruin to thousands of homeless exiles. The pure-bloods who lost their cities in this manner became utterly destitute, and were then forced to serve as mercenaries themselves — looked down upon by all — in the “scarlet” warbands of other surviving city states throughout the realm.

Eventually, as the deadliest monster invasions waned over time (c. 850-1000 AD), there arose a tense system of détente between city states, enforced by an understanding of mutually assured destruction. Resource and manpower depletion had reached the point that any further attrition could lead an urban populace to disaster. No city would wage war on its neighbors for long, because the price of doing so became catastrophic. Every city stood ready to take advantage of the first rival state that would subject itself to another civil war, until there came a time when *no* city would dare a major disruptive conflict for any price. This is why in Tyrrhenia, the most common colloquial term for “peace” is simply “a lack of war in mother cities.”



This odd stalemate between rival urban powers gradually became the norm. As more of the patrician families died out (c. 900-1050 AD), esteemed and proven barbarian families at last gained prominence in politics and trade. A century later (c. 1150 AD), the urban populations were largely “mixed” to the point that one’s ancestry was no longer a guarantee of inherited social status. There were still armies to defend the cities in times of war, but gradually the meanings of terminology morphed so that the “federated” troops served as a state’s regional defense force, while “scarlet” troops fought offensive battles farther afield in order to keep humanoids and monsters away from the outer farmlands and border regions. Enterprising young men and women who sought an increase in their potential wealth and status frequently joined their city’s venturesome scarlet ones regardless of their upbringing; and some of these hardy souls fought for other cities’ causes in defiance of monstrous evil. The ways of a confused wandering mercenary caste had — over many painful centuries — come to be regarded as respectable means to a worthy profession, even a viable mode of life.

For a time (c. 1150-1300 AD), the mercenary caste expanded and its unique subculture grew more democratic, free-spirited, and ornate. The forces grew strong enough to challenge the powers of evil in their nether strongholds once again. A significant number of Empyrean ruins were explored and their infesting monster populations were wiped out. Impressive recovered finds of gold and treasure led to a greater formalization of mercenary codes of conduct and “asset division,” and eventually there arose small companies of specialized treasure-hunting “scarlets” who were associated with the mercenary trade while not being affiliated with any one city. Scarlet ones in this era were commonly hired to serve adventuring heroes as

bodyguards, scouts, treasure porters, or as hunter-guides, sniffing out long-forgotten entrances into the hoard-veiling crypts of the underworld. This golden age of ruin exploration, monster eradication, and treasure recovery persisted for nearly 150 years.

And then came the darkest hour in Tyrrhenia's riddling history. This new terror came surrounded in vermin-touched dust, upon insect-clouded winds, from out of the Utter East. The civilized Tyrrhenian states learned of this terrible demonic resurgence when the first Chaos Plague emerged as the Yellow Death, as manifested by an avatar of the King in Yellow in Anno Calvariae (Year of the Skull, AC) 1348.

(Refer to the supplement *Oldskull Plague Doctors* for further details concerning that foul contagion, the sieges of Grimrook and Serenisse, the King in Yellow, the heroic resistance of the plague doctors, and the deathless Triumphator known as the Lich Queen.)

During this era many of the vaunted mercenaries of Tyrrhenia proved themselves in battle and became known as the True Scarlets, sworn to defend against the forces of evil regardless of their beliefs, mercenary employment, heritage, urban fealty, or other loyalties. The few mercenaries of truly evil ethos (alignment) who survived this era tended to drift away into brigandry, outlawry, or across the seas to other lucrative lands where evil is more embraced by dark and nefarious corners of outland society.

In Tyrrhenia, when the Lich Queen was entombed and the undead legions largely defeated, the Free City of Grimrook stood as the dominant bastion of human and demi-human power in the realm. This was largely due to its siege prowess and its veteran army as commanded by the uniquely powerful planar explorer (and

Supreme Overlord) Khom Orthrul, a man of hale heart and bold conviction who has somehow lived to be well over 100 years old.

(Refer to the *Game World Generator, Deluxe Edition* — and the City State Design Guide therein — for a few more intriguing secrets in that direction.)

Khom's triumphant leadership ensured Grimrook's unassailable position as the most influential and well-defended city in the region. As various lesser Tyrrhenian towns and cities fell prey to the undead terror, the surviving citizens tended to join mercenary and True Scarlet companies for protection and salvation ... and many of these militia-like forces drifted into Grimrook due to its relative safety and supremacy as the Lich Queen's reign came to an end.

The full history of medieval Grimrook is too convoluted to delve into here, but we will touch on a few necessary points which relate to the origins of the Order of the Scarlet Tabard as a separate and fully realized *Compagnia di Ventura*. Grimrook is unique in that it stands near to the great nether planar nexus which is crowned by the Ushirian Manor, known more commonly as Castle Oldskull.

(Refer to the supplement *Oldskull Trolls*, particularly the section detailing Groohlz-Drakha, for more details concerning the secret history of Castle Oldskull.)

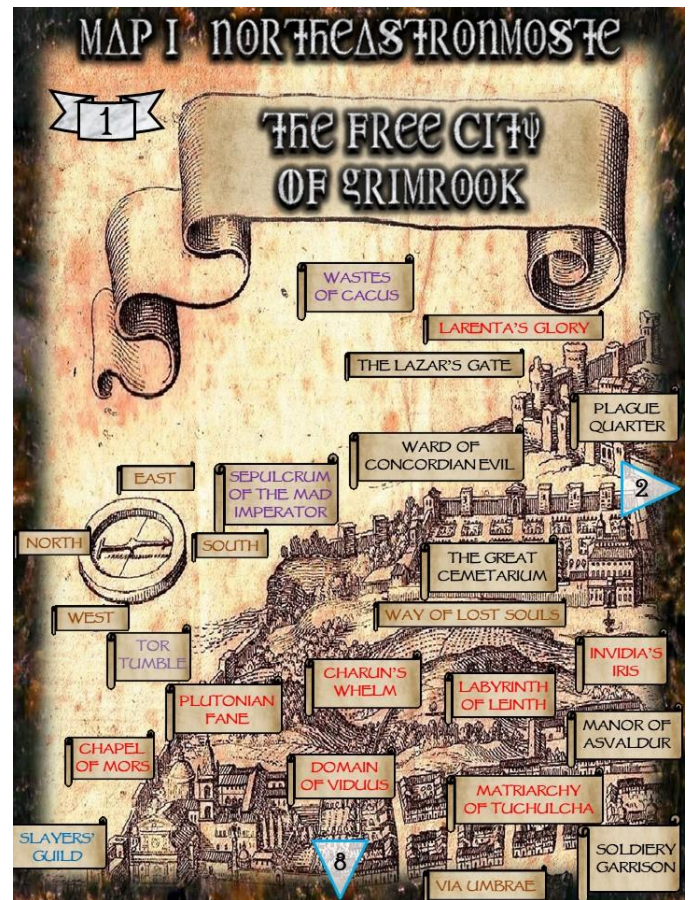
It is well known that there are massive labyrinthine subterranean areas between the Manor and the Free City, including the dungeons deep, the Great Netherworld Imperium, the vaults of the dimensional rifts, and the infernal Pyres of Cacus. Cacus, in turn, is an ancient demon-giant and demigod — you can read all about him in Herculean tales of Roman mythology — who embodies fire, rulership over giants, and defiance of mankind's ultimate legacy (and survival) in defiance of Chaos. The city of Magna Roma was founded when

Cacus was defeated and forced into the netherworld ... but his fiery legions have raided and besieged the city many times over the intervening centuries.



In recent decades, a deadly force of Cacus-allegiant monsters was defied by a Captain of the Overlord ... a man known as Artorius o' Braune, the Staunch-Hearted.

In AC 1387 there arose a powerful monstrous force from the volcanic region to the east of Grimrook's outer walls, from out of a poisoned place known as the Wastes of Cacus, which lie beyond the city's Plague Quarter and the Lazar's Gate.



A quake-eruption led to the emergence of a full cohort of salamander men, supported by fire giants, troll-giants, and pyro-hydra war beasts. Khom Orthrul's legion engaged this force to the east, but another formidable nemesis of Cacus arose in a separate eruption further to the north, beyond Tor Tumble and the Sepulcrum of the Mad Imperator. This was Verimithraxa the Contemptuous, an ancient crimson she-dragon who had not been seen above the surface in more than a century. She arose with a great Balorian demon astride her, a Cacus-serving fiend known as Gorthromai. The dragon and her demon ally incinerated much of Khom's left flank as the deceitful salamander men simultaneously led a bloodthirsty charge, which necessitated a wheeling maneuver in which much of the Grimrook legion was left vulnerable along its northern arc.

The Overlord's chosen Captain upon the left, Artorius, was commanded (in great haste) to lead a sacrificial rearguard action which saved the Overlord and much of his hard-pressed legion. In a tumultuous and bloody retreating battle — in which Artorius lost his cousin, his friends, and most of his valorous soldiers — Gorthromai was slain by Bloodgaunt, Artorius's vorpal blade.

A devastating surge of Verimithraxa's dragon-fire left Artorius scarred and near to death. He was carried dying from the field by the High Matriarch Vopisca Ovidia, one of the ruling Ward-Scions of Grimrook who is frequently at odds with Overlord Orthrul.

The Grimrook Legion, once behind the city's walls, repelled the forces of Cacus while Verimithraxa — her dragon-fires by evenfall were spent — was herself nearly slain.



Powerful healing magics conducted in the Temple of Sol Invictus saved Artorius's life. The Captain was hailed and honored as a

hero, and as savior of the Grimrook Legion. But nevertheless in grief and bitterness he refused the overtures of the Overlord and relinquished his command.

The Overlord had a crisis upon his hands, for Artorius's remaining men were determined to follow him into exile ... and Khom was in no political position to order them to remain under his over-arching command. If he refused and superseded their allegiance to Artorius, it was nearly certain that the grieving Captain and his troops would leave the city. And who would stand to stop them?

An initially very tense concord was reached, in which Artorius would be allowed to command his own surviving soldiers, while the remainder of the Grimrook Legion would remain allegiant under Orthrul. The new and celebrated Artorian faction — christened at first the Scarlet Order Resurgent, and soon after as the Order of the Scarlet Tabard — was allowed to serve as a True Scarlet-inspired company under Artorius, with the significant proviso that the company must forever remain based within, and loyal to, the Free City of Grimrook.

This rather masterful political stroke strengthened the populace's loyalty toward the Overlord, while also creating a new inspirational institution under Captain Artorius's own command. Many citizens — in particular, the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and cousins to those heroic soldiers who had fallen in battle against Verimithraxa and Gorthromai — volunteered to serve under the Scarlet Order Resurgent while still remaining loyal to the Free City and its ruler.

This put the Overlord in a delicate position, because his earlier reputation (achieved in war during the Chaos Plague) was largely dependent upon his leadership of True Scarlet mercenaries in support of the city's plague doctors and the Grimrook Legion.

The Overlord could not risk alienating his people by preventing the blood-kin of Artorius's soldiers from joining the Order Resurgent, if that is what they wished to do. In compromise, all of these worthy souls were allowed to join the Order, but a proclamation was then made (with Artorius at the Overlord's side) that henceforth, the Order would be required to maintain an equal and meritorious non-citizen contingent "in honor of the courageous warriors' Scarlet ways of old." In other words, for every Grimrook citizen who joined the Order, a foreigner would also be allowed to join; and in fact, a second citizen could not join until a second foreigner was accepted in as well. Those foreigners who served faithfully in the Order under Artorius could attain citizenship in Grimrook, making them devout subjects of Khom Orthrul as well.

This crafty manipulation created a situation in which the Order Resurgent was devoutly loyal to Artorius, but the resident-recruits were nevertheless more loyal to Grimrook City than they were to the Order proper. The Order was thenceforth regarded not as a patriotic Grimrook institution, but as an independent mercenary force which grew due to a foreign influx of power. As such, many Grimrookers stood to remain more loyal to the Overlord than they were to the Order Resurgent.

This measure also ensured that many of the Overlord's own people would frequently seek to join the ranks of the Grimrook Legion (as opposed to the Order), while recruitment into the Order Resurgent was measured and slowed. It also created significant goodwill between Grimrook and the wandering outcasts and vagabonds throughout the land, many who had become homeless as a result of the ravages of the Chaos Plague. By joining the Order and fighting well, these outcasts could secure a path to full citizenship which

would ensure the safety of their families for generations to come.

Ever since that uncertain era, the Order has been hired out thousands of times, but never as a full concerted legion. Dungeoneers seeking fellow protectors to assist with their excursions beneath Castle Oldskull hire handfuls of Order members at a time, typically only for a few days. Meanwhile, ship captains and caravan masters employ dozens or hundreds of soldiers at a time, with extended tours of service lasting for several months or even longer. Some Order-supported expeditions have even journeyed to the realms of the Terra Novae and Tamoanchan, far across the Sea of Storms.

Closer to home, cityfolk employ Order soldiers as bodyguards, sentries, patrollers, treasure house guards, tavern "bouncers," and as scout-laborers in dangerous reaches ... including down in the nefarious Undercity, as well as within the marble mines which reach into and beneath the Wastes of Cacus. The Order has lost many hundreds of soldiers, and suffered many defeats over the years. And yet, the Scarlet Tabard has always stood true, and its membership and strength under the guiding hands of Lord Artorius and his Scarlet Captains have only grown.

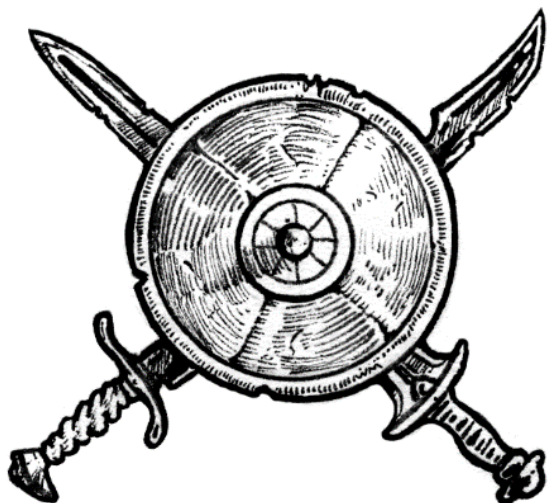
Over recent passing years the Order of the Scarlet Tabard has come to symbolize the Free City of Grimrook for many incoming outsiders seeking solace. The Order champions fulfillment through bravery, triumph through adversity, and kinship between "brothers" and "sisters" where no kinship would otherwise exist. The lesser nobles in the city scarcely tolerate the existence of such a huge "mercenary" force within their walls, but the Order has endured to become an entrusted institution.

The members of the Order largely respect the laws of Grimrook, while Lord Artorius

and the Overlord Orthrul — despite their arguments and differences — maintain a strong mutual respect which strengthens the Order's ties to its glorious city and its people.

Grimrook is now regarded as the foremost capital for the hiring of mercenary soldiers in the known World of Oldskull, with no end to the pressing need for doughty “sell-swords” ever in sight. Due to many turbulent recent events — the skirmishes against the Cinder Lords in the Vesuvian south, the scourging of the undead and wererat remnants from the Chaos Plague, and the flickering dimensional gates which usher in fiendish horrors from all the Realms of Entropy — the call to join the Order is more lucrative and urgent than ever before.

Whatever the odds, and wherever the battles, the ever-replenished legionnaires of the True Scarlet will remain steadfast and vigilant unto the end!



The Magnitude of the Order

The Order of the Scarlet Tabard is the largest and most powerful mercenary company in the World of Oldskull. Indirectly, this can be attributed to the Overlord Khom Orthrul and his uniquely daring political manipulations. (Few kings, and certainly no tyrants, would ever trust in the existence of some unaffiliated mini-army stationed within their city walls.) More directly, the Order has grown over time due to the heroic reputation of Lord Marshal Artorius the Staunch-Hearted and the courageous audacity exhibited by his Scarlet Captains.

Due to losses and recruitment the Order's total membership ranges over time between 700 and 1,500 souls, of which some 150 positions are non-combatant (being porters, accountants, liaisons, laborers, physicians, notaries, treasurers, stable hands, and so forth). Due to the frequency of their subterranean excursions and missions, the Order's soldiery is over 85% infantry in composition, although many “footmen” are skilled horsemen who might be termed “hobilars,” preferring to fight on foot.

At the current time membership is high (~1,300) despite frequent losses, uncertainty in the Terra Novan hinterlands, and other hardships. A full 900 of the Order's soldiers are currently employed as contracted fighting men and women, with a further 400 avidly seeking work.

The Nature of the Order

So, with glitter of armor and flaunting of pennons, their warhorses tossing and pawing, the champions rode down to the midway oak. Behind them streamed hundreds of archers and men-at-arms whose weapons had been wisely taken from them lest a general battle should ensue.

With them also went the townsfolk, men and women, together with wine-sellers, provisions merchants, armorers, grooms and heralds, with surgeons to tend the wounded and priests to shrive the dying. The path was blocked by this throng, but all over the face of the country horsemen and footmen, gentle and simple, men and women, could be seen speeding their way to the scene of the encounter.

The journey was not a long one, for presently, as they threaded their way through the fields, there appeared before them a great gray oak which spread its gnarled leafless branches over the corner of a green and level meadow. The tree was black with the peasants who had climbed into it, and all round it was a huge throng, chattering and calling like a rookery at sunset.

— *Sir Nigel*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Order is an unusual institution, but it is well known throughout the region and its eccentricities are commonly accepted as being “the way things are” by rival, foe, and citizen alike. The Company of Adventure is accepted by the Overlord and the Grimrook Legion, respected by most citizens, and yet routinely mocked by some.

Rivalries between mercenary groups can be extreme at times, and other powers — for example including the Thieves’ Guild, mariner crews from foreign lands, Colosseum gladiators, and barbarians from the north — tend to regard the Order as “a sniveling mob of cowardly miscreants, made weak by their simpering preference for lukewarm gnome piss over a good and ready tankard of Dwerrow ale.” Or something like that.

Drunken fights are frequent and Ordermen are renowned for their inability to “stand down” when it comes to returning unwise insults in kind. The Order’s soldiers are certainly no strangers to the gaols, or to the local magistrates. By life’s very nature, being a mercenary man-at-arms is a rough and tumble trade. In Grimrook it’s to the point that the Scarlet Captains nonchalantly regard tavern brawls as “unarmed melee training.”

Chaos does not reign, however. There are certain rules of Scarlet Tabard conduct which are so ubiquitously known that outlanders and neophyte adventures are sometimes caught unawares by the way things are.

To be clear, these irreproachable and largely unspoken rules include the following:

- Order members, hired or no, cannot lawfully act against the Overlord or his Grimrook Legion.
- Order members cannot join the Grimrook Legion.
- Grimrook Legion members cannot join the Order.
- Order members, and their accompanying employers, can fully expect the respectful act of being marched to and from the city’s gates under the Legion’s (or the Guard’s, or the Night Watch’s) supervision regardless of the hour. Locals term

this “honorable and good,” while paranoid employers from other lands might call it “spying.”

- Most Order members worship Virtus, the Emyrean Lesser God of Men-at-Arms, Soldiers, and Tactics. (This belief was brought into Tyrrhenia from Achaea, where Virtus was originally known as Arete.)
- Good and neutral priests throughout the city will frequently heal Order members at no cost, or at a greatly reduced cost paid by Lord Artorius personally. In a city where over 200 shrines and temples exist, there are more healers than anywhere else in the world ... and most priests recall the Day of Verimithraxa well within their living memory. No debt to heroes is ever paid in full.
- Those Ordermen who perish in service die knowing that they will be buried in the places of honor within the city walls.



The Order has a standing silent rule of accepting anyone, however weak or unproven, into the ranks ... provided (a) they have all of their limbs and at least one of their eyes, (b) they are not evil (and are

willing to subject themselves to a Know Alignment spell), and (c) they are either more courageous, more determined, or more intelligent than the average bear.

It should be noted however that some Order members *become* evil over time, due to the influence of the many priesthoods and modes of appeasing worship which are tolerated throughout the city's wards. It's a complicated situation.

Very generally, all nine alignments — including the evil ones — have temples in Grimrook, and the demon lords and arch-devils are worshipped by carefully-watched priesthoods as a matter of appeasement due to the city's accursed history, in which attempts to cast out evil priests very nearly led to the city's total destruction. There is also a deathly curse — Om Krol-kratha, “The Emyrean Casuistry Undying” — which was laid upon the city by the Lich Queen which lashed this dire situation even more irrevocably to all of Tyrrhenia's future survival. The Overlord tolerates ritualistic adherence to evil Elder Ways, while mercilessly stamping out cults and splinter factions who cause violent crimes against Grimrook or its people.

As a result of this messy predicament, Grimrook is a dangerous sanctuary city which sees all manner of pilgrimages and religious festivals throughout the year ... making it the largest, most important, and most unpredictable city in all the Occidental realms. This is a rather complex consideration which basically means that non-evil PCs will be prevented from hiring evil NPC Order members, but some of these nefarious people do exist for *other* factions' needs.

(Do not envy Lord Artorius ... despite his good inclinations, he has seen the future curse-engendered destruction of Grimrook in his nightmares. Evil is loathingly tolerated within the Order ranks, so long as discipline forever holds true. Order

members who become murderers will find themselves prison-bound, or dead, without fail.)

There are other alignment-driven problems to be considered as well. The eternal proviso that “One must be Scarlet, and one Grim” — referring to the fact that citizens and non-citizens must be admitted in equal numbers — can at times cause fairly significant delays while desperate outland folk are waiting to join the Order. Temple almsmen are well aware of these unfortunates and tend to feed and shelter them, provided they are willing to work as temple servants until the Order finally takes them in.

There are other game in-twists caused by the Order’s unique tenets as well. Perhaps most notably, standard mercenary companies have a “must be able-bodied” tenet of admittance ... which in game terms means that any man or woman of fewer than 4 hit points (level zero) will be refused entry into service. However the Order allows all such “lean of body” persons the opportunity to prove themselves. Astute readers of the preliminary volume in this series, *The Order of the Scarlet Tabard*, might note that some Order members have a mere 3 hit points to their names. And this is why.



Although the admittance of “all and sundry” does indeed increase the Order’s

casualty rates, it also boosts morale, and gives unpromising individuals a chance to join the mercenary way of life even when other companies refuse to accept them.

Paradoxes of Faith: Reputation and Code of the Order

Behind came a stream of howling archers and men-at-arms, like a flood which has broken its dam. Down they slipped into the ditch, rushed across it, and clambered on each other’s backs up the opposite side. Nigel, Raoul and two archers gained a foothold in front of the burning gate at the same moment. With blows and kicks they burst it to pieces, and dashed with a yell of triumph through the dark archway beyond.

For a moment they thought with mad rapture that the castle was carried. A dark tunnel lay before them, down which they rushed. But alas! at the farther end it was blocked by a second gateway as strong as that which had been burned.

In vain they beat upon it with their swords and axes. On each side the tunnel was pierced with slits, and the crossbow bolts discharged at only a few yards’ distance crashed through armor as if it were cloth and laid man after man upon the stones. They raged and leaped before the great iron-clamped barrier, but the wall itself was as easy to tear down.

It was bitter to draw back; but it was madness to remain ...

— *Sir Nigel*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The perpetual, dangerous, and headache-inducing conundrum involving the nature of good and evil within the city of Grimrook creates problems for the Order. The Order is quite rightly seen as admitting potential “evildoers” into the city, an appellation which refers to all of those desperate and violent people who might otherwise never achieve citizenship in any other corner of the world. But when one considers the long history of the Empyreans and the issues of refused citizenship which led to the eventual decline and fall of the glorious empire, a greater philosophical question arises: “Is it more dangerous to forgive potential evildoers, and to give the desperate a chance to prove and redeem themselves; or is it more dangerous to refuse the lowly any and all hope of their future salvation?”

I’ll leave that deep and nasty riddle for the philosophers to quarrel over. However, the fact that the Order is built upon “acceptance of all” creates a huge potential issue with hired soldier behavior. As such, it should be known that the Order of the Scarlet Tabard has the strictest and most punitive written code of conduct which its members are daily sworn to. This code directly manifests itself in play because it dictates how men-at-arms comport themselves in times of trial and violent adversity.

When PCs order men-at-arms to fight to the death, or to search for perilous traps, or to leave their wounded comrades behind, morale checks will be called for; and morale failure (disobedience) will need to be carefully adjudicated by the Game Master. Order soldiers will act in accordance with their individual alignments, true; but they will also act in accordance with the Code of Scarlet, and whenever there are conflicts between the two, the code and disciplined training will tend to win out in the end.

Usually.

As such, it pays to consider the nature of the code and its wording.

The Code of Scarlet reads as follows:

I am a man / woman of the Scarlet Tabard, and regardless of my oaths to god or family, never shall I:

- **(I)** *Raise arms against the innocent.*
- **(II)** *Defy the rightful Overlord, nor betray the Free City of Grimrook.*
- **(III)** *Ever betray my employer, unless I am first betrayed.*
- **(IV)** *Flee from a fight without a blow being struck, unless my employer or officer commands.*
- **(V)** *Commit a violent deed in the name of Evil.*
- **(VI)** *Strike a man or woman of the human race, unless I am first attacked.*
- **(VII)** *Similarly strike a dwarf, elf, gnome, or halfling, unless I am first attacked.*
- **(VIII)** *Accept a command or compulsion to betray my own companions within the Order.*
- **(IX)** *Lie to a commanding officer.*
- **(X)** *Refuse a direct order from the Lord Marshal, without willingly departing the Order first, and then forevermore.*

In practice and in game play, this translates to the following:

- Order members will refuse to join in on Grimrook crime capers, up to and including many activities which players might term “urban adventures.” This means: breaking and entering, lying to officials to obscure criminal activity, killing citizens or guests of the city, stealing

treasure from citizens, and so on. Players can be gently (?) reminded that there are other more insidious mercenary companies which can be hired, along with worthy (?) members of the Thieves' and Assassins' Guilds who stand ready and willing to work "dirty" for the right price.

- Clause (III) can be touchy, because if the PCs (as employers) screw over Order soldiers and leave them to die, the soldiers might well regard that as treachery. If any of them survive to tell their tales, it might become *rather* difficult for those PCs to hire other Order members thereafter.
- Clause (IV) means that Order members are trained and disciplined, and they have higher morale than normal (averaging Morale 9 for companions, sometimes higher, depending on employer Charisma).
- Clause (V) tends to get very testy when the interpretation of the word "violent" is stretched due to extenuating circumstances.
- Clauses (VI) and (VII) do in fact mean that even if ordered to attack, Order members will not attack humans or demi-humans unless their side is attacked first. This can cause some interesting tactical problems when PCs are beset by bandits, brigands, berserkers, etc.
- Further, clause (VII) is a source of social tension in the city. Game Masters might note that the races "half-orc" and "half-ogre" are not included in this list, and yes, that directly relates to racial tensions within the city wards. There's also the interesting wrinkle involving evil netherworld-dwelling demi-human races, such as the drow, Dvergar, and others. Order members are

sworn not to attack these races until they are attacked first!

Beyond the code there are also a few other practical matters to consider:

- The cost to hire Order members is a bit higher than the going rate for most mercenary soldiers. But then again, considering discipline, morale, reputation, and fighting ability, you get what you paid for. Anyone can hire a few random ruffians out of the alleys to do some violent deeds, but hiring from the Order means that serious business is afoot.
- Player Characters might well encounter Order members in a tavern, looking for employment, while they are planning a dungeon expedition. However, members will never accept work in a tavern, on the street, or elsewhere. All offers of employment are taken directly to the Order Hall, and then a messenger will return to the PCs — either confirming or rejecting employment, along with terms — within an hour's time.
- Order members do not gain treasure shares while adventuring; they accept agreed-upon pay instead.
- The Gygaxian 1979 guide tells us that normal men-at-arms will not willingly venture below dungeon level 3, due to their low survivability in lethal circumstances. Order of the Scarlet Tabard soldiers, however, will do so if commanded, and if they succeed in a morale check.
- Overall, Order soldiers have a reputation for high risk, sacrifice, low survivability, and bravery in combat. And they wouldn't have it any other way.

“By the rood!” cried the fierce man-at-arms, “I will see the color of their blood ere I turn my mare’s head for the mountains. Am I a child, that I should ride for three days and nought but words at the end of it?”

— *The White Company*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle



Three Sides to the

Spearhead: Experience

Classification of Order

Soldiers

There are five major classifications of mercenaries working in the Order of the Scarlet Tabard: officers (detailed later in this supplement), non-combatants (the clerks, notaries, etc.), blade squires, companions, and free lances.

Player Characters will most frequently adventure alongside companions and free lances (with the occasional blade squires), although officers will likely come into play later if significant bodies of mercenary troops are hired at one time.

- **Blade Squires (base morale level 8):** These are inexperienced troops who have high morale and camaraderie, but they have not yet seen battle. They can only be hired in groups of 20 or more, and their survivability

tends to be low. Morale is lower when compared to that of experienced troops. But since their pay rates are lower too, they are popular choices for guard duty, scouting, and overland travel where dangerous monsters only “might” be a potential problem. (PCs tend to get into violent messes, and the hiring of blade squires by such adventurers will be discouraged by Order officers, because they’re well aware of the dire bloody messes that occur when adventurers go dungeon delving! In Game Master terms, these are “troops for NPC employers or overland journeys” for the most part.)

- **Companions (base morale level 9):** Companions are the most common type of Order mercenaries. They have standardized weapons and armor, and standard rates of pay. They can be hired in units; in fact, due to a contractual survivability clause an employer must hire at least 5 companions at one time and the troops must be kept together. Their morale tends to suffer (-1) if they are not led by either an Order officer, or by a charismatic (CHA 13+) and capable employer.
- **Free Lances (variable morale, as listed):** These unique soldiers are individuals who commonly own their weapons, armor, and equipment. (They were self-trained earlier on their own favored weapons, and refuse to comply with orthodox training ordinances when their lives are on the line.) They are experienced and (usually) brave, hailing from foreign armies or rival mercenary companies. However they have not yet proven themselves to the Order to the point of being classified as “line troops,” which means that they do not serve in units under a

Scarlet Tabard officer. These are the individuals who are most commonly hired by PCs, because they are available for hire singly. The individuals featured in *The Order of the Scarlet Tabard* supplement are all free lances. Pay rates vary according to the person, their preferred weapons, their armor, their endurance, and their skills. They have quite different capabilities, but generally the more you pay, the better the soldier. Caveat emptor!

- **(GM's Note:** The distinction between companions and free lances arose in my campaign because sometimes I wanted to offer unique persons with adventure-hook details and special personalities, which brought the free lances into play. At other times, I didn't want to wrestle with piles of NPC stats to keep the game moving, so more generic and standardized companions were made available. I've included both approaches here so that you can decide which play approach you want to take with your own group. Note that by design, a small group will typically consist of unique free lances, while a larger group will consist of "generic" companions for ease of statting and rapid play.)

The weapons and armor used by individual free lances are detailed in *The Order of the Scarlet Tabard*.

For blade squires and companions, equipment will be standardized as follows. Note that these Gygaxian "loadouts" assume that the length, speed, space required, and weapon vs. armor adjustment rules are all being used, which explains (for example) why a soldier would want to carry both an axe and a sword. Some weapons are just plain better vs.

some particular armors and types of enemies!

- **Light Footman, Blade Squire:** Padded armor and shield; spear and club
- **Light Footman, Companion:** Studded leather armor and shield; spear and hand axe



- **Skirmisher, Blade Squire:** Padded armor and shield; 12 darts and club
- **Skirmisher, Companion:** Ring mail and shield; 15 darts and dagger
- **Heavy Footman, Blade Squire:** Chain mail and shield; battle axe and broad sword
- **Heavy Footman, Companion:** Splint mail and shield; battle axe and long sword
- **Armsman, Blade Squire:** Ring mail; pole arm (GM's choice) and club
- **Armsman, Companion:** Banded mail; pole arm (GM's choice) and hand axe



- **Slinger, Blade Squire:** Padded armor and shield; sling and club
- **Slinger, Companion:** Studded leather armor and shield; sling and 2 throwing clubs
- **Crossbowman, Blade Squire:** Studded leather armor; light crossbow and hand axe
- **Crossbowman, Companion:** Chain mail; light crossbow and military fork



- **Arbalester, Blade Squire:** Ring mail; heavy crossbow and club
- **Arbalester, Companion:** Chain mail; heavy crossbow and short sword
- **Archer, Blade Squire:** Studded leather armor; short bow and short sword
- **Archer, Companion:** Scale mail; short bow and broad sword



- **Longbowman, Blade Squire:** Leather armor; long bow and broad sword
- **Longbowman, Companion:** Scale mail; long bow, long sword, and dagger
- **Light Cavalry, Blade Squire:** Studded leather armor and shield; 2 throwing axes, broad sword, and club
- **Light Cavalry, Companion:** Ring mail and shield; 3 javelins, long sword, and hand axe
- **Mounted Crossbowman, Blade Squire:** Studded leather armor and shield; light crossbow and horseman's military pick
- **Mounted Crossbowman, Companion:** Scale mail and shield; light crossbow and broad sword
- **Medium Cavalry, Blade Squire:** Studded leather armor and shield; lance and horseman's flail
- **Medium Cavalry, Companion:** Chain mail and shield; lance, horseman's flail, and short sword
- **Heavy Cavalry, Blade Squire:** Banded mail and shield; lance, broad sword, and horseman's mace
- **Heavy Cavalry, Companion:** Plate mail and shield; lance, broad sword, and horseman's mace

All blade squires and companions are considered to be human, unless the GM decides otherwise. (There are also some special troop types and demi-human rules

listed in the officers section of this supplement.)

As a rule of thumb I would recommend that if mixed troop races are preferred, demi-humans — who are clearly superior at low experience levels — should make up no more than 10-15% of the available troops.

I have not gone to the level of detail of providing counts of each type of troop available for hire in the city, because that type of micro-management by the author can actually hinder your campaign. It isn't fair for me to dictate to you what you can offer your own players when you're encouraging them to try out the concept of NPC men-at-arms!

My advice to Game Masters is, assume approximately 50 of each infantry troop type (and 25 of each cavalry type, but *not* intended for dungeon expeditions!) are available for Player Character hire at any one time, at most; and make adjustments as needed during play.

Also, feel free to enforce Charisma adjustments to follower morale, loyalty, and number of controllable troops if you like. Some GMs interpret those rules as applying only to long-term henchmen and retainers, while others prefer to use them for all NPCs, up to and including mercenary soldiers who might only be hired for a single day.



Hiring Ordermen

The pay rates of men-at-arms in the Free City of Grimrook vary, according to the hardiness and experience (classification) of the mercenary soldier, as well as the esteem of the soldier's company. All of

these factors influence soldier prowess and morale, and — as any adventurer knows — the morale of the mercenaries has a direct impact on the survivability of their employers while engaging in dangerous expeditions. Those who are foolish enough to skimp on bodyguard pay might well regret their decisions once sword, fang, and claw come to the fore!

Monthly pay rates for Scarlet Tabard *free lances* vary widely between 1.5 and 6.5 gold pieces per month, as demonstrated in the Order of the Scarlet Tabard supplement. Pay rates for *blade squires* and *companions* however are standardized, as listed below.

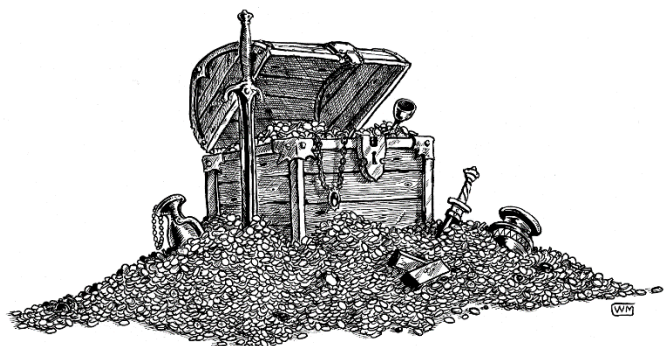
The Gygaxian pay rates listed are per *month* of “light duty” (guard duty, caravan accompaniment, etc.), and are also per *week* of “heavy duty” (certain combat, riot duty, bodyguards of threatened persons, etc.). The listed rates are also used as rates of pay for subterranean or dungeon expedition accompaniment, whether the service is for 1 day or up to 7 days.

The Order’s pay rates are:

- **Arbalester (heavy crossbow):** For a blade squire, 2 gp / month (light duty), week (heavy duty), or expedition; for a companion, 3 gp.
- **Archer (short bow):** For a blade squire, 2 gp / month (light duty), week (heavy duty), or expedition; for a companion, 3 gp.
- **Armsman / Pikeman (pole arm):** For a blade squire, 3 gp / month (light duty), week (heavy duty), or expedition; for a companion, 4 gp.
- **Crossbowman (light):** For a blade squire, 2 gp / month (light duty), week (heavy duty), or expedition; for a companion, 3 gp.
- **Heavy Cavalry (heavy warhorse):** For a blade squire, 6 gp / month (light duty), week (heavy duty), or expedition; for a companion, 9 gp.

- **Heavy Footman (heavy armor and melee weapons):** For a blade squire, 2 gp / month (light duty), week (heavy duty), or expedition; for a companion, 3 gp.
- **Light Cavalry (light warhorse):** For a blade squire, 3 gp / month (light duty), week (heavy duty), or expedition; for a companion, 4 gp.
- **Light Footman (light armor and melee weapons):** For a blade squire, 1 gp / month (light duty), week (heavy duty), or expedition; for a companion, 2 gp.
- **Longbowman (long bow):** For a blade squire, 4 gp / month (light duty), week (heavy duty), or expedition; for a companion, 6 gp.
- **Medium Cavalry (medium warhorse):** For a blade squire, 4 gp / month (light duty), week (heavy duty), or expedition; for a companion, 6 gp.
- **Mounted Crossbowman (light warhorse):** For a blade squire, 4 gp / month (light duty), week (heavy duty), or expedition; for a companion, 6 gp.
- **Skirmisher (light armor and hurled weapons):** For a blade squire, 1 gp / month (light duty), week (heavy duty), or expedition; for a companion, 2 gp.
- **Slinger (light armor and sling):** For a blade squire, 2 gp / month (light duty), week (heavy duty), or expedition; for a companion, 3 gp.

These are rates for the esteemed Order of the Scarlet Tabard only. Rates for soldiers of other (cheaper) mercenary companies will be equal to the *blade squire* rates listed above.



If demi-humans are available for service, I recommend a special pay rate of +1 gold piece for infantry, or +2 gold pieces per cavalry. (The bonus for “game balance reasons” should actually be even higher than that, but “socially” these rates are more reasonable in my opinion.) Do not under-estimate highly prized troops such as halfling slingers, dwarven heavy infantry, or elven archers! Those minor demi-human combat advantages really tend to add up quickly when you’re dealing with dozens of soldiers acting in formation.

Hiring Officers of the Scarlet Tabard

In addition to the listed types of normal soldiers, the Player Characters might also express interest in hiring minor *officers*. These are either fighters with normal (11-12) ability scores and hit points, or special elite officers (Scarlet Captains) who are detailed as individuals in this supplement.

Officers provide considerable firepower for low-level PC groups, but they are only available for hire if certain troop number thresholds are reached. Hiring Order officers is quite an expensive undertaking, but being dead is more expensive, to be sure! Make it clear to your players that the option of hiring officers is potentially

available to the PCs, but let the players decide if the service is worth the price. The prices are such that the question will probably not arise until the PCs have reached mid- or high experience levels.

Order officers will act in accordance with the employer’s will, up to a point. The officers will also have firm opinions on the point of who commands whom, and when.

If the employer is *embracing command*, then this means (in play terms) that the players’ PCs will issue orders to the Order officer, and the officer will order the troops. A simple command of “Attack!” from a PC might well result in the NPC officer making tactical decisions for the mercenary soldiers, with heavy infantry charging, light infantry in reserve, archers firing before melee is engaged, and so forth. But if the PCs issue more tactical and detailed orders, the officer will do his or her best to enforce their perceived intent. Of course, as always highly dangerous or suicidal orders will require a morale check.

Conversely, if the employer is *delegating command*, the Order officer will command the troops as he sees fit. This means that the NPCs will fight if the PCs fight, will flee if the PCs flee, and so forth.

It is advisable for the Game Master to insist on which approach the players would like to try, to avoid arguments when combat occurs. Of course the command distinction can change during play, but not discussing it at all can be very problematic.

Some other command situations will need to be considered based on whether or not the PCs decide to assist officers, and the number of troops controlled. The following guidelines are recommended:

(The Order will allow level 1+ PCs to hire between 1 and 10 soldiers.)

- **If the PCs have hired between 1 and 4 Order soldiers,** no officers are available to assist for hire. The troops will be directly commanded by the PCs.
- **If between 5 and 10 soldier are hired,** the PCs can also choose to hire a sergeant. A typical sergeant is a level 1 fighter with between 7 and 10 (1D6+4) hit points. The sergeant will have the same weapons as the “companion”-level majority troop type that he leads; for example, a longbowman sergeant would be equipped with long bow, long sword, and dagger. Sergeants will also have +1 armor class, to a maximum of plate mail and shield; for example, if chain mail is listed for line troops, the sergeant will wear banded armor. They give a +1 morale bonus to the soldiers that they lead. The pay rate for a sergeant is equal to the companion rate x 10, which means that a longbowman sergeant’s rate is 60 gold pieces. Officer pay rates are never discounted.

(The Order will allow level 2+ PCs to hire up to 20 soldiers. A 2% total troop fee discount applies at this tier; therefore hiring 20 mounted crossbowman companions, which normally costs 120 gp, would only cost 117.6 gp.)

- **If between 11 and 15 soldiers are hired,** the PCs can choose to hire 1 or 2 sergeants. A sergeant can command up to 10 troops on his own; if only 1 sergeant is hired, the remaining troops will be under the PCs’ direct command.
- **If between 16 and 20 soldiers are hired,** the PCs can choose to hire 1 (junior) lieutenant, or 2 sergeants. A typical lieutenant is a level 2 fighter

with between 15 and 20 (1D6+14) hit points. A lieutenant — capable of commanding up to 20 troops on his own — will have the same weapons as the “companion”-level majority troop type that he leads, plus a fine sword (long, bastard, or two-handed). Lieutenants will also have +2 armor class, to a maximum of plate mail and shield. They give a +1 morale bonus to the soldiers that they lead. The pay rate of a lieutenant is 200 gold pieces per month.

- **Note:** Hiring more than 20 soldiers to accompany an underground or dungeon expedition will be considered highly unusual ... but if the GM and the players can handle the logistics, more power to them! The GM must decide if there is an “upper limit” for dungeon accompaniment.

(The Order will allow level 3+ PCs to hire up to 30 soldiers. A 4% total troop fee discount applies at this tier.)

- **If between 21 and 30 soldiers are hired,** the PCs can choose to hire 1 senior lieutenant, or 2 or 3 sergeants. A typical senior lieutenant is a level 3 fighter with between 23 and 30 (1D8+22) hit points. The senior lieutenant — capable of commanding up to 30 troops on his own — will have the same weapons as the “companion”-level majority troop type that he leads, plus a fine sword (long, bastard, or two-handed). Senior lieutenants will also have +2 armor class, to a maximum of plate mail and shield. They give a +1 morale bonus to the soldiers that they lead. The pay rate of a senior

lieutenant is 300 gold pieces per month.

(The Order will allow level 4+ PCs to hire up to 40 soldiers. A 6% total troop fee discount applies at this tier.)

- **If between 31 and 40 soldiers are hired**, the PCs can choose to hire 1 commander, 2 lieutenants, or 1 senior lieutenant and 1 sergeant. Further, if the PCs are only level 4, the Order will insist that officers be hired; for PCs of level 5+ this will be optional. A typical commander is a level 4 fighter with between 31 and 40 (1D10+30) hit points. The commander — capable of commanding up to 40 troops on his own — will have the same weapon types as the “companion”-level majority troop type that he leads. He will also possess a +1 weapon of the primary type wielded (long bow, long sword, pole arm, etc.). He will have +3 armor class, to a maximum of AC 1. He will have a chance to have either +1 armor (10%), a +1 shield (10%), or both (5%), with a 75% chance of having only a magical weapon but no magical armor. Commanders give a +2 morale bonus to the soldiers that they lead. The pay rate of a commander is 400 gold pieces per month.

(The Order will know the approximate experience levels of higher-level PCs through rumor and reputation; a standard ratio should be applied following the above guidelines, e.g. a group of level 7 PCs would likely be allowed to hire up to 70 Order soldiers at a time.)

- **If more than 40 soldiers are hired**, the PCs will have the option of hiring 1 Captain of the Scarlet Tabard to accompany the group. Further, if the PCs are below experience level 6, the Order will insist that 1 Captain be hired. There will be special troops types available for optional hire, as listed under each captain’s description. The pay rates and command ability for the captains are listed in their descriptions in this volume.



Skirmishes and Land Battles: The Size of Larger Order Units

If the Game Master wants to feature PCs commanding mercenary troops in land battles, the following bits of information might be helpful.

Because the Order exists through allowing groups to be either commanded or not, in forces ranging in size from 1 to 100 or more, the term “unit” becomes rather laughable from a command perspective. The Order is not an army ... but it can act like one when required, if the price is high enough.

The following unit sizes are recommended for miniatures or large-scale engagements:

- **Hand** (or in the White Company, a **Lanze**): This is a squad of 3 to 5 men.
- **Contubernium**: A unit of 6 to 15 troops, commanded by a sergeant or a lieutenant.
- **Troop**: A unit of 16 to 45 troops, commanded by a lieutenant, senior lieutenant, or commander.
- **Host**: A unit of 46 to 90 troops, commanded by a commander or a captain.
- **Centuria**: A unit of 91 to 110 troops, commanded by a captain. Internally, a centuria is wryly referred to as a “Gallowglass Cohort.”
- **Maniple**: A unit of 111 to 130 troops, commanded by a captain.
- **Company**: A unit of 131 to 250 troops, commanded by a veteran captain.
- **Cohort**: A unit of 251 to 500 troops, commanded by an elite captain or the Lord Marshal.
- **Great Host**: A unit of 501 or more troops, up to the Order’s full maximum strength; commanded by the Lord Marshal and captains.



Goodly Men and Women of Renown: The Great Captains of the Order

“At your age, a man should have a hot head and a high heart. I also had both and fought for my lady’s glove, or for my vow, or for the love of fighting.

“But as one grows older and commands men, one has other things to think of. One thinks less of one’s own honor and more of the safety of the army. It is not your own spear, your own sword, your own arm, which will turn the tide of fight; but a cool head may save a stricken field.

“He who knows when his horsemen should charge and when they should fight on foot, he who can mix his archers with his men-at-arms in such a fashion that each can support the other, he who can hold up his reserve and pour it into the battle when it may turn the tide, he who has a quick eye for boggy land and broken ground — that is the man who is of more worth to an army than Roland, Oliver, and all the paladins.”

— *Sir Nigel*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Above the standard sergeants, lieutenants, and commanders, there are unique individuals who are renowned for their fighting prowess, wisdom, and — truth be told — their combative eccentricities and occasional foolhardiness in battle. Collectively, these men and women are known as the **Scarlet Captains**.

These individuals are based (very distantly) upon the names, but not the identities, of real-life people who contributed to the Bundle of Holding / Castle Oldskull charity and funding drive. You can feel free to use them in your own campaign, although if you use them in a published supplement I would ask that you please maintain this association with the real-life contributors if you feel that you can do so.

I thank you in advance!



Captain Hierarch I:

Lord Marshal Artorius o' Braune

(The Staunch-Hearted, Demon Slayer, High Commander of the Order of the Scarlet Tabard)

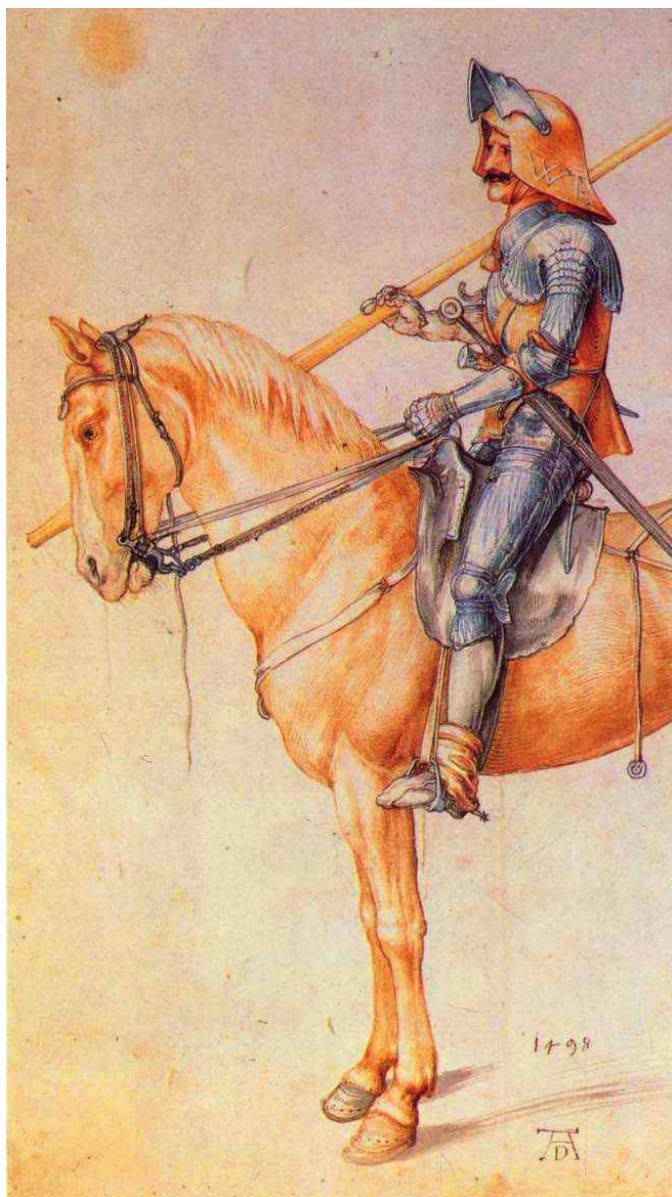
- **Description:** As told in the introduction to this volume, Lord Artorius is regarded as a hero by the citizenry of Grimrook due to his past actions in the field. His ethos is quite evident, as the Code of Scarlet — as sworn to by every soldier in the Order — manifests his personal beliefs. He

is haunted by the conviction that Grimrook's ritualistic veneration of evil deities will culminate in disaster, but the Lich Queen's curse of Om Krol-kratha has bound the Elder Ways and the city to a dark destiny which cannot be averted. Running a famous mercenary company, regardless of one's ideals, is a never-ending study in compromise! Despite his authority as Lord Marshal, Artorius still prefers to be hailed as "Captain" by his compatriots.

- **Command Ability:** The entire Order of the Scarlet Tabard follows and obeys Lord Artorius's commands. He confers a +3 morale bonus (to a maximum morale level of 12) to all soldiers he personally leads into battle from the forefront. When forced to command behind ranks, the morale bonus is +2 (to a maximum level of 11).
- **Hiring Terms:** Lord Artorius will only ally with Player Characters if they are serving a death-defying cause that will greatly favor the Free City of Grimrook. The GM must decide when the circumstances are appropriate. Being a mercenary company commander, he must demand a fee of course or his reputation amongst his men and rivals would be on the line! His required rate of pay is 2,000 gold pieces per week or dungeon expedition. However, he will not demand any shares of discovered treasure while serving alongside a worthy adventuring party.
- **Special Troops:** When Lord Artorius agrees to a commission, he can call upon any of the Order's specialists to assist him.
- **Game Statistics:** High Elf, Male, Level 7/10 Fighter/Magic-User. STR 18, DEX 14, CON 13, INT 17, WIS 11,

CHA 16. Hit Points 56. Alignment Lawful Neutral (with Good tendencies). Plate Mail +2, Shield +3, Vorpal Blade (Bloodgaunt), Dagger +2, Bag of Holding, Cloak of Elvenkind, Net of Snaring, Ring of Djinni Summoning, 3 Potions of Extra-Healing.

- **Dedication:** With thanks to Arthur Braune, a long-term fan, for his ongoing encouragement and support.



Captain Hierarch II:

Sir Joshua of the House of Wright

(Bravest of the True Companions, Illustrious Lord Captain)

- **Description:** Sir Joshua is the master of the Order's cavalry contingents. He prefers to ride a spirited Illyrian charger, free of barding, for maximum maneuverability upon the field of battle. While adhering to the greater code of chivalry as honored by his house he is nevertheless, through and through, a mercenary and a bit of a joking scoundrel. He will attempt to mercifully spare the lives of any non-evil foes who are bested by his units in battle, unless specifically — and perhaps repeatedly — ordered to do otherwise.
- **Command Ability:** Due to his experience level of 10, Sir Joshua can command up to 200 soldiers on his own without assistance. He confers a +2 morale bonus to cavalry (mounted or dismounted), or a +1 bonus to infantry.
- **Hiring Terms:** When Sir Joshua is available for service, his rate is 1,200 gold pieces per week or dungeon expedition. He rarely adventures underground these days but will bravely do so in the name of a worthy cause.
- **Special Troops:** When Sir Joshua agrees to a commission, he can call upon any cavalry units in the order. At his behest, cavalry will also serve as hobilar, riding to the field or area of battle, and fighting on foot if necessary.
- **Game Statistics:** Half-Elf (of Sylvan descent), Male, Level 10 Cavalier. STR 17.12 (plus girdle), DEX 15.83, CON 17.49, INT 14, WIS 11, CHA 15. Hit Points 84. Alignment Chaotic

Good. Full Plate Armor +2, Broad Sword +2 Giant Slayer, Lance +1, Girdle of Stone Giant Strength, Horseshoes of a Zephyr, 2 Potions of Extra-Healing.

- **Dedication:** With thanks to Bundle of Holding fund contributor Ser Joshuak of Wright, #1 contributor.

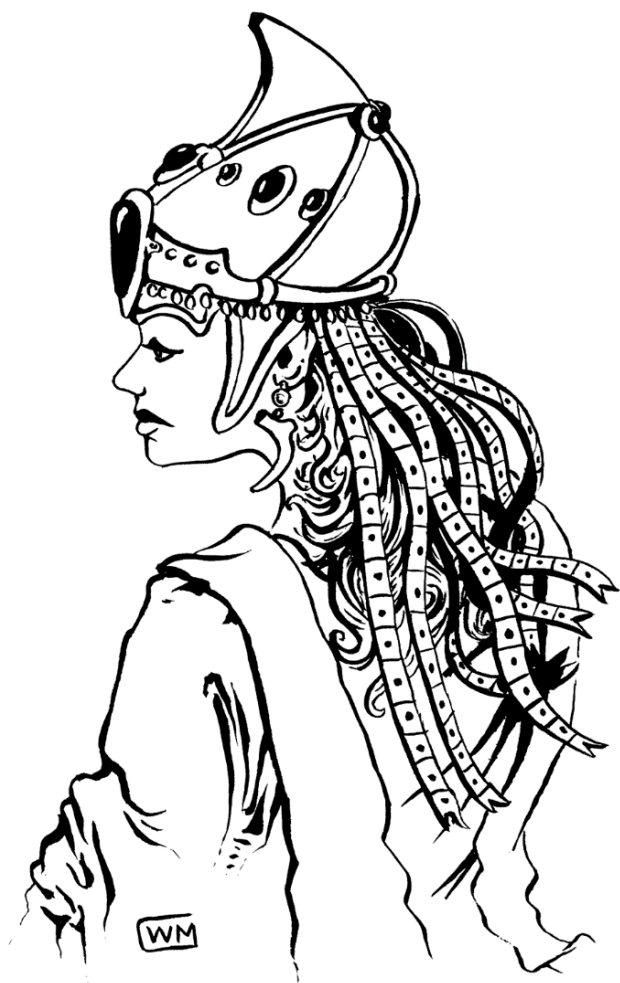
Captain Hierarch III:

A Man Called “Khaos”

(Companion of the Sharpest Blade, Master of the Outlanders, Vaunted Lord Captain)

- **Description:** “Khaos” — true name unknown — is the notorious loose cannon of the Order. He tries to charge his troops into battle at the first excuse for action, strategically or otherwise. He only grudgingly takes orders, especially to retreat. His saving grace is that the men and women he commands, the Outlanders, positively adore and nearly worship him.
- **Command Ability:** Khaos can command up to 180 soldiers on his own. When commanding the Outlanders, he gives them a +3 morale bonus. When commanding other troops however, they suffer a -1 penalty to morale.
- **Hiring Terms:** When Khaos is available for service, his rate is 900 gold pieces per week or dungeon expedition. He must be allowed to command his own troops on behalf of the employer. He does not like riding horses, and prefers subterranean exploration and combat missions. The battle cry “Crom, witness!” has been known to escape his lips from time to time. Fortunately silver spray paint does not exist in the World of Oldskull.

- **Special Troops:** Khaos commands the blade squires who are known as the Outlanders. These are the rough-and-tumble people “from afar” who desperately crave Grimrook citizenship. Their ethics are questionable. They will fight boldly while under Khaos’s command. When commanded by others, however, they can be unpredictable and a bit unruly. Their primarily favored clever tactics are “hack and slay,” along with the ever-popular “pointy end goes in the bad guy.” Beyond that they’re a bit tactically challenged due to bloodthirst and enthusiasm. The Outlanders have the lowest survival rate of all the troops in the Order.
- **Game Statistics:** Human, Male, Level 9 Barbarian. STR 18.93, DEX 16, CON 16, INT 12, WIS 9, CHA 15. Hit Points 89. Alignment Chaotic Good (with Neutral tendencies). Leather Armor +2, Bastard Sword of Sharpness, Spear +2; non-martial magic items are frowned upon as “cursed trinkets of the milksops” and are either destroyed or bestowed upon companions.
- **Dedication:** With thanks to Bundle of Holding fund contributor Khaos.



Captain Hierarch IV:

Valeria of the Dogs of War

(Mistress of Hounds, Commander of the Desert Sky Archers, Lord Captain)

- **Description:** Valeria Canthae is the wilderness tracking and combat specialist for the Order of the Scarlet Tabard. She has served from the Hyrcanian forests to the Khomite wastelands, and it is said that she can track just about anyone, anywhere ... for a price. She loves to use war hounds both for tracking and combat missions. Her favored weapon is the long bow, and melee combat is avoided whenever possible; nevertheless she is an exceedingly deadly swordswoman as well. She

bears a particular hatred toward the Dvergar (subterranean dwarves) who murdered her family, and will actually refuse hirings that make her subservient to dwarven characters of any kind.

- **Command Ability:** Valeria can command up to 180 soldiers on her own. When commanding ranged troops (slingers, archers, skirmishers, etc.) or Hound Masters, she gives them a +2 morale bonus. When commanding other troops, she gives a +1 morale bonus.
- **Hiring Terms:** When Valeria is available for service, her rate is 900 gold pieces per week or dungeon expedition.
- **Special Troops:** When Valeria is available for service and liaison (at the GM's discretion), whether or not she is hired she will also offer the Order's esteemed Hound Masters for service. These specialized fighters are not otherwise available. They are equipped as heavy companion footmen, and each can control 1D4+1 war hounds. These troops are expensive, and their rate is 9 gold pieces for themselves and an additional 2 gold pieces per hound they control. No more than 5 Hound Masters will be available to serve at any one time. Hounds will only obey orders given by their masters, but they are all experienced in over-ground tracking, pursuit, and subterranean combat. Valeria also commands the Desert Sky Archers, a mostly-female contingent of 40-60 (depending on recent losses) companion longbow archers. These archers can only be hired when Valeria herself is hired.
- **Game Statistics:** Human, Female, Level 9 Ranger. STR 15, DEX 17, CON 16, INT 14, WIS 15, CHA 13. Hit Points 66. Alignment Neutral

Good. Elfin Chain Mail +2, Long Bow +1, 20 Arrows +2, 10 Arrows +4, 5 Arrows of Slaying (various), Displacer Cloak, Ring of Spell Turning.

- **Dedication:** With thanks to Bundle of Holding fund contributor Desert Sky Archers.



The Dogs of War

The following war dog breeds (sub-races) are featured in the World of Oldskull. Each specialized Hound Master will command a different breed, and the bracketed numbers can be used to roll D20 (for rarity) to determine which breed each master controls. All dogs controlled by a single master will be of the same breed.

Standard war dog statistics can be found in the 1977 hardcover bestiary; only variations from those provided figures are detailed below.

- **[1-3] Aquitanian Alaunt:** Armor Class 5, Move 150' (50'), Hit Dice 2D8+2, minimum hit points 12, # Attacks 1 Bite, Damage 2D4.
- **[4-5] Belgaeian Bloodhound:** Armor Class 6, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 2D8, minimum hit points 10, # Attacks 1 Bite, Damage 1D6+1. Tracks as a level 8 ranger.
- **[6-8] Emphyrean Molossus:** Armor Class 5, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 2D8+2, minimum hit points 12, # Attacks 1 Bite, Damage 2D4. Gain +1 to hit and damage bonuses for as long as their allegiant side has suffered no casualties. These bonuses are erased (for 24 hours) as soon as an allied person or hound falls unconscious or dies in battle.
- **[9] Hibernian Beast of Bremen:** Armor Class 6, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 2D8+2, minimum hit points 14, # Attacks 1 Bite, Damage 2D4+1. Difficult to control, not available to (or controllable by) anyone with less than 1 year of war hound handling experience.
- **[10-11] Hibernian Wolfhound:** Armor Class 6, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 2D8+2, minimum hit points 12, # Attacks 1 Bite, Damage 2D4. Gain +1 to hit and damage bonuses vs. non-magical beasts (wolves, bears, etc.).
- **[12] Indian War Hound:** Armor Class 5, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 2D8+2, minimum hit points 13, # Attacks 1 Bite, Damage 1D6+1. Unshakeable morale for as long as its master is willing to fight.
- **[13] Lysimachian War Dog:** Armor Class 6, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 2D8, minimum hit points 10, # Attack 1 Bite, Damage 1D6+1. Very faithful; gain +1 to hit and damage bonuses vs. any enemies who have attacked their master.
- **[14] MacRothian Kell Hound:** Armor Class 6, Move 150' (50'), Hit Dice 2D8+1, minimum hit points 11, # Attacks 1 Bite, Damage 1D6+1. Tracks as a level 4 ranger.

- **[15] Magnesian War Dog:** Armor Class 6, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 2D8, minimum hit points 10, # Attacks 1 Bite, Damage 1D6+1. Gain +1 to hit and damage bonuses vs. humanoids.
- **[16] Marathonian War Hound:** Armor Class 5, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 2D8+1, minimum hit points 11, # Attacks 1 Bite, Damage 2D4. Will fight to the death over the bodies of any fallen comrades unless ordered to disengage.
- **[17-20] War Mastiff:** Armor Class 6, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 2D8+2, minimum hit points 13, # Attacks 1 Bite, Damage 2D4. Very high morale (10).



Captain Hierarch V:

Master Halberdier Malaeus the Elemental

(“The Stony,” “The Old Man,” Foremost Banneret of the Scarlet Tabard, Senior Captain at Arms)

- **Description:** Malaeus never speak if no fight. You hire Malaeus? No? Then why speak?
- **Command Ability:** Malaeus can command up to 160 soldiers on his own. When commanding in relatively simple circumstances in which curt orders can be given (e.g., attack, fall back, open fire, close ranks, withdraw, etc.), he gives a +2 morale bonus to his soldiers. In complex situations where longer commands must be shouted and relayed, this bonus is reduced to zero.
- **Hiring Terms:** 800 gold. Take or leave.
- **Special Troops:** Malaeus prefers to command footmen, particularly armsmen (pole arm specialists), whenever possible. As a pole arm master of the Helvetian “Gaxegon” martial school he is singularly proficient at doing so. He inspires his men to stand firm in grim shoulder-to-shoulder circumstances. If the troops are capable of fighting in formation, they can balance their pole arms in the curvature of a crescent shield, or even on one another’s shoulders. This gives them a +1 Armor Class bonus and a +1 to hit for as long as the formation can be obtained. The circumstances are up to the Game Master. For example, in a 10’-wide corridor, these troops can fight three abreast, with three in the front rank and three in the mid rank fighting over their shoulders. But if they are interspersed with (unruly) PCs in those two ranks, the formation

bonuses do not apply. Similarly, if there were 40 armsmen in a field, they could likely make a formation unless they were completely surrounded; but a mere 20 men would have a much harder time, unless they could stand in a defile or smaller area (such as with their flanks shielded by a rushing river).



- **Game Statistics:** Human, Male, Level 8 Fighter. STR 18.13, DEX 11, CON 18, INT 8, WIS 12, CHA 9. Hit Points 73. Alignment True Neutral (Gods not care for Malaeus? Malaeus not care for gods.) Splint Mail +3, Large Shield +1 (crescent, allows a specialized master to attack with a thrusting, but not slashing, one-handed pole arm attack while also using a shield), Halberd +1, Amulet

of Life Protection (mmm, stone pretty).

- **Dedication:** With thanks to Bundle of Holding fund contributor Elemental.

Captain Hierarch VI:

Master Agent Goladir

(Commander of the Night Stalkers, Second Banneret, Vaunted Captain at Arms)

- **Description:** Goladir Terenthius is the master of guile, in charge of clandestine troops who serve when a more delicate touch is required. He speaks eloquently, and is rather charming when he wants to be. He tends to be a bit racist toward “bumblers,” by which he typically means half-ogres, half-orcs, and the occasional ill-mannered dwarf.
- **Command Ability:** Goladir can command up to 160 soldiers on his own, when necessary. By preference, however, he is uncomfortable when commanding more than 20 hand-picked individuals at time. All dwarves, elves, gnomes, half-elves, and halflings gain a +1 bonus to morale while being led by Goladir. However, all dwarves suffer a -1 penalty, and all half-ogres and half-orcs suffer a -2 penalty.
- **Hiring Terms:** When Goladir is available for service, his rate is 800 gold pieces per week or dungeon expedition.
- **Special Troops:** When Goladir is hired, he and the Order allow all simultaneously-hired troop positions to be filled by demi-humans. This results in the creation of a temporary unit termed the Night Stalkers, with infravision and other special abilities. All are companions and level 1 fighters (not just men-at-

arms), and hiring costs are doubled. These troops all have proficiency in one “weapon of subterfuge” (including blowguns, darts, sword canes, throwing knives, etc.) in addition to their normal combat capabilities. Discretion is their motto. Minimum Intelligence for Night Stalkers is 13, minimum Dexterity 14. They are usually employed as scouts, agents, decoys, or intimidators, not front-line fighters. Those who need front-line combat troops might want to look elsewhere.

- **Game Statistics:** Gray Elf, Male, Level 6/7 Fighter/Thief. STR 13, DEX 18, CON 12, INT 15, WIS 14, CHA 14. Hit Points 43. Alignment Chaotic Neutral (with Good tendencies). Leather Armor +2, Short Sword +3, Dagger +1, Boots of Elvenkind, Ring of Invisibility.
- **Dedication:** With thanks to Bundle of Holding contributor Peter “Goladir” Schuster.

Captain Hierarch VII:

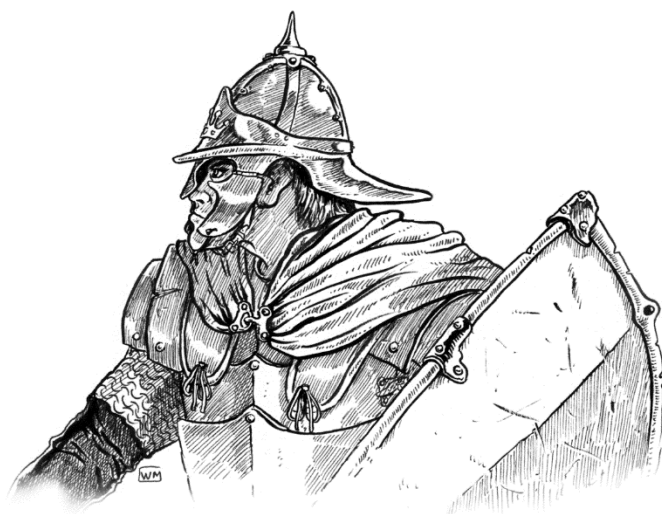
Radoslava the Tranquil

(Matriarch of the Aegis, “The Shield Mother,” Third Banneret, Captain at Arms)

- **Description:** Radoslava is renowned both for her sheer refusal to become angry, and for the legendary tempests which occur on the rare occasions when someone finally manages to piss her off. She is a devout cleric of Virtus but is sworn to the Order. As the foremost healer within the company, she is regarded as a protectress and respected defender by all.
- **Command Ability:** Radoslava can command up to 140 soldiers on her own. Whoever they are, they all gain

a +1 morale bonus; she is universally liked. Her handpicked troops, The Wall, gain a +2 morale bonus. However, she is deemed “too important to sacrifice,” which means that she can only be hired under circumstances in which Lord Artorius grants his personal approval.

- **Hiring Terms:** When Radoslava is available for service, her rate is 800 gold pieces per week or dungeon expedition.



- **Special Troops:** Radoslava specializes in defensive combat and protective maneuvers. She will only lead heavy footmen (with a few armsmen) into battle, regardless of an employer's wishes. This dedicated contingent of 70 or so grognards is known as “The Wall.” Her chosen men and women tend to be older veteran companions who have outlived their brothers and sisters in arms. Their minimum Wisdom is 14 and they each possess a minimum of 7 hit points. Those who serve in The Wall suffer a -1 to their hit rolls, but they all gain a +1 tactical AC bonus as well. If

Radoslava is there to directly command them in shield wall formations, without an employer's command intervention, the AC bonus is improved to +2.

- **Game Statistics:** Mountain Dwarf, Female, Level 6/5 Cleric/Fighter. STR 15, DEX 10, CON 17, INT 13, WIS 17, CHA 15. Hit Points 49. Alignment Lawful Neutral. Plate Mail +1, Shield +4, Hammer +2, Throwing Hammer +1, 3 Potions of Extra-Healing.
- **Dedication:** With thanks to Bundle of Holding fund contributor Radoslava the Tranquil.

If the charge of the horsemen had been terrible from its rush and its fire, this steady advance of a huge phalanx of armored footmen was even more fearsome to the spectator. They moved very slowly, on account of the weight of their armor, but their progress was the more regular and inexorable.

With elbows touching — their shields slung in front, their short five-foot spears carried in their right hands, and their maces or swords ready at their belts, the deep column of men-at-arms moved onward.

Again the storm of arrows beat upon them clinking and thudding on the armor. They crouched double behind their shields as they met it. Many fell, but still the slow tide lapped onward ...

— *Sir Nigel*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle



Captain Hierarch VIII:

Sir Aleksandir the Imperious

(Orc-Slayer, Bane of the Salamander Men, Fourth Banneret, Senior Captain)

- **Description:** Sir Aleksandir is a hot-headed yet chivalrous hero of the Scarlet Tabard. He was orphaned during the murderous orcish incursions of the 1380s and was raised on the streets of Grimrook by members of the Thieves' Guild, the Night Watch, and the chevaliers' Order of the Darkened Rose (which has since fallen into disrepute and been disbanded by the Overlord). Despite some disciplinary issues he is regarded as a rising star. If he ever survives to become more temperate and even-handed, he might well lead the Order of the Scarlet Tabard in decades to come.
- **Command Ability:** Aleksandir can command up to 140 soldiers on his own. In engagements where his troops are battling evil humanoids (gnolls, orcs, goblins, etc.), his fearless heroics will give his soldiers

a +1 bonus to morale. If Aleksandir suffers grievous wounds in such a battle, his soldiers also gain +1 to hit and damage.

- **Hiring Terms:** When Aleksandir is available for service, his rate is 700 gold pieces per week or dungeon expedition.
- **Special Troops:** Aleksandir lives a rather impoverished life; he donates nearly all of his wealth to “his” troops and upgrading their equipment. All soldiers commanded by Aleksandir will be armored in half plate (AC 4) or better, even the light archers and skirmishers. Every soldier will also have a great helm and a short sword in addition to any other listed weapons. His modified infantry units move slowly due to these extra burdens, but he is equally comfortable commanding either dungeon troops or cavalry in battle.



- **Game Statistics:** Human, Male, Level 7 Cavalier. STR 16.61, DEX

15.94, CON 17.30, INT 13, WIS 10, CHA 12. Hit Points 55. Alignment True Neutral (with Chaotic tendencies). Field Plate Armor +1, Two-Handed Sword +1, Lance +1, Ring of Free Action, 2 Potions of Extra-Healing.

- **Dedication:** With thanks to Bundle of Holding fund contributor Alexander Nevsky.

In Ulthar, which lies beyond the river Skai, once dwelt an old man avid to behold the gods of earth; a man deeply learned in the seven cryptical books of Hsan, and familiar with the Pnakotic Manuscripts of distant and frozen Lomar. His name was Barzai the Wise, and the villagers tell of how he went up a mountain on the night of the strange eclipse.

Barzai knew so much of the gods that he could tell of their comings and goings, and guessed so many of their secrets that he was deemed half a god himself. It was he who wisely advised the burgesses of Ulthar when they passed their remarkable law against the slaying of cats, and who first told the young priest Atal where it is that black cats go at midnight on St. John's Eve.

Barzai was learned in the lore of earth's gods, and had gained a desire to look upon their faces. He believed that his great secret knowledge of gods could shield him from their wrath, so resolved to go up to the summit of high and rocky Hatheg-Kla on a night when he knew the gods would be there ...

— *The Other Gods*, by H. P. Lovecraft



Captain Hierarch IX:

Barzai the Wise, “The One and Ever-Returning”

(Fifth Banneret, Veteran Captain)

- **Description:** The elder known as Barzai the Wise bears a unique distinction in that he can only be hired upon specific request made to, and approved by, Lord Artorius himself. (He cannot leave the Order’s halls without Artorius’s approval, either.) The reason for this is that Barzai is completely insane. He believes that he is the incarnation of a Dreamlands priest who was abducted by the Other Gods, transported ethereally into the World of Oldskull for the purpose of gathering a sect of warriors. These warriors are purportedly destined to journey through the nether to seal the deadly dimensional rifts which lie beneath the labyrinths of Castle

Oldskull. Complicating matters, Barzai is the man who stabilized Captain Artorius (and kept him from dying) until High Matriarch Vopisca Ovidia could carry his body out from the battlefield. If not for Barzai, Artorius would have died upon that day. More harrowingly, Barzai’s nonsense babblings concerning the “future opening of the demoniac ways into the Realms of Entropy” ended up being 100% prophetic, but that is a tale for another tome ...

- **Command Ability:** Barzai is unfit for command. However, most of the older veterans in the Order would gladly and proudly lay down their lives for him. As such, there are about 100 old zealots in the order who possess unshakeable morale. Unfortunately, these elite grognards will only take the field when Barzai is there to lead them. They all suffer -30’ movement rate, -1 to hit and -1 damage due to age and war injuries, but on any natural 20 they inflict double reduced damage (while crying out “For Ulthar!” as they strike). Lord Artorius knows that he would lose these men if Barzai was removed from command; and still, there are many old employers who insist upon Barzai’s hired assistance to this day. It’s all rather complicated and a bit embarrassing.

- **Hiring Terms:** Barzai will refuse all payment, but Artorius will feel obligated to accept 700 gold pieces on behalf of the Order’s soldiers per week of Barzai’s service, or per dungeon expedition. Expeditions below Castle Oldskull dungeon level 6, or involving the troll demigod Groohlz-Drakha, will *not* be approved by Artorius and Barzai will be expressly forbidden from accompanying the party (due to his

abject lack of control when triggered by such revelatory things).

- **Special Troops:** As noted for Command Ability, above. All of these veterans are companion footmen (50% light, 50% heavy). Other soldiers will not accept Barzai as a commander.
- **Game Statistics:** Human (?), Male, Level 6 Cleric. STR 8, DEX 9, CON 13, INT 15, WIS 18, CHA 17. Hit Points 34. Alignment Lawful Neutral. Bracers of Defense (Armor Class 3), Ring of Protection +3, Quarter Staff +1, Gem of Seeing. For whatever reason, Barzai is completely immune to all mind attacks and mind reading, whether the attempts be made by Know Alignment spells or psionic blasts from a demon lord.
- **Dedication:** With thanks to Bundle of Holding fund contributor Barzai the Wise.

...

— Paltyria, the Blood Spinner

Captain Hierarch X:

Paltyria the Blood-Spinner

(Foremost Signifer, Senior Commander)

- **Description:** Paltyria Endromion is a Sister of the Ivory Mask, an Occidental monkish order whose sanctuary is said to lie somewhere beyond the northern Tyrrhenian peaks. She has taken an oath of silence and relays her battle orders through hand signals and veteran intermediaries. Few people have even seen her face, but she seems to

be polite, curious, and honorable to a fault. She is enraptured by random things which tend to distract her with some frequency; known examples include cats, children, wind instruments, and sculptures.

- **Command Ability:** Paltyria can command up to 120 soldiers on her own. However, she is reliant upon experienced troops who are accustomed to her eccentricities. In circumstances where she cannot command effectively — a recent example being a Darkness spell which eclipsed her in its radius — her troops become confused and suffer a -1 penalty to morale. At all times, Paltyria insists in fighting alongside her troops. She leads from the front, using a combination of armed and unarmed tactics. If an employer insists upon having another vanguard, advance scouts, etc., she walks beside them. She requires a certain degree of patience to contend with, but her record is exceptional.
- **Hiring Terms:** When Paltyria is available for service, she will accept 600 gold pieces per week or dungeon expedition ... and then the moneys are given directly to her soldiers. Lord Artorius has discussed this with her numerous times, but hey, it's a one-sided conversation.
- **Special Troops:** Paltyria will only work with certain soldiers, and they are not cavalry (they go too far afield). A few mission-specific troops of each type will accompany her, as selected by her, not the prospective employer. All hand-picked soldiers will have at least 6 hit points.
- **Game Statistics:** Human, Female, Level 6 Monk. STR 15, DEX 18, CON 16, INT 12, WIS 16, CHA 8 (she's rather frustrating). Hit Points 27. Alignment Lawful Neutral. Ivory

Mask +2 (treat as armor, +2 AC), Hand Axe +2, 3 Javelins of Lightning, Wand of Wonder.

- **Dedication:** With thanks to Bundle of Holding fund contributor Spinplasm.



Captain Hierarch XI:

Marwinion of the Seven Fingers, “The Master of Mayhem”

(Treasure Master, Second Signifer, Vaunted Commander)

- **Description:** Marwinion — some would call him “The Master of the Mead-Halls” — is a colorful dwarven captain who has seen more than his share of Really Weird Shit over the last several decades in mercenary service. He is a treasure master of notorious repute, renowned for his ability to stack any and all potential hard-won treasure that is recovered for an employer. “Treasure” means gems and coins, but it also means

scrap armor, chunks of marble, waterlogged books, and other miscellaneous doodads. He has improvised unique dungeon carts with sturdier wheels, chambered leather satchel-grids, near-silent greased axles and the occasional iron-shod battering ram plate (what?) along with other ad hoc innovations. His motto is “No purse too small, no copper too heavy.” He’s extremely popular with employers, and is typically booked out months in advance.

- **Command Ability:** Theoretically, Marwinion could command up to 120 soldiers on his own. In practice, 20 is pushing it, and he will likely refuse to lead higher groups unless the employer is willing to accept at least half of the command responsibility. Troops who serve under Marwinion do not gain a morale bonus; many know they are unlikely to return, but if they do, they’ll probably come back rich. In recent years, Marwinion was involved in an incident in which he somehow loaded a dungeon cart with pyrotechnics ... resulting in the death of an orc chieftain and several dozen followers. Any humanoids within a 20-mile radius are 30% likely to know the sordid details, and if so they suffer a -2 morale penalty when facing a force which includes Marwinion and his crew.
- **Hiring Terms:** When Marwinion is available for service (which is rare), he requires 600 gold pieces per week or dungeon expedition.
- **Special Troops:** All companion soldiers serving under Marwinion are dwarves with a minimum of 7 hit points. There are no archers or cavalry, but there are footmen, arbalesters, and skirmishers.

- **Game Statistics:** Hill Dwarf, Male, Level 4/5 Fighter/Thief. STR 14 (plus girdle), DEX 15, CON 15, INT 13, WIS 8, CHA 11. Hit Points 24. Alignment Chaotic Good. Splint Mail +1 (lock picking is manly, but hiding in shadows is for lil' nancy-pants, Come at me ye bastards), Battle Axe +1, Girdle of Hill Giant Strength, Ring of Fire Resistance, Rope of Climbing.
- **Dedication:** With thanks to Bundle of Holding fund contributor Master Mayhem.



Captain Hierarch XII:

Placidia of the Molten Cross, "The Ever-Burning"

("Redshanks," Third Signifer, Veteran Commander)

- **Description:** Placidia is a good-hearted, child-like pyromaniac who trains her troops in the combative use of flaming oil. She preaches a combination of personal safety and aggression against evil ("Burn early,

burn often") which has resulted in the highest troop survivability rate for all commanders throughout the history of the Order. Although rather reserved and tranquil under most non-combat circumstances, she becomes positively fervid when it's time to lay fiery waste to the mazy corridors which run every which way underneath Castle Oldskull. Her troops are rather protective of her and her eccentric ways. They recently managed a significant kill, incinerating three mummies in a death pit, which has brought them a fair amount of quizzical admiration. All of the valuable treasures were melted, but "At what price glory" and all that, right? Employers need to lighten up and get their misguided priorities straightened out.

- **Command Ability:** Placidia can command up to 100 soldiers on her own. Her favored troops by far however are the enigmatic "Burninators," a specialized unit of 50-odd souls replete with unique equipment (studded leather armor, improvised "goggle" lenses sewn into leather face hoods, moistened face wraps, torch-clubs with sharpened stake tips, and oil flasks in various shapes and sizes). Pay rate is 10 gold pieces per Burninator. When commanding this group, her troops gain +2 morale. Other more orthodox soldiers suffer a -1 morale penalty.
- **Hiring Terms:** When Placidia is available for service, her rate is 600 gold pieces per week or dungeon expedition. She will not undertake wilderness journeys or ship-bound service, and dungeon missions are strongly preferred. She likes dead ends, pits, death traps, narrow corridors, locking doors, precarious stairways, and long walks on the beach.

- **Special Troops:** (As defined under Command Ability, above.)
- **Game Statistics:** Half-Elf (of High descent), Female, Level 5 Fighter. STR 13, DEX 15, CON 17, INT 12, WIS 9, CHA 14. Hit Points 41. Alignment Chaotic Neutral. Studded Leather Armor +1, Short Bow +1, Dagger of Venom, Ring of Fire Resistance.
- **Dedication:** With thanks to Bundle of Holding fund contributor Molten Cross.

Captain Hierarch XIII:

Patrus Joyun-Hammerfall, “The Battering Ram”

(Fourth Signifer, Proven Commander)

- **Description:** Patrus is a fearsome-looking half-ogre champion, with a snaggle-toothed smirk and a heart of gold. Lord Artorius realized long ago that the disenfranchised untouchables of Grimrook — the half-ogres, half-orcs, and other near-monstrous creatures — were unfairly treated in the city as a result of appearance, poverty, and long-standing stigma. Patrus rose through the ranks and nearly all of the misfits in the Order look up to him. He possesses no tactical brilliance, but his fervor and massive girth more than make up for any strategic deficiencies in his nature. He is famed for his ability to smash down doors with his shoulder, as well as enemies with his misshapen cranium.
- **Command Ability:** Patrus can command up to 100 soldiers on his own. He is held in silent disfavor by dwarves, elves, gnomes, and halflings in the order, as well as older veterans (many of whom lost their families back in the orcish

incursions). He gives a +1 morale bonus to half-orcs, a +2 to half-ogres, and a -1 penalty to other demi-humans. He is also capable of parleying with hostile humanoids, providing adventurers with a role-playing opportunity that they might not otherwise be able to embrace.

- **Hiring Terms:** When Patrus is available for service, his rate is 500 gold pieces per week or dungeon expedition. He has built up a significant amount of hurt toward elves and half-elves in particular, and groups willing to hire him that include such characters may well require some additional coaxing and reassurance before Patrus will commit his “Basturges” to battle. But when he commits, he is loyal and he inspires loyalty from his soldiers.
- **Special Troops:** All troops led by Patrus will be either half-orcs (70%, with 6 or 7 hit points) or half-ogres (30%, with 12 to 14 hit points despite being experience level zero).
- **Game Statistics:** Half-Ogre, Male, Level 5 Fighter. STR 18/00, DEX 8, CON 18, INT 9, WIS 7, CHA 5. Hit Points 68. Alignment True Neutral (with Good tendencies). Makeshift Chain and Iron Plate Armor +1 (AC 3), Two-Handed Sword (Flame Tongue), Ring of One Wish. (Refer to the Oldskull Half-Ogres supplement for more information.)
- **Dedication:** With thanks to Bundle of Holding fund contributor Patrick Joynt.

Captain Hierarch XIV:

Mahir Gormheart, “The Perfidious”

(“The Dun Falconer,” Fifth Signifer, Proven Commander)

- **Description:** Mahir Gormheart is a suave and pernicious old gnome who

holds onto grudges for several decades, bringing up highly uncomfortable shreds of trivia whenever he feels the idle need to gaze down (up?) his ample nose at his many, various, tall, and sundry inferiors. He is also one of the craftiest and finest falconers who has ever lived. Uniquely among captains of the Order of the Scarlet Tabard, Mahir does not command troops; he commands birds of prey. Those who hire him will also hire two or three of his famed and frightening gyrfalcons by default.

- **Command Ability:** Technically, Mahir could command up to 100 soldiers on his own. However, he would only do so if he was directly ordered by Lord Artorius; and, truth be told, Artorius is a little afraid of him.
- **Hiring Terms:** When Mahir is available for service, his rate is 500 gold pieces per week or dungeon expedition. His falcons can fly in tunnels and even fight in dungeons while aloft. They are perfectly trained and practically fearless.
- **Special Troops:** Gyrfalcons. Mahir's falcons are of the greatest size and endurance for non-magical birds (HD 1, hit points 8 each). Their unique traits are as follows: [1] Gyra, +2 to hit and +1 damage ("Go for the eyes, Gyra!"); [2] Velocis, fastest of all (flying movement rate 360' above ground, 180' underground in sufficient light); [3] Magicia, faerie-born and gifted with 150' infravision; [4] Intamira, the most evasive (AC 3 in flight instead of 6); [5] Fortissimo, strongest and deadliest (damage 1D3 claw / 1D3 claw / 1D2 beak instead of 1D2 / 1D2 / 1); and [6] Majestica, eldest and wisest and capable of rudimentary gnomish speech. Mahir will grieve when any of his falcons

die, but he and his apprentices have many fledglings who are being raised to follow in their elders' paths upon the wind.

- **Game Statistics:** Burrow Gnome, Male, Level 4/4 Fighter/Thief. STR 14, DEX 17, CON 15, INT 14, WIS 12, CHA 7. Hit Points 30. Alignment True Neutral (with Chaotic tendencies). Leather Armor +1, Short Sword +2, Throwing Dagger +2, Bag of Holding (which he will actually stash wounded falcons in, in times of extremis), Ring of Invisibility, 2 Potions of Extra-Healing.
- **Dedication:** With thanks to Bundle of Holding fund contributor Mahir the Perfidious.

And there you have it. Thanks to all of you who participated in Wonderland Imprints' first funding drive, and I hope to be able to entertain you with more of my gaming supplements in the future!



Then came two-score more archers, ten more men-at-arms, and finally a rear guard of twenty bowmen, with big John towering in the front rank and the veteran Aylward marching by the side, his battered harness and faded surcoat in strange contrast with the snow-white jupons and shining brigandines of his companions.

A quick cross-fire of greetings and questions and rough West Saxon jests flew from rank to rank, or were bandied about betwixt the marching archers and the gazing crowd.

— *The White Company*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Onward, True Scarlets. Toward fate and the city walls, and thence to the grand gates of Castle Oldskull. Huzzah!



About the Author

Beginning play as a chaotic neutral normal human with one measly hit point to his name, KENT DAVID KELLY eventually became apprenticed to a magic-user of ill repute ... a foul man who dwelt in the steamy deeps of the Ivory Cloud Mountain. After this mentor carelessly misplaced an intelligent soul-sucking sword and then died under suspicious circumstances, his former henchman Mr. Kelly escaped to the deeper underground and there began playing Satanic role-playing games. This, the legends tell us, occurred in the year 1981.

Hoary wizard-priests who inspired Mr. Kelly in his netherworldly machinations included the peerless Gygax, Carr, Arneson, Cook, Hammack, Jaquays, Bledsaw, Moldvay, Kuntz, Schick and Ward. Sadly, a misguided made-for-the-basements movie entitled *Mazes and Monsters* gave Mr. Kelly's parents conniptions in 1982. As a result of that blasphemous Tom Hanks debacle (and other more personal lapses in judgment), Mr. Kelly was eventually forbidden from playing his favorite game for a considerable length of time.

Nonplussed but not defeated, he used this enforced exile to escape to a friend's alehouse, and there indulged himself in now-classic computer RPGs such as Zork, Telengard, Temple of Apshai, Ultima, Tunnels of Doom, The Bard's Tale, Phantasie, Pool of Radiance, Wizard's Crown and Wasteland. He then went on to write computer versions of his own FRPGs, which led to his obsession with coupling creative design elements with random

dungeons and unpredictable adventure generation.

Mr. Kelly wrote and submitted his first adventure for Dungeon Magazine #1 in 1986. Unfortunately, one Mr. Moore decided that his submission was far too “Lovecraftian, horrific and unfair” to ever serve that worthy periodical as a publishable adventure. Mr. Kelly, it must be said, took this rejection as a very good sign of things to come.

In the late 80s and 90s, Mr. Kelly wrote short stories, poems and essays ... some of which have been published under the Wonderland Imprints banner. He wrote several dark fantasy and horror novels as well. Concurrently, he ran Dark Angel Collectibles, selling classic FRPG materials as Darkseraphim, and assisted the Acaeum with the creation of the Valuation Board and other minor research projects.

At this time, Mr. Kelly and his entourage of evil gnomes are rumored to dwell in the dread and deathly under-halls of the Acaeum, Dragonsfoot, ENWorld, Grogardia, Knights & Knaves, ODD, and even more nefarious levels deep down in the mega-dungeon of the Web.

There he remains in vigil, his vampiric sword yet shivering in his hand. When not being sought outright for answers to halfling riddles or other more sundry sage advice, he is to be avoided by sane individuals *at all costs*.

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