

CONAN[®]

THE FREE COMPANIES



QUILLIAMS
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CONAN®

THE FREE COMPANIES

CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| CREDITS | 2 |
| INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| MERCENARIES OF HYBORIA | 4 |
| TRADITIONS OF FORCE | 17 |
| THE SECRETS OF WAR | 49 |
| REWARDS OF BLOOD | 54 |
| TOOLS OF WARFARE | 66 |
| SHADOWS AND DARKNESS | 77 |
| FIELDS AWASH WITH BLOOD | 87 |
| MERCENARIES OF NOTE | 95 |
| BATTLE'S BRIGHT FLAME | 105 |
| OUTSIDE THE RANK AND FILE | 113 |
| LICENSE | 128 |

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Introduction

Welcome to the Free Companies

SOMEWHERE A SOLDIER laughs as he plunges his spear into a helpless girl-child. Somewhere a hard-bitten warrior swallows the blood bubbling up from his throat as he lifts his leaden body to its feet for one final charge. Somewhere a lord in lace and pearls counts out gold to his captains, who will turn it into coppers before using it to buy men's lives. Somewhere, yet another mercenary hoists a drink bought with those coppers high into the air, a song on his lips and sure knowledge of his own death in his heart.

The Hyborian Age, with its slowly decaying civilisations beset by Corruption from within and rage from without, simultaneously shows us the best and the worst in men. Every person, from a nobleman to the most common peasant can experience wonders that will not appear in the world again for another ten thousand years. Yet, at the same time they act towards one another with the utter lack of regard only available to men who know they will never answer for their actions.

The men who would become mercenaries embody this dichotomy in their lives and morals. On one hand they stand as the protectors of civilisation, placing their lives on the line to defend corrupt nations. On the other they indulge their every whim, committing crimes even worse than those that invaders might inflict if they had the chance. Barbarians might act out their basest desires but it takes a formerly civilised man to imagine the greatest perversities.

Welcome to the world of mercenaries in the Hyborian Age. A more brutal bunch of cut-throats, thieves and wretched villains you will never find. Better yet, civilised countries pay them to be that way so they can mount a defence against the forces of barbarism ravaging their borders.

OVERVIEW OF THE FREE COMPANIES

Welcome to the Free Companies, a book about Hyborian Age mercenaries. Within these pages you will find rules for the looting and the destruction of innocent lives. You will also find rules to help a mercenary make the most of his potential by cutting the throats of everyone who might stand in his way. When not engaged in his bloody business, a mercenary also needs ways to let off steam, including drinking, wenching and engaging in horseplay with slaves or civilians.

Mercenaries of Hyboria provides information about the various mercenary organisations feasting on the flesh of the Hyborian kingdoms. These organisations, including the titular Free Companies and the Shemite *asshuri*, take sacks of gold in return for protecting their client's goods from outside threats. Each of these companies has its own requirements for admittance, code of conduct and reasons for continuing their current service.

Traditions of Force gives rules for looting, the sacking of cities and the various atrocities associated with mercenary activity. Mercenaries who still cling to a code of honour might try to rise above such things, but since the majority of their income comes from what they can steal, such a stance carries with it considerable personal cost.

The Rewards of Blood covers how mercenary life can bend, break and change a character and ends with a detailed discussion of the psychology of mercenaries, how they come into their service and why they remain.

The Secrets of War details a host of new feats, while *Tools of Warfare* talks about the materials of war, including providing details about a handful of traditional Hyborian Age siege engines.

Shadows and Darkness talk about the magical powers developed to better slaughter hordes of enemy soldiers, oppress innocent civilians or both. This chapter discusses those dreaded war-magic wielded by Stygian priests and wise-women alike.

Fields Awash with Blood presents a new narrative mass combat system for the massive battles of Hyboria. *Battle's Bright Flame* is replete with ideas for adventures linking the mercenaries' world with the standard heroic adventures of Hyborian Age characters.

Conan: The Free Companies closes by dealing with how to integrate mercenaries into your campaigns and the multiclassing options and variant rules applicable to these truly unique mercenary characters.

Mercenaries of Hyboria

IN THE HYBORIAN Age everyone from the mighty kings to the savage chieftains raises armies in the hope of establishing hegemony. For many, this dream of domination comes to a swift and painful conclusion at the end of an enemy's spear. Others, like King Conan himself, can rise from poverty and barbarism to grind the world's jewelled thrones under his sandaled heel.

These various forces draw the vast bulk of their strength from the local population. Nations with a Hyborian heritage field knights and stout yeoman, bowmen and borderers forged strong by martial traditions stretching back centuries. Those descended from the nomads of Shem turn out armies of cavalry and horse archers to the fray, granting them unmatched mobility and ranged power. The hordes of the Black Coast and the interior Southern kingdoms unleash swarms of barbaric spearmen, undisciplined but strong in their hate.

Even if a national tradition provides the ruler with a well trained and disciplined army he may look to those who sell their swords for supplemental forces. After all, each soldier in a national army has more roles than just fodder for enemy blades. He may be a farmer, a craftsman or a village leader whose loss on the field of battle could damage the country for years to come. Mercenaries, on the other hand, can die without impacting anyone but their own isolated culture and comrades.

Similarly, kingdoms without a martial tradition to provide them with broad military options hire mercenaries to round out their own forces. Countries like Iranistan, famous for their horsemen, may hire infantry or engineers in order to help guard their borders. Countries like Kush, whose limitless hordes of barbarian spearmen provide them with fodder but not discipline or strategic skills, hire in competent captains from the far north to lend their operations the insights gained though centuries of civilised warfare.

Though a kingdom can, and often will, hire individual mercenaries, most money in this bloody trade flows from kings to mercenary captains who rule over companies of cut-throats and wastrels. Many

of these companies come into being though the captain's charisma and will not outlive him. Some, however, come from a larger and more stable tradition of mercenary service. These companies, usually called 'mercenary brotherhoods' for lack of a better term, have customs stretching back centuries.

By raising a banner associated with one of these brotherhoods the mercenary captain creates expectations both about his own skills and the behaviour of his company. He can also claim higher pay for his band, though he may not necessarily pass those fees on to the rank and file. Over time, his company will develop its own reputation, both attracting and repelling potential employers depending on their fame or infamy.

ESTABLISHED MERCENARY BROTHERHOODS OF THE HYBORIAN AGE

By the time the Hyborian Age begins its last gasping breaths under King Conan's reign a number of established brotherhoods dominate the mercenary landscape. Three of these brotherhoods represent traditions of national service; the others long since dispensed with their national identity in order to become cultures in their own right.

These groups are: the Nemedian Adventurers, the Engineers, the Free Companies, the *kozaks*, the Kushite Spearmen and the infamous Shemite Asshuri. A few foolish suzerains will also hire pirates, but these sea-rats generally lack what little discipline and honour mercenaries retain.

THE NEMEDIAN ADVENTURERS

Nemedias, like any country with landed nobility and primogenitor inheritance, required an answer to the question of what to do with all of the non-inheriting sons. Lacking the ability to conquer their nearest neighbours for new lands,

the nobles turned to the king for a solution. After a few disastrous rebellions lead by disenfranchised younger sons the Nemedian king established the Adventurers, a group of warriors owing loyalty only to the king. As enticement he offered those who served with distinction first choice of any lands confiscated from 'malcontents and those disloyal to their Hyborian heritage'.

At first this band of youths lacked both the discipline and the training to pose a serious threat. Although theoretically loyal to the king each member retained strong loyalties to his original family and their basic needs. Frustrated, the king sent these factious bands of armed children out into the wider world as mercenaries. He reasoned that they would do less harm to his country out earning gold for his coffers than they would rousting local merchants and despoiling their daughters.

The Hyborian youth's first encounters with the Shemite asshuri rocked them to their core. These 'desert filth' rode like the wind, fought like demons from Hell and maintained a discipline unheard of even in the professional armies of the Nemedian nobles. Their pride stung, the men who would found the Adventurers traditions learned everything they could and on their return to Nemediia they were boys no longer, but men forged in battle with deep understanding of logistics, strategy and tactics.

The return of the Adventurers marked a rise in the Nemedian king's power. They quickly became the king's 'right hand', administering justice to any noble who dared to stand against his decrees. That the lands taken from these nobles became part of their eventual reward did not go unappreciated by the enforcers. Within a generation this new order established a far stronger kingdom, curbing the nobles traditional power and granting the king ascendancy.

Over time the king, the Adventurers and Nemediia's nobles came to a stable arrangement. The king opened the ranks of the Adventurers to common folk and others who would swear loyalty to him, thereby diluting their association with the noble families. Those families began to welcome back children who served in the 'king's adventures', placing them in positions of authority in return for their military knowledge. The Adventurers, after one failed attempt to usurp the king's position, settled into service as a regular unit of the Nemedian army with contracts taking their soldiers all around the world.

Joining the Adventurers

By tradition any Nemedian man of service age may offer his service to a company commander. If he is of sound mind and can wield a sword the commander may not refuse his request. The man then becomes a 'recruit' in the Adventurers, a soldier waiting for sufficient training before he takes up a blade in battle.

The 'recruit' period lasts for three to six months. During which time the 'recruit' performs menial chores and trains with a mentor appointed by the company captain. At the end of this period the mentor may either accept or reject the recruit. If he accepts him, then the recruit may swear an oath of loyalty to the crown and from that point on, he becomes a full member of the Adventurers, with rights and responsibilities equal to all of his other brothers.

Of course, as in most societies some members are more equal than others. Veteran Adventurers receive more respect and have more influence than newer members, and those who serve the king directly receive even more respect.

All Adventurers are subject to the king's justice. This means that their lords, or indeed any Nemedian lord, can no longer claim jurisdiction over their actions. Practically, this means that so long as the Adventurer does not violate the code he cannot be persecuted for his actions before he joined the organisation. Many of the Adventurers have shady pasts, or outright criminal charges that could mean their deaths if they were ever to leave the king's service.

Serving in the Adventurers

The Adventurers perform two separate duties for Nemediia's king. First, they are his personal army and guards. Second, they are a source of income for the crown, independent of the whims of the other feudal lords.

In order to fulfil their first function the Adventurers maintain various stations within their homeland. They garrison key fortresses, patrol borders or even protect the king himself as he travels. At least one unit is always 'inactive', its members charged to wander the countryside looking for anything out of the ordinary. This function is considered almost as prestigious as guarding the king; it indicates that the ruler trusts not only the commander but also each of the Adventurers to have the king's best interest at heart.

The second function, a mercenary army, occupies roughly half of the Adventurer's forces at any one time. A king or noble wishing to hire the Adventurers must deal directly with Nemediia's king. He pays the king, who in turn pays the Adventurers. Given the cost of hiring but a single unit of this elite cadre very few nations can afford to hire them, especially not for duties better suited to native troops. Instead, kings and disgruntled nobles hire them to secure areas or act as the vanguard of an invasion force.

Kit

Each member of the Adventurers receives the traditional grey mail hauberk, steel cap and great sword in return for one year of service. After a year of service they may request additional equipment, including heavy warhorses and

other traditional Hyborean gear. The Adventurers will replace gear lost in battle but not equipment lost to 'ill-fortune or inconsiderate behaviour' on the soldier's part.

For the duration of his service each soldier receives 10 silvers a day, room and such board as the captain can provide.

Order of Battle

The Adventurers fight as heavy mounted infantry: they ride their horses into battle, then dismount to engage the enemy. If there is not enough time to dismount they can fight from horseback, but only their most senior members receive training in cavalry formations and tactics.

Each unit contains 400 men serving under single captain appointed by the king. This captain, usually a man with at least two decades in the king's service, has direct command over and responsibility for every Adventurer. However, by tradition the nobles and noble's sons serving under the commander assume the role of non-commissioned officers, each leading a single 'file' of ten soldiers. Every four files reports to a file-leader, who normally comes from one of the greater Nemedian noble houses. The captain unofficially appoints the file-leaders and may change their assignments at will.

When the Adventurers stride into battle they technically count as heavy infantry even though they lack shields and must maintain a relatively wide distance between rows in order to make room for sweeping strikes with their great swords. They accomplish this feat by using staggered files and highly mobile file leads. When all else fails, though, they simply surge into their opponents and chop their way through, relying on their blades' devastating cutting power to win the day.

Gaining the Right of Command

Whether or not a man can expect to gain command in the Adventurers depends entirely on his bloodline. A soldier of common descent can expect, at best, to become a file-leader. A much less worthy soldier

with noble blood can quickly expect to advance from leading a file to file-leader. From there, most will get a chance to command a unit for at least a season.

This reality of service seems at odds with the tradition of allowing all Nemedian citizens into the Adventurers. However, it is a case of tradition and ideals bowing to the realities of the king's court. Since the king holds the right to appoint all Adventurer officers, those who have connections to him or can raise their case in his court find their advancement rapidly accelerated. Those without these resources (e.g. commoners) must struggle forward hoping their deeds will bring them to the notice of someone willing to champion their cause.

When an Adventurer of common blood raises his Reputation over 20 he may, by taking a level of noble, gain access to the court. This access allows him to advance using the same methods as a nobleman.

The Wandering Unit

As mentioned above the Nemedian king assigns one unit of the Adventurers the enviable task of rooting through his country looking for trouble. Units compete for this yearlong duty, offering up tremendous bribes and promises of everything from access to new slave markets to boxes of gemstones in order to come to their suzerain's notice.

Once chosen, the unit has one month to return from whatever land they currently serve in. For the next year they enter 'inactive' status, no longer drawing pay or supplies from the king's own stores. During this year, however, each member of the unit receives a royal token allowing him to 'commandeer for government use' any property within the kingdom. This gives the unit unlimited access to the



storehouses of nobles, the wealth of merchants and the home of commoner families.

This level of power, naturally enough, breeds more than a little Corruption, especially in the hands of men best described as bloodthirsty psychotics. However, the Adventurers also root out Corruption, identify traitors and go a long way towards maintaining the peace through their timely interventions. So long as they continue to perform these duties the king will happily overlook the occasional bit of 'mischief' on his soldier's part.

The Adventurers on Watch: Stations in Nemedi

To an outsider, the Adventurer's disposition within Nemedi seems both tactically unsound and strategically unwise. The king maintains five units as his personal army, reserves another as his personal guard and scatters the rest seemingly at random throughout the country. Given the constant state of agitation along the Aquilonian border, as well as that great nation's military might, it would seem logical to locate the kingdom's strongest, most loyal fighting force along that border.

A closer examination of Adventurer troop deployments by a scholar or soldier with sufficient knowledge of Nemedian politics reveals an underlying order within the seeming chaos. The king stations units of his most loyal soldiers in areas where the feudal lords might consider resisting his authority. These units serve a dual purpose acting as both a deterrent to Aquilonian aggression and a reminder of the sword hanging poised over those nobles who would dare refuse the king.

When Nemedi's king wishes to harry the Aquilonian border, or to stage a massed invasion, he generally gathers ten units of Adventurers at one of his larger border keeps before sending the regular army into the opposing nation. When the regular army encounters opposition he then moves the Adventurers into an advantageous position, relying on their superior logistical mobility in order to move them at speed through enemy territory.

The Adventurers at War: Mercenary Service

In order to hire a unit of Adventurers the would-be employer must petition the Nemedian throne. This petition, which must be delivered by either the person wishing to hire the unit or a member of his immediate family, must include the first month's payment in advance. The petitioner forfeits half the fee when the king hears the request; the rest of the fee must be delivered within three dawns of the king's agreement.

Once hired, the unit's captain agrees to take orders from the petitioner for a period of no less than three months. He will obey these orders, up to and including sacrificing his unit, without hesitation or complaint so long as the king continues to receive his monthly payments.

That said, the captain is the only member of the unit who agrees to follow the petitioner's orders. Regardless of where they serve, the Adventurers and their support staff do not obey the local military chain of command. They also do not obey the laws of the local land. Instead, they demand the right to remain subject to Nemedian justice wherever they serve. Given the Crown's lack of interest when it comes to persecuting events taking place on alien soil, this gives them *almost carte blanche* to behave in a manner almost as degraded as a cut-throat from the Free Companies or the Khitan Engineers.

A contract between a petitioner and the Nemedian crown becomes void if the petitioner uses the Adventurer units to damage Nemedian interests. The Adventurers owe their loyalty first and foremost to the Nemedian crown; they will not tolerate those who wish to turn their skills against their homeland.

Within these restrictions units of Adventurers serve all over the Hyborian kingdoms as caravan and garrison guards, road patrols and in the vanguards of armies. Unlike most mercenary units the Nemedians do not generally perform hard labour or construction duty, though they will do so if it will improve a defensive position they must inhabit.

The Adventurers' Code and Commandments

Every day, at mealtime, the company archivist reads aloud the following rules:

1. Each man's past is his own. Ask no questions. A questioner will be beaten with a birch rod across the back, five lashes.
2. Each man's belongings are his own. Take nothing from your brothers. A thief will be beaten with a whip across the back, ten lashes.
3. Each man's woman is his own. Do not touch her. A rapist will be beaten with a whip across the back, five lashes.
4. Each man's life is his own. Do not strike your brothers. A ruffian will be beaten with a whip across the back, five lashes, and across the front, five lashes. A murderer will be beaten with a whip until dead.
5. The orders of the commander are absolute. A soldier who disobeys orders will be beaten with a birch rod across the back, ten lashes. If brothers die because of his actions, he will be beaten with a whip until dead.
6. The king is life. To break trust with him is death. An oath breaker will be beaten with a whip, 30 lashes, then crucified.

THE KHITAN ENGINEERS

Khitai and Stygia, both lands shadowed from the sight of Hyboria's many rulers, have long traditions of bringing science and sorcery to the field to augment their troops' frail flesh. The bold Hyborians, who rightfully sneered at the practice as they ran cold steel through the scholars' bellies, have recently turned to these esoteric disciplines as well in order to further increase their power on the field of battle. Whether this effete style of combat will, in time, sap their once great strength so that the barbarian Picts and Cimmerians can overcome their borders remains to be written.

Regardless of its acceptance, the knowledge of engineers and scholars can radically alter the balance of power between two armies. These scholars do not have to use sorcery to change a victory into a defeat; a bit of common sense engineering and the application of appropriate siege weapons can do that for them. Most, in fact, know little if any magic at all, though they can supplement their scientific skills with occasional bits of alchemy and herbalism.

An 'engineering company' takes its name from its lead scholar, the man whose charisma and drive gathered them together in the first place. These lead scholars rule their little schools with an iron-fist, driving out any dissenters rather than accepting contrary opinions. Despite this idiosyncratic approach a handful of engineering companies boast traditions stretching back hundreds, if not thousands of years.

Types of Engineering Companies: Ancient and Modern

Engineering companies fall into two primary categories: ancient and modern. The ancient companies are the oldest incarnation of a school stretching back centuries. Conversely, modern companies recently formed around a single charismatic genius and will most likely not outlive his death.

Most Khitan and Stygian engineering companies derive their current form from schools founded in the ancient history of their shadowed nations. They combine weak sorcery with alchemy and scientific knowledge torn from the minds of creatures who inhabit the outer darkness. Most have a fully defined philosophy that forces its members to go forth and create destruction in the world.

Engineering companies from the Hyborian nations organise around a contemporary leader whose undeniable genius for mechanical warfare marks him as one of the great scholars of the age. These engineering companies use technologies derived from mortal knowledge and observation rather than secrets for which a man must forfeit his soul. The individual engineers 'serve' under the master in much

the same way an apprentice serves a master craftsman: he is there to learn a trade, not develop powers or further a specific philosophical point of view.

Normal soldiers rarely, if ever, make any distinction between the two groups. When a man has his flesh boiled from his bones it really does not matter to him if the substance causing the destruction derives from unearthly ether or some esoteric combination of chemicals occurring in the region. Advanced science and magical power seem indistinguishable from the point of view of someone dying a torturous death at its hand.

Joining an Engineering Company

Ancient engineering companies impose extremely rigorous initiation rites on those who would join them. They test candidates for ability, ideological purity, knowledge and willingness to accept the traditions governing the company's activities. Assuming the candidate survives these tests he still may die during the gruelling initiation rite itself.

Should the applicant survive he will face at least a decade of menial service before gaining access to the company's secret teachings. During this time the company's fully recognised members rain abuse down on the apprentice, forcing him to engage in progressively more humiliating and demoralising activities in the company's name.


Once the apprentice passes through this period he becomes an initiate of the company. From this point on he serves on the front lines, using secrets to prove his school's superiority on the field of battle. In time he might even rise to lead the school assuming he does not die kicking and screaming with a spear through his belly.

In contrast the modern companies require very little in the way of initiation rites. Many just ask the would be company member to pass a short battery of practical engineering exams, usually starting with building a siege weapon from scratch and ending with repairing a broken engine while under extreme circumstances. If the candidate can pass most or all of the exams he can join the company on a provisional basis.

This provisional standing usually lasts for a single campaign season. During the season the candidate works and fights as a full member of the company. Any hazing that takes place generally amounts to pranks and mild embarrassments rather than the fiendish torments dreamed up by more established companies. If things work out during the season the captain invites the candidate to stay on; if not then the candidate can leave with a recommendation and a full season's pay.

Serving in an Engineering Company

Even the lowliest member of an engineering company studies hard to duplicate skills vital to the success of military



operations. A captain can replace a swordsman or spearman at the next town; replacing an apprentice engineer takes thousands of gold and years of training.

This cost means that, unlike a soldier, engineers cannot be lost on the field of battle without serious repercussions. They, therefore, rarely come into direct contact with enemy forces. In battle the engineers remain far behind the front lines; in sieges they remain firmly entrenched behind the pickets with their siege engines. If the engineers must send someone into danger, most captains either go themselves or send a handful of apprentices to perform whatever activity the situation requires.

Engineering companies generally find more service during peace than war. Unlike other companies, their skills actually become more valuable after a battle. Company's looking for work can almost always find a commission building new roads, constructing dams, providing architectural assistance in mines or in any of a thousand other mundane activities that pay extremely well. These activities serve to further hone the company's expertise: once they know how best to build something it becomes considerably easier to destroy similar installations in other locations.

Kit

The kit an engineer receives upon joining the group depends on whether he joins an ancient or a modern company. Ancient companies generally have considerably more wealth than their modern counterparts, but also more restrictions on how they share that wealth with their members.

Ancient companies work more like cults than mercenary organisations. An apprentice receives a traditional ritual weapon (usually an ornate dagger) along with robes and probably but not always shoes or sandals. Should he survive the apprenticeship and the ritual of initiation, he gains access to various luxury goods and supplies for creating alchemical devices. These companies do not pay a salary although they do provide full room and board so long as the member remains in good standing.

Modern companies give their apprentices a suit of stout brigandine armour, a simple set of crafter's tools and a short sword. Once the apprentice graduates to full membership he gains access to a mount and a complete set of crafter's tools. These companies generally pay their members 10 silver a day and provide very basic room but not board unless the company is in the field.

Both ancient and modern engineering company's camps radically differ from those of common soldiers. They enclose themselves in rich tents, protected by the best traps and magic they can muster. Unlike the filthy camps inhabited by the expendable warriors these enclaves are free of disease and almost always have access to a clean water supply.

Founding an Engineering Company

A scholar with a Reputation over 20 may attempt to found an engineering company by taking the Leadership feat. He can then attract other scholars to work with him, to the limits of charisma and willingness to put up with other's needs.

Order of Battle

Due to their diffuse nature and professional issues engineering companies rarely exceed 40 engineers per unit. Each member of the engineering unit reports directly to the leader, making it difficult for the unit to operate under adverse conditions.

Generally these units do not engage in hand-to-hand combat. Most of their activities take place either in siege work before the battle or in building or restoration work immediately after the conflict. In either situation they rarely listen to the local military authority, although their captain will generally accept orders from the force commander or general.

The Engineers' Code

Engineering companies do not have a uniform code of conduct. They expect their members to behave professionally and to execute their duties as assigned, but each one uses its own means of dealing with troublemakers.

Modern engineering companies remain subject to the laws of the state they serve in. Conversely ancient companies rarely recognise the authority of any modern state. They will ignore local laws and rules when and as they see fit.

THE FREE COMPANIES

The Free Companies represent arguably the single most recognisable mercenary brotherhood in the Hyborian Age. How much of this fame they deserve, and how much of it comes from their prominence in the tales King Conan tells about his early years none in these later ages can say. However, members of the Free Companies or similar groups appear in military service throughout the known world, sometimes even as far away as Khitai.

The idea of the Free Companies, of a group of mercenary captains bound together in a compact describing their conduct towards one another, originated in Zingara. Companies' lore claims that five younger sons of a Zingaran noble agreed to the compact when they went out into the world to try their blades and seize such coin as they could. These five brothers somehow proved the worth of their compact to others, who in turn spread the word.

By the time King Conan came out of Cimmeria the Free Companies incorporated most of the independent mercenary groups from the Westmarck to the Vilayet Sea. Even soldiers not associated with the Free Companies know and follow their

traditions; most having served in a Company at one time or another during their chequered career.

The compact binds the captains to specific behaviours, but does not enforce rules on the member companies. Each company may maintain its own order of battle, tactics and traditions regarding the honouring of contracts. Furthermore, off the field of battle the members do not have a clear set of rules about how they should interact. Commonly, this lack of distinct rules leads to chaos and outright conflict between ostensibly allied groups.

The Name of a Free Company Unit

Most mercenary groups agreeing to the Free Company Compact have three names: a formal name used in contracts, a reference name and a nickname used by the other mercenaries. Mercenaries use these three names interchangeably; captains and other individuals in authority generally use the appropriate name for the specific circumstance.

A company's formal name includes its captain's full name, the captain's country of origin and designators indicating their primary function. These formal names appear on any document or contract the mercenary captain signs on behalf of his company. Common line fighters use it only when boasting about their personal prowess or when mocking another company's captain.

The designators attached to the formal name originally stemmed from the five units assembled by the Zingaran brothers: archers, cavalry, command, engineers and skirmishers. Over the years other captains added additional designators including: arbalesters, light cavalry, light infantry, heavy cavalry, heavy infantry, marines, pikemen and spearmen. A designator applies to a company so long as it has a full and functioning unit of the appropriate type.

The company's reference name usually takes the construction: 'Captain's Name's' Free Company'. Although ostensibly simple, this method becomes complicated when the company deliberately keeps the name of a famous captain from one or more generations back. In these cases, the name can take the form: 'Current Captain's Name' leading 'Former Captain's Name's' Free Company. Captains and nobles use the company's reference name in casual conversation. Mercenaries use it in formal conversations, in written orders and in any situation requiring them to speak to their 'betters'.

The company's nickname originates either from the company's cut-throats or, more commonly, from soldiers outside the unit. The nickname usually includes the current captain's name and a graphic reference to an animal, part of the human anatomy or particularly ignominious defeat in the company's past. Captains and

Example: Captain Almeric's Free Company

Captain Almeric leads a Free Company with two units of heavy infantry, two units of heavy mounted infantry and two units of archers. He formed the unit about six years ago.

His company takes the following names, depending on the circumstance:

Formal: Captain Almeric's Company of Zingaran Archers and Heavy Infantry

Reference: Captain Almeric's Free Company

Nickname: Almeric's Sloggers (referring to their one large contract, in which they missed out on the real battle due to an unfortunate combination of bad roads and considerable amounts of water).


other notables never use the nickname in public though they sometimes laugh about them in private. Mercenaries, on the other hand, commonly refer to all companies within the compact by their nickname.

Joining a Free Company

Each spring the Free Companies open their doors to new recruits. Any man of sound mind may sign up for a six month 'recruit period' during which he receives room, board and training in one of the three primary soldier's disciplines: archery, cavalry or infantry. The training he receives depends on his own aptitude and the specific company's needs. During this training period he and his fellow recruits form a recruit unit, complete with a formal chain of command, performing all of the functions of a real unit. The Free Company may call this recruit unit into active service if it needs additional bodies for some reason.

After finishing recruit training the company moves the character into a veteran unit. This veteran unit may or may not contain members from his own recruit unit. Generally it does not: too many recruits in a unit can weaken its fighting effectiveness. Although the recruit is now nominally a member of the Free Company, he must still prove his worth to the veteran soldiers and until he does, no one will call him by his own name. Instead, the veterans refer to him by a humiliating nickname and give him the worst possible chores. This hazing ritual ends after the recruit survives his first battle. After that, he is considered a full member of the company.

If a Free Company takes considerable casualties during a campaign it will hire in seasoned warriors (e.g. a character with at least two levels of soldier) during the campaign



season. These soldiers go through a hazing period similar to that of a recruit. However, since the company is mid-campaign at the time, the hazing usually ends within a few days or weeks. If the soldier once served with one of the other Free Companies the veterans may forego the traditional abuse if he demonstrates sufficient respect and skill.

Serving in a Free Company

Free Company mercenaries experience all of the joys of military life, with few of the disciplines or compensations that go with it. Their employers hire for a full gambit of activities, including brute labour when they can spare the time from guard or garrison duty.

These mercenaries have a deserved reputation for lax discipline. Although they do reasonably well on the battlefield, most lack the command structure required to keep their men under control in peaceful situations. They have trouble with drinking, assault and theft when left unsupervised. This causes most of their employers to use them either as border guards or as patrols, where they can at least bother someone else's merchants.

Kit

By tradition a Free Company provides each recruit with a buckler, leather jerkin, steel cap and short sword. Mercenary recruits trained in archery also receive a hunting bow and 80 arrows. Recruits trained as cavalry receive the use of a warhorse though this horse belongs to the company, not the recruit.

If the company trains pikemen or spearmen the recruit receives the appropriate weapon.

Once a mercenary becomes a veteran the unit will replace any part of his kit that breaks in battle or due to general use. Veterans may wear other armour or carry additional equipment if they can scrape together the silver to buy it, but the company will not replace it if it breaks or wears out.

A soldier in a Free Company generally earns seven silvers a day. When on campaign he also receives free room and board. When not campaigning he may spend his time in the company barracks or use his limited funds to purchase lodging in the local area.

A Free Companion

A veteran who serves a company for one year may ask, at any time except on the eve of battle, to take his leave of the company. Assuming he owes no debts and the company does not need his service, the company captain must agree to the request.

Upon leaving, the company presents the soldier with a crimson cloak, the badge of a Free Companion. This cloak

marks the soldier as a seasoned veteran of the mercenary service. It, in effect, acts as a letter of reference in a world where most men cannot read.

A Free Companion receives relatively free passage through national borders and most bandits will leave him alone on general principles. He can present himself to anyone looking to hire a mercenary and stand a reasonable chance of finding work, although that work might not necessarily match up with his skills and abilities.

Order of Battle

Free Companies model their internal command structure on a hybrid of the Zingaran model and the deep command structure used by the Shemite ashshuri. A group of five Free Companions forms a squad, commanded by a veteran soldier called a corporal. Each set of ten units has a sergeant, usually a soldier with at least seven years of mercenary experience. A group of 20 squads forms a unit, commanded either by the company captain or one of his sub-captains. Each unit captain has a squire who can, in theory, take over for the captain falls in battle.

During a battle failing to follow orders leads to summary execution. Each member of the company relies on his brothers to do their jobs, for the good of the whole. In general, this means staying together, locking shields and, if need be, dying on the opponent's blade for no better reason than the captain says to.

Each Free Company contains of between four and ten units. Most specialise in a single discipline (e.g. archery, cavalry or infantry) but some have split specialities or logistics units as well.

Becoming a Captain or Entering the Compact

A mercenary can become a captain in the Free Companies either by taking over an existing company or by founding his own. The first gives the would-be captain a fully functional mercenary group, while the second forces him to build a group season by season until it finally stands proud among the more established companies of the world.

Taking over a mercenary company occurs when the current captain steps down or dies. When this happens the unit sub-captains vie among themselves for the privilege of ascending to the rank of captain. By tradition the sub-captains have one month before the veterans gather and vote to determine who will rise to command. This vote is binding. Any soldier, including a sub-captain who failed in his bid to rise to captain, may leave the company without prejudice if the vote does not come out as he wishes.

Founding a mercenary company presents a considerably more challenging route to becoming a captain in the Free Companies. The mercenary must build his Reputation, train followers, establish a base of operations and find contracts suitable for his company. If he can negotiate his way through these obstacles he must also adhere to the rules of warfare established by the Free Companies Compact.

The Free Company's Code and Compact

Unlike the Asshuri or the Adventurers, the Free Companies do not have a formal code of conduct outside of warfare. However, they do have a saying that they often repeat among themselves:

'Live well today, take what you desire. Tomorrow, you spill your blood for silver so a merchant can earn gold.'

According to the compact at the foundation of the companies each Companion agrees to abide by the following rules of war:

1. Fellow Free Companions, once they surrender or are captured, must not be subject to torture or undue humiliation. Their captain may ransom their safe return for cost of six months pay per man.
2. Fellow Free Companions deserve mercy and dignity in death. Each dying soldier should die an honourable and quick death; those wounded who can survive should be spared.
3. When captured by a Free Company, a Free Companion will make no effort to escape. He will co-operate with his captors and stand with them in common defence.

KOZAKS

Strictly speaking, the *kozaks* are not a mercenary brotherhood but rather a group of outcasts who sometimes accept gold in return for mercenary service. Their true origin and goals lie more in survival and the destruction of their petty enemies rather than acquiring gold through military service.

While more information about the *kozaks* can be found in *Conan: The Road of Kings*, the information below presents the information required to use them as a mercenary group, not detailed cultural or political information about this fascinating and reclusive group.

Joining the Kozaks

A man who wishes to join a *kozak* tribe must impress its hetman. Hetmen sometimes establish humiliating tests of stamina and horsemanship for newcomers; other times, they just accept the newcomer with a laugh.

Generally, any character with at least one level of barbarian or nomad will be welcomed with open arms. The rest will have to suffer for a while before the hetman trusts them.

Turanian and Hyrkanian characters rarely join the *kozaks*.

Serving with the Kozaks

The *kozaks* are steppe nomads. Even if someone hires a *hetman* to help him, they do not engage in traditional soldier tasks. Instead, merchants hire them either to guard caravans from other *kozaks* or to raid enemy territory.

Order of Battle

The *kozak* display a particularly chaotic order of battle. Each man acts on his own, co-ordinating his actions with his neighbours more through instinct than through training. They mostly act as skirmishers or as cavalry and those with bows have been known to stop in mid-battle to take a few shots at retreating foes.

The Kozak's Code

The *kozaks* expect each man to protect his own. A man who cannot appeal to the hetman, who will probably just laugh at him. Failure to protect his personal property (including his woman) can lead to a *kozak's* expulsion from the tribe.

KUSHITE SPEARMEN

When a nation needs disposable, readily available mercenary soldiers willing to lay down their lives for a handful of copper coins they need look no further than the barbarian spearmen of Kush and the Southern Kingdoms. The vast majority of these illiterate warriors find employment south of Stygia, but some northern noblemen will hire them out of their hot lands simply for the amusement of seeing unarmoured southerners fall under a rain of steel-tipped arrows.

These undisciplined southern units cannot put up a real fight against an armoured and trained group of mercenary soldiers from the north. However, they make excellent fodder intended to slow down more disciplined soldiers in order to gain time for more sinister methods of battle to take hold. The Stygians, in particular, use this later tactic to great advantage, spending spearmen like water while their sorcerers prepare various terrors for the battlefield.

Joining the Kushite Spearmen

Unlike the other companies described here, the soldier's village of origin determines whom he may die beside. Each 'company' of Kushite Spearmen consists of all the males of fighting age from a specific village. Anyone not from this village is not welcome to serve alongside the 'soldiers'.

However, any warrior of sufficient skill can challenge the 'captain', really the village headsman, for command. This warrior does not need to be a member of the company; he simply must prove his superiority by killing the headsman in equal combat. Anyone knowing the proper rites may issue this challenge at any time. If the challenger wins he inherits both the company and its responsibilities.

A new warrior from the village does not receive any additional training. His traditional training with spear and shield, expected of any boy wishing to become a man, must suffice until he gains additional experience on the field of battle.

A new captain will receive the old captain's head-dress, shield and spear. He may also claim the captain's personal effects, slaves and wives if he chooses to do so. Many northerners will let the wives go, though some enjoy themselves for a time before doing so.

Serving with the Kushite Spearmen

Rulers rightly regard the Kushite spearmen as the bottom of the mercenary pool. They are undisciplined, lazy and unreliable in battle. However, their numbers and low cost make up for a great deal when looking for fodder. They do not have to be highly skilled to show down a cavalry charge or absorb arrow stocks from better-trained troops.

Most spearman units get either garrison or patrol duty. Only the most foolish of rulers would give them responsibly for maintaining order in a city.

A Kushite spearman earns four silvers a day. His captain must provide him with sufficient food and shelter to keep body and soul together, but does not need to see to any other comforts.

Kit

All Kushite spearmen receive a hunting spear and a large, painted shield as part of their equipment. Those who survive their battles may loot armour or other forms of protection from their fallen foes.

Northerners generally dismiss the painting on spearmen's shields as simple artistic decoration. In reality the patterns and colours serve two purposes: identification and protection. All of the patterns on the shields serve to identify the bearer's holder's nation, village and family. Anyone with sufficient skill can read the

shield and identify its holder; a particularly talented reader could identify the holder's likely personal name. Additionally, the spearmen believe the shield paintings help to provide them with protection against arrows, their enemy's weapons and even supernatural forces.

Order of Battle

The men of Kush listen to their elders; the oldest men in the unit keep the younger in line while the captain makes his decision about when and where to die. The spearmen do not, therefore, have an established chain of command or order of battle recognisable to more sophisticated mercenary companies.

The Kushite spearmen do not use sophisticated tactics. Each man holds his shield in front of him and waits for the order to charge. When that order comes, the line becomes ragged as men out pace one another. Fortunately, hundreds, if not thousands, of the strong southerners back the charge, so even horrendous casualties rarely make much difference.

The Spearmen's Code

An astute observer could sum up the Kushite spearmen's uniform code as: 'Don't get killed.' They rarely willingly fight to the death nor do their employers expect them to.

Each spearman answers to his own brothers, his chief and to the local authorities. Generally the southerners turn their eye from any behaviour that does not directly impact another southerner. The local authorities might be less forgiving.

THE ASSHURI

Before the Free Companies, before the Kushite Spearmen realised how much money they could make selling their skills, before the Adventures first darkened the horizon, the Shemite asshuri sold their services to the highest bidder. Their tradition of service extends into the murky pre-history of the Shemite meadow cities. Indeed, most stories about city founding simply assume the presence of these fierce, dedicated, disciplined troops. Where they came from and where they learned their tactics will doubtless remain a mystery forever.



The annals of the Adventurers and the Free Companies mention a strong asshuri presence in the northern Hyborian kingdoms almost immediately after the Hyborians finished their conquest of the area. Apparently, despite their general disdain for Shemites, the former barbarians recognised the mercenaries as a tremendous asset in pacifying their newly acquired lands.

Asshuri Company Names

A company of asshuri goes by a name combining both its city of origin and its captain's name. For example, an asshuri company from Eruk under Captain Gabal would be Captain Gabal's Eruk Asshuri.

Joining the Asshuri

Any free Shemite man may join the asshuri based in his home city during the one-week spring recruitment festival. They do not welcome foreigners or former slaves among their ranks. For most prospective members, joining the company is as simple as signing their name on a piece of parchment. Recruits receive normal wages and training equipment for the duration of their service.

The recruit-training period lasts for six months. Each week during this period recruits take tests to demonstrate their improvement in archery, horsemanship and swordsmanship. Those who display acceptable progress may proceed to the next week's training exercises. Those who fail once may pass on, but are on probationary status. If a recruit fails three weeks during the six-month period or fails twice in a row the company throws the recruit out. He may never again attempt to join the city service or participate in public affairs.

At the end of this training period the recruits must pass one final test involving at least one day of hard riding into the meadows and a variety of archery and swordsmanship contests. Those that fail and survive face expulsion. Those that pass may serve with the asshuri, first in local garrisons and later as mercenaries representing the city and its interests abroad.

Serving with the Asshuri

Once a recruit passes his final test he joins his city's asshuri company as a full member. He receives a full kit and an assignment with one of the units just returned from a foreign contract. Once he joins the unit he must remain in it for the next year, after which time he may request a transfer to any other unit currently within the city. Unlike most other mercenary companies the proud Shemites do not inflict hazing on their new brothers: anyone who can survive the recruit period and subsequent test is worthy of at least modest respect.

Each asshuri must maintain his personal gear and weapons. Older mercenaries, bored with this

duty, will often offer new recruits 'extra duty' cleaning and caring for their equipment in return for an extra silver a day. Each mercenary must also devote at least a part of his day to maintaining company equipment and performing camp tasks like cleaning, cooking and digging latrines. The captain assigns these tasks by drawing and distributing wooden chits. By tradition the soldiers may trade these chits so long as no task is neglected.

As a whole the asshuri give respect to a man based on the number of enemies he kills in battle. A man with 10 kills receives a sword with an iron hawk on the pommel from his commander. One with a bronze hawk is given to a man with 20 kills. A man with 100 kills receives a blade with a gold hawk pommel. An 'iron man' can expect anyone who is not of his calibre to treat his word as final in all matters. Similarly, a bronze man can overrule an iron man, and a gold man can overrule either. This influence is mostly limited to interpersonal matters. However, even officers pause and listen when the gold men speak.

After serving in the asshuri for five years a soldier may request a discharge from the company. If the company's rotation places it in the home city the unit captain cannot reasonably refuse the request. However, any request for discharge made while on foreign duty may require justification or even a pay off equal to the cost of hiring a trained mercenary for the remaining duration in the contract.

Kit

An asshuri recruit wears a leather jerkin topped with a steel cap and wields a light lance and scimitar. Any other equipment he might need he may borrow from the company until he completes his training. If he fails he may keep the kit as payment for his time and service.

Once an asshuri graduates from recruit to full member he receives a scale hauberk, Shemite bow and a warhorse for his own use. Once per year he may request a replacement for any of this equipment, including his light lance or scimitar. When he goes on patrol or into battle the company issues him 80 arrows, which they do not expect him to return with.

Each asshuri receives seven silver a day for his service. The company provides his room and board in foreign countries. Asshuri serving local duty may store their belongings in the central barracks. They also receive meal and lodging chits redeemable at any of the local inns.

Local Service

Each asshuri company always leaves half of its total numbers to garrison their home city. This service, called 'home service' or 'home guard' by the mercenaries, occupies seven units of asshuri on rotating duty. Each unit takes at least a one-year shift, though some have not left their home cities for more than a score of years.

When engaged in local service the asshuri live in the city's inns and report to duty at the marshalling ground by dawn. They train every day, send out patrols, guard the city streets and assist the local government in law enforcement. Each soldier serves two six-hour watches; he may take his leisure during the other two.

Tradition dictates that asshuri in their home city remain on their best behaviour. They must demonstrate courtesy to the local citizens and patience with foreigners. Young recruits who forget this rule will quickly find themselves taken out by one of the unit's iron or bronze men for a discussion usually involving no more than five broken bones.

While within their cities the asshuri do not engage in manual labour. They do, however, funnel at least 10% of the company's foreign earnings into the city's defences. The oversight of these projects falls on those soldiers who have already proven themselves in battle, in descending order of kills. Given that, again by tradition, the overseer receives 10% of the project's cost back in the form of bribes, oversight can become quite lucrative if properly managed.

Foreign Service

In order to secure the service of a unit of asshuri the petitioner must approach the company's city of origin. The local government will negotiate the contract, then pass it to the asshuri for fulfilment. This process can take days, weeks or even years depending on how many bribes the petitioner pays. Once the government signs the contract the asshuri do their best to meet its conditions without incurring undue losses.

The government has the right to sign any contract involving combat operations, garrison duty, guard duty or patrol duty. Asshuri never serve their employers as labourers; an employer suggesting such an insult immediately voids the contract binding the company to his service.

Ostensibly the asshuri fall under local jurisdiction when it comes to misdeeds while engaged in foreign duty. However, the asshuri look after their own. Any guardsman foolish enough to accuse an asshuri of criminal activity, whether it is true or not, will likely find himself hung from the nearest tree. Instead local magistrates usually approach the unit captain directly, presenting what evidence they can muster. If it proves sufficient the asshuri will deal with the offender in accordance with the laws of their home city.

Order of Battle

A unit of asshuri consists of 200 cavalry soldiers mounted on desert warhorses. These units have the deepest command structure of any existing mercenary group or army, starting from the organising unit of a single 'wing'. When an asshuri joins the unit he receives a 'wing brother' who holds command over him. In each two pairs (four soldiers) one man, usually

an iron man, designated as the 'hawk leader'. Four hawk leaders report to a 'flight leader', who in turn reports to a captain who commands 12 flight leaders. The remaining eight soldiers, who must be at least brass men, form the 'captain's flight', an elite guard within the unit dedicated to the captain's personal protection.

The unit captains report directly to the regional commander. The regional commander reports to the city government and maintains the company's archives, books and logistics. The local government appoints regional commanders.

The asshuri are talented cavalry, archers and swordsmen. Their commanders listen to their employers, but will ignore them if they give ill-advised orders. Asshuri fight together as a coherent unit, and have the discipline to obey orders without question. They generally serve as either cavalry or mounted archer units, but sometimes dismount to serve as archers.

Every soldier takes responsibility for the mission's success. If an officer falls, his replacement must pick up the reins without breaking stride. Each man knows his place in the chain of command, so that if everyone of a senior level dies the unit continues to function without fail.

The asshuri do not take prisoners. When they win, they make it their responsibility to kill every member of the opposing army they can.

The Asshuri Code

The asshuri follow the following code while working for their city. The company archivist reads this code every morning at dawn.

1. Each asshuri is responsible for himself. If he is attacked he is allowed to defend himself. If he is stolen from, he may take back what is his.
2. Each asshuri is responsible for his brothers. If his brother is attacked he may defend him. If his brother does wrong he must bear the punishment with him.
3. Each asshuri is responsible for the contract. Violations of the contract will not be tolerated. Each violation is punished with one day without water.
4. Each asshuri is responsible for his city. The asshuri represent their city in all things. They are guests, and must treat their employers as hosts.
5. The asshuri are a people onto themselves. If a brother violates the law he will be returned to the city for punishment. His fate does not rest with those who do not share his blood.

Basic Mercenary Information

| Company | Typical Range | Leadership | Rules of Order | Pay and Loot |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Nemedian Adventurers | Hyborian Kingdoms | Nemedian nobles command, king holds final authority | Obey Nemedian law in all cases, subject to Nemedian justice | 1 share of the soldier's loot, 10 silver a day |
| Khitan Engineers | Anywhere | Mid-level scholar (5 th +) responsible for representing the unit. | Face local justice | 2 shares of the soldier's loot, 7 silver a day |
| Free Companies | Hyborian Kingdoms and the South | Mid-level soldier/general (7 th +) with at least one 4 th level soldier commander per unit. | Face local justice | 1 share of the soldier's loot, 7 silver a day |
| kozaks | Turan and Hyrkania | Mid-level barbarian/nomad (5 th +) hetman. | Killed on sight by the Turanian Horde | 1 share of loot, no payment |
| Kushite Spearmen | The South, Shem, and Koth | Mid-level barbarian (5 th +) hetman. | Face local justice | 4 silver a day, no loot other than personal looting |
| Pirates | Any coastal nation | Mid-level (7 th +) pirate. | Criminals, face justice anywhere but their home port | 1 share of the total value of the loot |
| Asshuri | Hyborian Kingdoms and Shem | Trained professional officers (soldier 3 rd +) reporting to both client and home city government | Obey Shemite law, subject to Shemite justice | 7 silver a day, 1 share of the soldier's loot |

MERCENARY GROUPS IN SUMMARY

The table above outlines some basic information about the various mercenary groups. Each group receives more detailed treatment later in the chapter.

Company: Indicates the company name.

Typical Range: Indicates where these mercenaries are most often found. A mercenary company may work outside of its typical range, but will have more trouble securing the kinds of contracts is used to.

Leadership: Indicates the company's general command structure and the level/classes of its leader.

Rules of Order: Indicates what laws the mercenary organisation obeys. Most obey the laws of their home country. A few, notably the Asshuri and the Adventurers, are allowed to live under their own laws and answer to their own justice.

Pay and Loot: Indicates how much a soldier can expect to be paid.

The Tools of War (pg. 66) contains complete information for both individual looting and sacking cities on a grand scale.

This information provides the value for the 'shares' mentioned in the above table.

MERCENARY PAY

Armies cost. A lot. As a general rule, a native soldier costs eight silver per day to feed, clothe and pay. This cost includes the cost of the equipment, expendable supplies and the camp followers required to keep soldiers reasonably happy. Soldiers receive their pay once per month.

Mercenary companies cost even more, but have the advantages of being both expendable and on limited duration contracts. A saying, old even in Hyborian times, sums up this particular situation: 'Dead men earn no gold.'

Mercenary generals with dreams of becoming incredibly wealthy should remember that over 90% of the fees go to pay for equipment and salaries. Even so, soldiers are usually underpaid during times of peace: it is only when they get to loot during invasions that they can gather real wealth.

A character employed by a native army receives four silver per day for pay. He also receives his unit's equipment and training at no cost. He may upgrade this equipment if he has sufficient funds to do so.

The Rewards of Blood (pg. 54) contains more information about mercenary contracts, the mercenary lifestyle and the industries that strip mercenaries of their hard earned wealth.

Mercenary Pay

| Unit | Per Week | Per Month |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Nemedian Adventurers | 4,200 gp per unit | 16,800 gp |
| Khitan Engineers | 560 gp | 2,240 gp |
| Free Companies | 700 gp per unit | 2,800 gp |
| kozaks | None (work for loot) | None (work for loot) |
| Kushite Spearmen | 1,960 gp | 7,840 gp |
| Pirates | 700 gp | 2,800 gp |
| Asshuri | 1,750 gp | 7,000 gp |

Traditions of Force

Armies of Hyboria

BY THE TIME of King Conan the world's great powers have long established military traditions, with distinct tactics, units and orders of battle. These traditions influence both the shape and the spirit of each society; in turn, the society and its religious beliefs help to shape the traditions as they evolve into the current era.

Here we start off by looking at the world's professional soldiers and their traditional order of battle before shifting into a discussion of civilian and military fortifications a mercenary might encounter in the various parts of the world. We conclude with a discussion of that most difficult and dangerous of pastimes, repelling and setting sieges against the various fortification types.

NATIONAL ARMIES AND THEIR ORDERS OF BATTLE

The armies, or lack there of, supported by the various nations indelibly shape their character and landscape. A country with a strong centralised army will generally have a strong central government and unified cultural traditions. One with a scattered 'army' composed mostly of locally raised militia often lack anything resembling central authority, with each petty noble claiming his own right to absolute rule.

Many Hyborian nations are home to units that are not in the least concerned with the preservation of their host nation's welfare. This chapter explores some of them.

In some cases, units are independent of the government of the land. They may be controlled by the local lord or a leader of a particular faith in whose name the unit fights, but their activities do not or cannot be controlled by the leaders of the land. Such units are separate from the military of any race or nation, though they draw their recruits from the common population. Members of these units often live, train and are based in isolated castles, fortresses or camps, either based in a frontier or hostile region as a forward base for the force, or within a host country, where it acts as a recruiting and supply centre.

TYPES OF UNITS

The unit types described below fall into two distinct categories: conscripted and professional. Conscripted units consist primarily of individuals who have jobs other than engaging in warfare. Professional units contain soldiers who make their living as fighters, whether as part of a national army or as part of a noble's retinue.

Conscripted units are generally, but not always, less skilled than professional units. They tend to have cheaper equipment and considerably less battlefield experience. However, this general rule does not apply in all cases. Nations with strong martial traditions may field conscripted units even better trained than the most skilled professional soldiers. Furthermore, conscription does not always equal slavery. In many cases conscripted units in the Hyborian Age have higher morale and greater willingness to serve than professional ones. They serve from a sense of duty rather than a desire for money, a sense which will sustain them long after the mercenaries have broken and run.

Professional soldiers in the Hyborian Age serve in a nobles' retinue, as part of the king's personal army or in a mercenary company. Whomever they serve, they spend the majority of their time on some kind of active duty. This duty usually does not involve combat; customs guards and marines serving at sea can spend years without ever crossing swords with someone in true battle. A noble's retinues generally defend their lord's lands, while king's troops protect the national borders and infrastructure. Mercenaries see considerably more battle than the average professional soldier and may serve anywhere in the world, limited only by the ambition and the range of the company they serve in.

Practically the primary difference between conscripted and professional units lies in the speed with which a general or king can call them to battle. Conscripted units take 1d4 weeks to muster for battle, assuming nothing acts to prevent the arming process. Once a conscripted unit musters it can move at a reasonable but not professional speed towards its destination. Professional units are immediately available but may have other duties to which they must attend. Winning free of these duties may require more than just

mustering and moving out. The sudden absence of troops could cause everything from civil unrest to outright rebellion, depending on the circumstances.

The examples shown are archetypes, based on generic racial characteristics and mythologies, and may easily be adapted for individual campaigns. Each unit is detailed with the following information:

Allegiances: The general allegiances of the unit, which is usually reflected in the allegiances of its members. Though some accept members from a wider base, those wishing to join a unit should have at least one of these in common with the unit they wish to serve.

Identification: The unit's colours, symbol or uniform if any.

Numbers: The number of the unit's type that can be rallied together in times of war.

MC: This is Military Cohesion, a measure of the order's typical combat ability in battle. See pg. 87 for more details on Military Cohesion.

Equipment: The standard equipment commonly used by the unit.

Special: Any special rules, possessions or features of the order.

ARMIES OF AQUILONIA

Aquilonia possesses the most powerful military force of the Hyborian Age. This army derives the bulk of its soldiers from a highly institutionalised civilian martial training regime, including national traditions of service and highly specialised ethnic combat traditions. These institutions, founded in the traditional Hyborian traits of battle readiness and a belief in their manifest destiny, allow the Hyborian nobles to draw up highly trained troops at a moments notice.

In addition to these skilled civilian levies Aquilonian nobles and her king have sufficient excess funds to equip, maintain and train an extensive professional army. These professionals serve as the nobles' retinues, spending most of their time protecting their patron's lands.

To ensure its army's ability to organise itself past the level of individual retinues fighting for their lord, the kings of Aquilonia long ago instituted a custom of seasonal 'commitment'. Each season the nobles of Aquilonia must send one-quarter of their retinue to the capital under orders to serve the king. During the season of service the retinues drill together, learning how to work as a cohesive

unit. They spend their time guarding the kingdom's roads, patrolling its borders and training in the finer points of warfare.

Fortifications and strong points in Aquilonia always belong to a particular noble. By tradition the king can request use of a fortification and its resources at any time. Unless the noble uses the fortification as his primary residence he must agree to the request, especially if it comes after the king takes possession of the property.

In addition to allowing his nobles to maintain their fortifications King Conan instituted a 'caching' programme similar to that used by his Cimmerian ancestors. However, where the Cimmerian barbarians typically cache no more than a handful of steel blades, he ordered the caching of arms, armour and baggage sufficient to sustain entire thousand man forces. These caches are funded by the royal treasury but the noble nearest the cache is expected to defend it from robbers.

The Aquilonian army consists of the following units:

Aquilonian Archers (Professional)

The nobles, not able to rely on levies of Bossonian archers, long ago instituted archery contests and mandatory archery practice in order to develop their own archery corps. Aquilonian archer units sprang up from this effort. Although they lack the extensive battlefield experience of their Bossonian counterparts, they make up their lack of professional experience with numbers. They often serve in the king's army, protecting the borders and garrisoning the capital city in case the king has need of their services.

Allegiances: The soldiers in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: Unit Commander, Aquilonia, the king.

Identification: They wear a tabard with the colours or heraldry of the noble they serve, these units are identified by their equipment and by a flag with three arrows on its field.

Numbers: Aquilonia can field 30 units of native archers.

MC: 11

Equipment: The soldiers in these units typically carry Bossonian longbows and hatchets. They wear leather jerkins and steep caps for protection.

Black Dragons, The (Professional)

If the Black Legion is the king's personal army, then the Black Dragons are his personal guard. Each member of this elite unit is hand picked for their strength, fighting skill and dedication to the throne. Their presence on the field of battle

does not promise victory, but it is certain to turn the tide in a close battle.

Allegiances: The Black Dragons must hold allegiance with all of the following: Unit Commander, Aquilonia, the king.

Identification: The Black Dragons wear a black tabard with a gold dragon emblem over their armour.

Numbers: The king can call upon a single unit of these elite troops.

MC: 15

Equipment: The Black Dragons wear full plate with great helmets, ride Hyborian warhorses, and carry heavy lances as well as great swords into battle. The warhorses are as heavily armoured as the riders.

Black Legion, The (Professional)

Strictly speaking, the Black Legion is not a separate kind of unit. Instead, it is the king's personal army. The Legion's forces are not committed to garrison duty, palace protection or any other task that might tie them down. Instead they exist to provide Aquilonia with a rapid response force in case of invasion or civil war.

Aquilonia almost always augments the Black Legion with 2,000 mercenary infantry and a unit of mercenary engineers.

Allegiances: The soldiers of the Black Legion must hold allegiance with all of the following: Unit Commander, Aquilonia, the king.

Identification: The black legion wears a black tabard over their armour.

Numbers: The Black Legion consists of 10 units of Aquilonian Archers, 20 units of Veteran Aquilonian Knights, 25 units of Veteran Mounted Men-at-Arms, 5 units of Raw Men-at-Arms.

MC: 12

Equipment: Chain mail, steel helmet, black tabard, broadsword, shield

Men-at-Arms (Professional)

These 'professional' soldiers consist entirely of raw recruits and an assortment of criminals serving out sentences for minor crimes. They have enough Hyborian blood to claim right of service to a noble, but not enough experience to qualify for anything more dignified than the lowest form of military dirty work. Most serve for less than six months before the constant drilling and back-breaking labour send

them looking either for a mercenary company or a less strenuous profession.

These recruits train in all of the Hyborian military arts, with a special focus on pike and shield. These soldiers serve as fodder for better-trained infantry units or as a breach plug against heavy cavalry charges. Membership in these corps is generally considered a path into military service rather than a career in and of itself.

Allegiances: The soldiers in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: Unit Commander, Aquilonia, the king.

Identification: Aquilonian men-at-arms are usually given a unit flag, often designed by a member of the unit.

Numbers: Aquilonia can muster 50 of these units, although their use on the field of battle remains open to question.

MC: 10

Equipment: In battle, men-at-arms wield pikes and a motley assortment of backup weapons. They wear mail hauberks and steel caps for protection from arrows.

Poitainian Archers (Professional)

After witnessing the carnage inflicted by Bossonian longbowmen the lords of Poitain wished to create a force of equal skill and power. Unfortunately, they discovered that giving someone a longbow and moulding his body to its use were two different processes. Their experiments in developing a professional archer corps eventually resulted in the creation of the Poitain archer units, soldiers who use Bossonian longbows but will never achieve the native strength or power of the bow's traditional users.

Poitainian archers are no more effective than their Aquilonian counterparts, but by tradition and culture maintain a separate identity.

Allegiances: The soldiers in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: local lord, Aquilonia, the king.

Identification: The Poitainian archers use a modification of Count Trocero's heraldry. The field is yellow, with a triple arrow semee. The centre charge is Count Trocero's heraldry.

Numbers: The Poitainian lords can field a force containing 20 units of archers.

MC: 11

Equipment: The soldiers in these units typically carry Bossonian longbows. Unlike their counterparts though, the Poitainian lords spend a bit of silver on them, so they have arming swords rather than hatchets. They wear leather jerkins and steel caps to ward off enemy blows.

Poitainian Footmen (Professional)

Poitainian nobles, like their Aquilonian counterparts, maintain strong retinues of footmen. However, great mountains in the eastern part of the country make large mounted forces impractical. Instead of training their soldiers as mounted infantry the nobles focus on developing in them the art of war sword and shield. This gives them greater damage potential in close hand-to-hand fighting, although it makes them somewhat less flexible in tactical and strategic applications.

Allegiances: The soldiers in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: local lord, Aquilonia, the king.

Identification: Their shields have a yellow field with a sword semee. The chief ordinary is Count Trocero's coat-of-arms.

Numbers: At full muster the Poitainian lords can field a force of up to 50 units of footmen.

MC: 10

Equipment: The soldiers in these units typically carry a longsword and large shield. They wear mail hauberks and steep caps for protection.

Poitainian Knights (Professional)

The Poitainian knights represent the highest development of Hyborian chivalry. They are an elite force, matched evenly with the most potent armies in the world. Though they spend most of their time governing their lands, Count Trocero could call them up if in a time of great need to form the core of an army capable of challenging even Aquilonia for its dominance.

Allegiances: The soldiers in these units generally hold allegiance with at least three of the following: local lord, Count Trocero, Aquilonia, the king.

Identification: A yellow field is quartered. In the first quarter are the arms of the king, in the second quarter are the arms of Trocero, in the third quarter the arms of the local lord and in the fourth quarter the arms of the knight's family.

Numbers: The Count can call up as many as 60 units of knights. Most Poitainian lords could call up at most three units of vassal knights.

MC: 16

Equipment: Armed with great swords, broadswords and heavy lances, these knights wear full plate and great helms. Their horses are superb examples of the breed, and can carry a full weight of armour as well as a fully armoured man.

Veteran Aquilonian Knights (Professional)

Aquilonia's veteran knights form her army's armoured backbone. Generally though knights are concerned with their own lands, so the armies contain no more than a handful of these units. If the king calls he can expect to roughly half of his knights respond immediately with the other half available within 2d4 months.

Allegiances: The soldiers in these units generally hold allegiance with at least on of the following: Unit Commander, Aquilonia, the king.

Identification: Personal family coat of arms.

Numbers: The nation can field 130 units of 50 knights each, for a total of roughly 6,500 individual warriors.

MC: 13

Equipment: Knights wear full plate, ride Hyborian warhorses and wield heavy lances for their primary work. They use arming swords as backup weapons.



Veteran Bossonian Archers (Conscript)

The Bossonian's have a centuries long tradition of civilian military service. All men over the age of 10 train at dawn and dusk, shooting at least one quiver of arrows into a distant target. This practice slowly shapes their bodies to the bow's use, giving credence to the saying 'Bossonian archers are born not trained.' Each season the men of marriageable age draw lots to determine who will serve to defend the land and who will go about their regular occupations.

Bossonian longbowmen, especially these veteran units, can decimate opposing armies under a withering rain of steel tipped arrows. Aquilonia's armies rely on their Bossonian comrades to soften up the opposition before engaging them in hand-to-hand combat.

By tradition the Bossonian nobles and the common men will answer the king's call.

Allegiances: The soldiers in these units generally hold allegiance with at least two of the following: Unit Commander, Aquilonia, the king.

Identification: Blue/White field per pale with seven arrows as its centre charge.

Numbers: Aquilonia can field up to 50 of these veteran units.

MC: 11

Equipment: The soldiers in these units typically carry Bossonian longbows with poniards as back-up melee weapons. Most wear brigandine coats in battle.

Veteran Gunderland Pikemen (Conscript)

Like their Bossonian neighbours, all of the men of Gunderland engage in constant martial practice. However, these fearsome fighters focus on heavy infantry tactics and the use of pike and shield rather than the cowardly discipline of archery. Also unlike their counterparts these citizen-soldiers take watch and guardianship of their lands in common: each man stands a watch each week, regardless of the season.

As much as the other nations fear Bossonian archers, they must also acknowledge that part of Aquilonia's battlefield superiority comes from its superbly trained Gunderland pikemen. These pike and shield wielding heavy infantry can rip apart cavalry charges, ignore punishing archery attacks and withstand the worst another nation can throw. If the archers are the hammer then the pikemen are the anvil upon which they fall.

The majority of these troops serve on the frontiers alongside their Bossonian allies.

Allegiances: The soldiers in these units generally hold allegiance with at least two of the following: Unit Commander, Aquilonia, the king.

Identification: On a green and white field, divided into quarters, a stylised pike is the charge on the first and fourth quarters (clockwise from the top left) and the coat-of-arms of their local lord is the charge on the second and third quarters.

Numbers: Aquilonia can call up to 50 units of veteran Gunderland pikemen. Typically an army contains no more than five units.

MC: 12

Equipment: Pikemen carry a pike and large shield. They wear steep caps and mail hauberks.

Veteran Mounted Men-at-Arms (Professional)

The vast bulk of the professional soldiers in Aquilonia, whether in noble's retinues or the king's service, fall into this unit category. These soldiers started out as men-at-arms in the army, but experience and training have elevated them from among the raw recruits who have just stumbled into service.

These soldiers, in keeping with Hyborian military theory function as both mounted infantry and as cavalry as the situation requires. They lack a knight's heavy armour but can perform a heavy infantry charge against lightly armoured infantry units. If, however, they face pikes or spearmen they can dismount and advance in ranks rather than throw themselves to their deaths.

Mounted men-at-arms form the bulk of Aquilonia's fighting forces, her garrison troops and her police force. Most nobles can muster a unit or two of these troops if forced to do so.

Allegiances: The soldiers in these units generally hold allegiance with at least two of the following: Unit Commander, Aquilonia, the king.

Identification: Varies by individual lord.

Numbers: Aquilonia can field up to 150 of these units, though no single army is likely to have more than 10 in active service.

MC: 13

Equipment: Each mounted man-at-arms has a heavy lance, large shield and heavy mace. They wear brigandine coats over mail hauberks.

ARMIES OF ARGOS

Despite its great wealth Argos does not have much of a standing army. In fact, it has almost no troops of its own at all. Instead it relies on a complex web of diplomatic entanglements and its vast wealth for protection. The rulers of Argos believe that no one will willingly attack them, as any disruption in the trade running through their ports will cause most nations to collapse.

If, however, someone were to mount an attack on them, the Argosian rulers could marshal units in their defence. These units would include a large number of mercenaries and a heavy dose of pirates from the Barachan Isles.

Barachan Pirates (Conscript)

The pirates of the Barachan Isles do not make ideal soldiers. They are lazy, drink too much, do not obey orders and tend to loot friendly towns. However, they will fight for money and for love of their country. Should Argos come under serious outside threat, tens of thousands of these pirates will swarm out of the sea to defend her.

Allegiances: The men in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: Unit Commander, Unit's ship, Argos.

Identification: Individual ship captains may designate a unique flag for themselves but few crewmen emblazon this on themselves.

Numbers: Anyone with sufficient coin can hire a crew (10 units) for a few hours or days.

MC: 7

Equipment: The Barachan pirates carry cutlasses and wear breastplates.

Marines (Professional)

The nobles of Argos organise small bands of professional marines to help protect their merchant ships that provide her wealth. Although technically a part of the noble's retinue, most marines actually directly serve the king. Each noble sends a stipend to the king each year for a number of marines based on the wealth of their holdings. The king then hires the marines directly, using any excess funds to build up the small royal navy.

The marines of Argos represent its only real native professional force. These soldiers train in both seamanship and the ways of war, focusing primarily on boarding actions and similar activities. Many were pirates

at one point or another in their careers, though most would rather not admit to such wrongdoing.

When a merchant wishes to host a unit of marines on his ship he must petition the king for the honour. While the marines stay with their host he becomes responsible for their upkeep, including their salaries. Despite this cost, though, most captains vie for the honour: few pirate crews will willingly attack a ship carrying a marine unit.

Traditionally, when a marine dies in battle the king and the merchant who requested his service must both pay one year's salary to his widow or children. This payment exonerates the two of any further liability for or to the marine's family, even in cases where the marine's contract promises some further compensation.

Allegiances: The soldiers in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: Unit Commander, local lord, Argos.

Identification: A yellow ship in full sail on an azure field, complete with flags, pennons and oars all in action. A silver border represents the wealth of the sea flooding into Argos.

Numbers: Usually one unit is hired per merchant ship. Argos can quickly muster 30 of these units; others must arrive from the sea, taking 1d4 weeks for 100 more units to arrive.

MC: 9

Equipment: Cutlass, quilted jerkin, steel cap

Shemite Mercenaries (Professional)

Every city in Argos has between 500 and 1000 mercenaries from the Meadow Cities in its walls. These mercenaries serve as guards, protectors of the peace and watchmen. They will die for their employers, but not in a foolish cause.

Allegiances: Mercenaries typically hold an allegiance to whichever lord is paying them and their unit commander.

Identification: Shemite mercenaries utilise symbols representing the Shemite city they originated from. Green and gold fields are common in Shemite heraldry, representing the dual nature of Shem: the meadows and the desert.

Numbers: Five to 10 units can be rallied in each city of Argos.

MC: 10

Equipment: Shemite mercenaries wear scale corselets, cylindrical helmets and wield hawk-pommel broadswords. The material the hawk pommel is made of displays the prowess of the mercenary. A bronze hawk indicates 20

slayings in war, while a silver hawk shows 50 confirmed kills. A mercenary with over a hundred deaths to his blade is given a gold hawk pommel.

ARMIES OF THE BORDER KINGDOM

The harsh conditions of the Border Kingdom do not lend themselves to the organisation of armies. Indeed, no one has enough central authority to truly command such a force even if it could be assembled. Instead, the forces of the Border Kingdom work in small independent armies. When not engaged with the Cimmerian raiding parties, these little armies turn on one another.

Each baron can field a force composed of some mixture of the following troops.

Border Kingdom Archers (Professional)

Archers in the Border Kingdom are cut of much the same cloth as their infantry counterparts. They are, however, slightly more dextrous. They stand back from the fighting and are likely to run if pressed at all.

Allegiances: Border Kingdom archers have allegiances to their barons and officers.

Identification: This varies with each individual lord and baron.

Numbers: A baron can typically field between one and three units of archers. Of these, there is a 50% chance that only one has sufficient arrows to maintain a sustained combat (more than 5 attacks, one round or narrative combat).

MC: 9

Equipment: The soldiers in these units typically carry hunting bows and broadswords. They wear mail hauberks and steep caps for protection.

Border Kingdom Infantry (Professional)

Border Kingdom Infantry units are primarily composed of thugs and criminals given weapons and armour by the local lords. In return for the right to bully others these men throw in with their leader's fate. Of course, should things turn against their current master they can always leave for a more suitable place.

Allegiances: Border Kingdom infantrymen have allegiances to their barons and officers.

Identification: This varies with each individual lord and baron.

Numbers: Each baron can muster between one and five units of infantry.

MC: 9

Equipment: These men wear mail hauberks and steel caps. They carry large shields and well-made spears.

Border Kingdom Noble's Retinue (Professional)

Each baron maintains a retinue of armoured men. He binds them to his side by fearsome oaths and promises of riches. These men, selected from among the very best the Border Kingdom has to offer, fill the same role as the noble knights of other Hyborian realms.

Allegiances: Border Kingdom archers have allegiances to their barons and officers.

Identification: This varies with each individual lord and baron.

Numbers: Each baron can muster a single unit for his retinue.

MC: 10

Equipment: Each fighter wears a mail shirt under a scale hauberk and a great helm. They carry heavy lances, large shields and broadswords into battle.

ARMIES OF BRYTHUNIA

Like the 'armies' of Corinthia and the Border Kingdom, the armies of Brythunia suffer from a lack of central organisation and logistical support. Each petty king maintains his own garrison of troops. If another king asks for help he might, or might not, receive it. Even if he did, the 'help' might never leave.

Without a strong central organisation, the armies of Brythunia cannot stand against the Turanian horde. They generally allow the nomads to sweep by rather than be ridden down. They might defend their cities if pushed to do so, but would more likely abandon them after a brief exchange.

Brythunia sports pikemen and great sword wielding nobles of Hyborian stock. These doughty fighters stay in their taverns, only coming out when called to battle.

Brythunian Archers (Conscript)

Brythunia draws her archers from those hearty men who live on the borders. There, men use their skill with the hunting bow to survive as well as fight. They bring a high level of precision to war

archery, though not enough to truly turn the tide against the horde. These archers will usually be stationed in one of the small garrison forts dotting the countryside.

Allegiances: Border Kingdom archers have allegiances to their various kings and military officers or to the unit itself.

Identification: This varies with each individual lord and baron. Most include a white horse in their coat-of-arms somewhere. Red and white are the most common colours used in Brythunian heraldry.

Numbers: Each king can field between three and six units of archers.

MC: 8

Equipment: These archers are equipped with leather jerkins, steel caps and hunting bows. They use short swords in close combat.

Brythunia Noble's Retinue

Each king maintains a well-armed and armoured cavalry unit capable of defending his person. This unit consists of his petty nobles, their sons, and various soldiers of fortune that catch the king's fancy. They have free reign to do as they please on the king's demesne, so long they come when called to battle.

Allegiances: The soldiers in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: Unit Commander, Brythunia, the king.

Identification: This varies with each individual lord and baron. Most include a white horse in their coat-of-arms somewhere. Red and white are the most common colours used in Brythunian heraldry.

Numbers: Each king can muster one or two units of his retinue.

MC: 10

Equipment: These soldiers generally wear mail hauberts under breastplates and great helms. When mounted they fight with heavy lances and large shields. When unhorsed, they fall back on their greatswords.

Brythunia Pikemen (Professional)

Brythunia infantry study the art of the pike. Their commanders hope that the weapon's extreme length will help to fend off cavalry charges.

Unfortunately the fighters would have to be far better trained than they are to withstand the odds arrayed against them.

Most of these soldiers serve in city garrisons. They earn extra coin either as watchmen or as 'protectors' to the local merchants. When called to duty it can take them up to an hour to muster a single unit.

Allegiances: The soldiers in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: Unit Commander, Brythunia, the king.

Identification: This varies with each individual lord and baron. Most include a white horse in their coat-of-arms somewhere. Red and white are the most common colours used in Brythunian heraldry.

Numbers: A king can call up five to seven units of pikemen.

MC: 9

Equipment: The soldiers in these units wear a mail shirt under a breastplate. They carry both a pike and a short sword for close in fighting.

ARMIES OF CIMMERIA

Strictly speaking the land of Cimmeria does not have an army. In fact, they lack most of the logistical or leadership tools needed to field a directed force for more than a few weeks. However, what they lack in sophistication they make up for in bloody-minded toughness. Barbarian hordes out of Cimmeria constantly threaten the more civilised lands to the south. These hordes are more raiders than invading armies; they have no intention of settling down. They appear, put a handful of villages to the sword and then retreat back into their misty mountains.

In their own lands the Cimmerians maintain a large number of caches full of arms and armour. Each village maintains at least two: one close to the centre of town and one located some distance away. If the town comes under attack the barbarians arm themselves from the cache contained within their own walls. If it falls they retreat to the second cache, rearm and begin the attack anew.

The raiding parties of a Cimmerian 'army' will contain the following units:

Band of Brothers (Professional)

From time to time barbarian and nomad cultures produce a 'band of brothers'. These warriors typically owe fealty to a common chieftain or cause. The actions that develop their strength and renown also deepen the friendship binding them together. In time they become like brothers, willing to die for one another without a moment's hesitation. This bond gives them a fearsome fighting spirit capable of unmanning those who dwell behind stone walls.

Allegiances: The warriors in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: Unit Commander, tribe, Cimmeria.

Identification: Cimmerian tribes each have their own unique method of identification which varies from tribe to tribe. Those of the Tunog tribe, for example, paint their faces in war and the those of the Galla tribe wear their hair in topknots and tattoo their bodies.

Numbers: Cimmeria will have anywhere from one to five bands of brothers active at any given time. Most actively dislike one another. No more than one will be on a given battlefield.

MC: 10

Equipment: These battle-hardened barbarians wear scale hauberks and wield broadswords. They do not bother with shields, although some will wield a weapon in their off-hand.

Special: A band of brothers never suffers any MC penalty for being outnumbered.

Cimmerian Horde (Conscript)

Every Cimmerian, man or woman, is an able fighter. The men organise themselves into large raiding parties, represented by horde units that sweep down onto the 'soft' Hyborean civilisations at random intervals. These attacks usually amount to little more than a nuisance for the armoured Hyborean troops. However, in time Nordheim will push the Cimmerians further to the south, causing the iron wall of Hyborean civilisation to finally fall.



Allegiances: The warriors in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: Unit Commander, tribe, Cimmeria.

Identification: Cimmerian tribes each have their own unique method of identification which varies from tribe to tribe. Those of the Tunog tribe, for example, paint their faces in war and the those of the Galla tribe wear their hair in topknots and tattoo their bodies.

Numbers: A horde contains between five and 20 horde units.

MC: 9

Equipment: A typical member of a Cimmerian horde wears a leather jerkin and steel cap. He wields a broadsword for close fighting work and a hunting bow to shoot down running enemies.

Special: A Cimmerian horde never suffers any MC penalty for being outnumbered.

ARMIES OF CORINTHIA

Like Brythunia, Corinthia is a mass of city-states. Unlike its neighbour, Corinthia has a complex social system designed to allow it to field an army worthy of the name. This army stands ready to defend the land against the Turanian horde, Nemedian aggression or even more exotic threats.

The Corinthian army is composed of the following units.

Corinthian Cavalry (Professional)

Corinthian cavalry is part of the professional military service. Many noble's sons, bored with life as merchant princes, take a tour of duty among these soldiers. However, the main fighting force is composed of professional men who have little patience with lollygaggers and fools. They have to constantly face the superb riders in the Turanian horde, any foolishness will get not only the fool, but all of his companions killed.

Most are stationed on the northern border, though a handful resides along the border with Ophir.

Allegiances: The warriors in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: Unit Commander, local lord, Corinthia.

Identification: Corinthian cavalry display the heraldry appropriate to the city-state they are serving. Most Corinthian heraldry uses a green field on the bottom half and a gold field on the top half to represent the green hills and golden skies of Corinthia. Triple turreted castles often figure into Corinthian heraldry

as well, a hold-over from ancient times when a stronger king ruled Corinthia.

Numbers: The army has 25 units of cavalry available.

MC: 11

Equipment: Corinthian cavalry wears the same heavy mail hauberk and breastplate combination as the infantry. They ride strong, heavily armoured horses. Rather than try to ride around their lightly armoured opponents the Corinthian's prefer to simply ride through them.

Corinthian Infantry (Professionals)

The regular Corinthian infantry comes from levies imposed on each city-state. They are citizen soldiers rather than career military. Most will serve a three-year stint then return to their original lives.

This system does two things. One, it insures the Corinthian army has a steady supply of youthful soldiers with few attachments to the local community. Two, it creates a supply of trained fighters in each city-state. Should the main body of the Corinthian army fall in battle a new supply of infantry can be called up from those recently out of service.

Allegiances: The warriors in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: Unit Commander, local city state, Corinthia.

Identification: Corinthian infantry display the heraldry appropriate to the city-state they are serving. Most Corinthian heraldry uses a green field on the bottom half and a gold field on the top half to represent the green hills and golden skies of Corinthia. Triple turreted castles often figure into Corinthian heraldry as well, a hold-over from ancient times when a stronger king ruled Corinthia.

Numbers: The army has 50 units of infantry available at any one time. A single city-state can call up an additional five units from its citizens given one month's notice.

MC: 11

Equipment: These soldiers use light lances and large shields in battle. They use the lances as spears, setting them against the massed charge of the Turanian horde. After the first few charges they cast the lances aside to engage in brutal blade-to-blade combat. The wealth of Corinthia supplies each soldier with a Mail hauberk and breastplate as well as a steel helm.

Hoplites (Professional)

Not all of the infantrymen called into service choose to resign their position when their term

comes to an end. These men move on to the 'hoplites', a group of professional soldiers who train new recruits and form the backbone of the Corinthian army. They are veteran troops, well skilled in the ways of war.

Allegiances: The warriors in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: Unit Commander, local city state, Corinthia.

Identification: Corinthian infantry display the heraldry appropriate to the city-state they are serving. Most Corinthian heraldry uses a green field on the bottom half and a gold field on the top half to represent the green hills and golden skies of Corinthia. Triple turreted castles often figure into Corinthian heraldry as well, a hold-over from ancient times when a stronger king ruled Corinthia.

Numbers: The army has 10 units of hoplites available at any given time.

MC: 12

Equipment: These soldiers use light lances and large shields in battle. They use the lances as spears, setting them against the massed charge of the Turanian horde. After the first few charges they cast the lances aside to engage in brutal blade-to-blade combat. The wealth of Corinthia supplies each soldier with a Mail hauberk and breastplate as well as a steel helm.

Shemite Mercenaries (Professional)

Rather than attempt to train up their own archers, the kings of Corinthia employ the highly skilled Shemite mercenaries. These mercenaries man the border forts and garrison the major cities.

Allegiances: Mercenaries typically hold an allegiance to whichever lord is paying them and their unit commander.

Identification: Shemite mercenaries utilise symbols representing the Shemite city they originated from. Green and gold fields are common in Shemite heraldry, representing the dual nature of Shem: the meadows and the desert.

Numbers: They keep 10 units of Shemite mercenaries in the country at all times.

MC: 10

Equipment: Shemite mercenaries wear scale corselets, cylindrical helmets and wield hawk-pommel broadswords. The material the hawk pommel is made of displays the prowess of the mercenary. A bronze hawk indicates 20 slayings in war, while a silver hawk shows 50 confirmed kills. A mercenary with over 100 deaths to his blade is given a gold hawk pommel.

ARMIES OF GHULISTAN

Ghulistan does not have an organised army. Instead, each village mounts its own fighting and raiding force. Their primary interest is raiding one another. Occasionally someone will come along, organise them into a good size horde and send them out into Vendhya to gather gold and women.

Most Ghulistan fighters come in the following unit:

Village Fighters (Conscripts)

The men of each village form a single, relatively cohesive fighting unit. The village 'unit' only fights as a whole when a headsmen betrays them or they come under direct attack.

Allegiances: Ghulistan fighters hold an allegiance to their headmen and to their villages and people.

Identification: Identification varies by tribe. Usually only those familiar with the various tribes of Ghulistan can differentiate one unit from another.

Numbers: One unit per village.

MC: 7

Equipment: They wear quilted armour and steel helmets. Most are armed with hunting bows and scimitars, though a few carry broadswords instead.

ARMIES OF HYPERBOREA

Hyperborea was once of land of pure Hyborian blood. Years of conflict with the Aesir of Nordheim, as well as raiding into the south for Zamoran and Hyrkanian women, weakened that noble heritage. However, they still retain vestiges of their former glory in the form of true Hyborian cavalry. The rest of their army, like their land, has fallen under the influence of foreign customs.

Hyperborean Archers (Conscripts)

Hyperborean archers lack the expertise of Bossonian or Shemite archers, but they make up for it with bloody-minded determination. Their strategy is to fill the air with their ill-made arrows. For everyone that hits, five fall short of the mark. When the battle finally comes to an end the archers do double duty as cut-throats.

Allegiances: The warriors in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: Unit Commander, local Hyperborean overlord, home village.

Identification: These archers use the emblems of their individual overlords but virtually all use the White Hand emblem as a central device.

Numbers: A Hyperborean lord can call up one or two archer units on short notice.

MC: 10

Equipment: Hyperborean archers wear mail shirts with steel caps. They wield hunting bows and use broadswords when their opponents close.

Hyperborean Infantry (Conscripts)

Hyperborean infantry training, tactics and equipment provide a military scholar with the clearest indication of Hyperborean degeneracy. Although they are racially Hyborian, they train in the traditional Nordheim arts of swordplay and sword and shield combat.

Allegiances: The warriors in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: Unit Commander, local Hyperborean overlord, home village.

Identification: These soldiers use the emblems of their individual overlords but virtually all use the White Hand emblem as a central device in some manner.

Numbers: A Hyperborean lord can call up a single unit of trained infantry. He can also call up a unit of militia, as described on pg. 45.

MC: 10

Equipment: They also wear scale hauberks fashioned in the northern manner. These hauberks do not provide the protection of more traditional Hyborian armours, but are cheaper to manufacture.

Veteran Hyperborean Knights (Professional)

Hyperborea's constant battles and raids into other lands forged her lords into a relatively competent fighting force. Although they lack the discipline of trained soldiers they never the less bring tactical power to most fights. They will never be a serious threat to the Hyborian nations that sprang from their bloodline, though they can fight off nomads and similar vagabonds.

Allegiances: The warriors in these units generally hold allegiance with at least one of the following: Unit Commander, local Hyperborean overlord, the White Hand.

Identification: These soldiers use the emblems of their individual overlords but virtually all use the White Hand emblem as a central device in some manner.

Numbers: A Hyperborean lord can call up a single unit of knights.

MC: 11

Equipment: Hyperborea's knights wear mail shirts under scale hauberks, topped with great helms of Nordheimer or Hyborian style. They carry heavy lances into battle while crouching behind traditional teardrop shields. When their lances break they draw heavy Nordheimer broadswords for close combat.

ARMIES OF HYRKANIA

Like most nomadic or barbaric cultures Hyrkania does not have a standing army. Instead, each man is responsible for raiding and self-defence. This gives a charismatic leader an almost overwhelming number of troops. Of course, with their level of logistical and strategic control they need overwhelming numbers.

Hyrkanian forces come in one of two varieties: hordes and raiders. A horde is a vast number of nomads, their families and all of their possessions. Raiders are small, fast moving groups composed of no more than two or three tribes. Hordes can devastate entire regions though force of numbers. Raiders tend to be more selective, taking slaves or goods then returning to their ancestral homes.

Both force configurations contain the following units.

Nomads (Conscripts)

Hyrkanian nomads are highly skilled riders, talented horse archers and lousy soldiers. They like to strike hard and fast, with overwhelming numbers. If they cannot, or if they must engage in a prolonged siege, they will usually just ride around their enemy looking for a softer target.

When they do engage the nomads use their bows to soften up the target. Once they empty their quivers the nomads gather together into a chaotic mass and charge. Each warrior strikes out for his own glory, protecting his comrades only if the situation presents itself.

Allegiances: Tribal *kagan* (commanders), tribal chiefs and squad leaders are typical allegiances held by the nomads.

Identification: Clothing and saddle designs are typical means of identifying

various units from other units. Some can be identified by horse breed.

Numbers: A raiding party consists of one to three units of nomads. A horde may have as many as one thousand units.

MC: 8

Equipment: Each nomad carries a quiver with 30 arrows, a scimitar and a good Hyrkanian bow. They wear mail shirts and have steel caps under their turbans.

Prince's Guard (Professionals)

A prince's guard consists of a veteran group of warriors who dedicate themselves to protecting a noble or chieftain. They have the same equipment as their nomad brothers but are somewhat more skilled in the arts of battle. They try to stay together during battles, but the lure of individual glory will often pull one or more of them away from the core group.

Allegiances: Tribal *kagan* (commanders), tribal chiefs and nobles and squad leaders are typical allegiances held by the guards.

Identification: Clothing and saddle designs are typical means of identifying various units from other units. Some can be identified by horse breed.

Numbers: A raiding party has a 20% chance of having a single prince's guard unit. A horde will have 1d6 prince's guard units per 30 units.

MC: 9

Equipment: Each nomad carries a quiver with 30 arrows, a scimitar and a good Hyrkanian bow. They wear mail shirts and have steel caps under their turbans.

ARMIES OF IRANISTAN

Iranistan does not have the central organisation required to sustain a national army. The king cannot levy troops from his chiefs, while the chiefs do not have sufficient resources to manage more than a handful of troops. However, like the city-states of Corinthia, the tribes do work together for their mutual protection.

They can raise a poorly coordinated army consisting



mostly of nomads and raiders, with a small backbone of professional soldiers drawn from the city garrisons.

An Iranistani army contains the following units.

King's Slingers, The (Professionals)

The king of Iranistan does have a handful of professional units at his disposal. These units called the King's Slingers, practice the honourable art of knocking targets off of their horses with sling-stones. Though not as powerful as a hunting bow, the sling has the advantage of having a nearly unlimited supply of ammunition.

Allegiances: Virtually all Iranistani have an allegiance to their family. Other allegiances include kin, clan and the king.

Identification: Iranistani units are identified by the embroidery on their clothing and headdresses, which are worn over armour and helms. Many Iranistani incorporate the peacock in its pride into their emblems.

Numbers: The king always has five units of slingers available on immediate notice. He could raise another unit from the retired slingers, though these aged warriors would have a -1 penalty to their Parry Defence Value and sling damage.

MC: 9

Equipment: These units wield slings and scimitars. They wear mail hauberks and steel caps. Most can ride, but do not choose to do so in combat.

Tribal Cavalry (Conscripts)

The tribes of Iranistan require each male of adult age to maintain a good bow, a sharp scimitar and a fast horse. When war beckons the men are expected to put all three to the test. Those that survive are awarded such honours as the chief can provide. The weapons and women of those that fall are passed on to the next generation.

Allegiances: Virtually all Iranistani have an allegiance to their family. Other allegiances include kin, clan and the king.

Identification: Iranistani units are identified by the embroidery on their clothing and headdresses, which are worn over armour and helms.

Numbers: Each village can mount one to two units of these disorganised warriors. If Iranistan were to come under concerted attack it would take weeks, if not months, to gather the 200 or so units within the country's borders.

MC: 8

Equipment: These men carry hunting bow, a quiver with 30 arrows and a scimitar. The village cavalry wear leather jerkins and steel caps.

ARMIES OF KHAURAN

Khauran is one of perhaps dozens of small kingdoms that broke off from Koth. Her military forces are of Kothic origin, use Kothic tactics and make up a rather large portion of the national budget. This small kingdom is keenly aware of the dangers that face it, with larger and somewhat aggressive neighbours on every border.

The Khauran army contains the following units.

Kothian Infantry (Professionals)

Kothian infantry trains in the use of shield and broadsword rather than following the Aquilonian model of pikemen. This makes them somewhat ineffective against cavalry units, so they must rely on their own cavalry for protection. They are solid hand-to-hand fighters, highly skilled with their weapons and well equipped.

When not fighting for the Queen, these units tend to work in garrisons along the border or in the city.

Allegiances: Queen of Khauran, unit commanders, the unit itself.

Identification: Khauranian heraldry features a fruit tree proper on a verdant base to symbolise the agricultural prosperity of the kingdom.

Numbers: The queen can command 10 units of infantry. Unless engaged on another front these units are immediately available.

MC: 12

Equipment: Most wear mail hauberks and steel caps. They carry broadswords, large shields and a variety of back-up weapons into battle.

Kothian Knights (Professionals)

Kothian cavalry consists of professional soldiers along with a smattering of lifetime mercenaries. They are lead by nobles and mercenary captains.

In typical Hyborian fashion, Kothian knights make up the primary tactical force of their army. From their point of view, the infantry exists only to pin down the opponent long enough for the knights to ride over them. This attitude does little to endear the knights to either their native troops or the various mercenary groups who work for the Queen.

Allegiances: Queen of Khauran, the nobility of Khauran, unit commanders.

Identification: Khauranian heraldry features a fruit tree proper on a verdant base to symbolise the agricultural prosperity of the kingdom. The knight's individual family crest is also displayed.

Numbers: The queen can command up to 10 units of knights. These units are immediately available unless otherwise engaged.

MC: 12

Equipment: Each member of the cavalry wears plate armour and a visored helm. They carry shields, arming swords, heavy lances and large shields into battle.

ARMIES OF KHITAI

Khitai's mighty armies rarely interact with the Hyborian Age world. Instead they sit on the empire's borders, waiting for another Hyrkanian invasion. Those not poised to repulse the nomad horde patrol the country's interior, relentlessly collecting taxes and suppressing anyone who would stand against the God Emperor.

Khitai units are uniformly pressed into service. They have very low morale. Assume all Khitai receive a -1 penalty to any morale bonus they receive due to battlefield circumstances. However, they will not break any more often than other troops. This is not due to any innate courage on their part. Instead, the emperor has declared that the family of any man running from battle will be publicly humiliated, then hung.

The Khitai army has the following units.

Khitan Archers (Conscripts)

Khitai maintains a vast horde of barely trained archers. These men use bows better suited for hunting than the rage of war. These men are recruited from the peasant class, thrust into armour and forbidden to see their families or return to their homes for four years. During this time they eke out a miserable existence on the frontier, stopping only occasionally to fight against highly skilled nomads.

Khitai archers use their bows until the opponent closes. Then they sling their shields from their backs and set to with broadswords.

Allegiances: Family, honour, unit commanders.

Identification: The armies of Khitai use colourful flags to indicate the locations of units. Individual conscripts do not wear distinguishing identification.

Numbers: The emperor can command up to 1000 units of archers. Only 100 of these units is available for immediate deployment.

MC: 7

Equipment: The average Khitan archer carries a hunting bow, 20 arrows, a broadsword and a large shield strapped on his back. He wears a quilted jacket stuffed with raw silk and a steel cap on his head. Left to his own volition he would run from a pitched battle.

Khitan Cavalry (Professionals)

These poorly equipped and trained soldiers try to make up in numbers what they lack in skill. Unfortunately they face an equally populous enemy. Cavalry units usually take casualties on the order of three soldiers for every nomad put down. This does nothing for their morale, which might be the lowest of any cohesive fighting force in the Hyborian Age.

Allegiances: The royal family of Khitai, unit commanders, family.

Identification: The armies of Khitai use colourful flags to indicate the locations of units. Unit commanders have a similar flag attached to their armour, jutting up over the helmet.

Numbers: The emperor can call up 1000 units if he wishes to do so. Of these, only 100 are available for immediate use.

MC: 8

Equipment: Khitai cavalry use broadswords and large shields on the field of battle. They wear high-collared embroidered coats with raw silk padding and steel caps.

Khitan Charioteers (Professionals)

Despite occasional references to them, there are in fact no 'chariot' units in the armies of Khitai. Chariots are used extensively as transportation and archery platforms for nobles but do not have a significant presence on the modern battlefield.

Khitai may have once sported chariot units. However, the presence of highly mobile cavalry reduced them to uselessness many generations ago.

Allegiances: The royal family of Khitai, unit commanders, family.

Identification: The armies of Khitai use colourful flags to indicate the locations of units. Unit commanders have a similar flag attached to their armour, jutting up over the helmet.

Numbers: None currently, except perhaps as honour guards in parades out of tradition.

MC: 8

Equipment: Chariot, lance, hunting bow

Khitan Infantry (Conscripts)

If the Khitan archers are unhappy with their lot, then the infantry could only be described as miserable. They wear cheap embroidered coats in battle, get inadequate rations and are forbidden upon pain of torture from returning to their homes. Most receive only minimal training with their spears before being forced to go into battle for the first time. If they survive, their skills are deemed sufficient for the next round of combat.

Allegiances: Family, honour, unit commanders.

Identification: The armies of Khitai use colourful flags to indicate the locations of units. Individual conscripts do not wear distinguishing identification.

Numbers: The emperor can command up to 1000 units of infantry. Only 100 of these units are immediately available.

MC: 6

Equipment: Khitan infantry carry short spears and large wicker shields, usually backed with silk lining to help stop arrows. These shields generally do not last the length of a battle. After the first five rounds of melee combat, or the first round of narrative combat, assume the shields are destroyed in the fighting.

Veteran Khitan Engineers (Professionals)

The Khitai engineers are the only military unit to receive significant funds from the emperor's court. They are a highly skilled, dedicated group of scholars (kept so by the threats of their government) who use remarkable war machines to help turn the tide of battle. Most are also skilled alchemists willing to create various kinds of fire weapons for their personal defence.

Allegiances: Imperial family, Khitain nobility, unit commanders.

Identification: The armies of Khitai use colourful flags to indicate the locations of units. Individual engineers do not wear distinguishing identification beyond the embroidery on their costumes.

Numbers: The emperor has 20 units of engineers with their attendant war machines.

MC: 11

Equipment: Engineers wear high-collared red coats with black embroidery and peaked black caps. They carry staves for personal defence, but are usually busy loading something lethal into a new machine to try out on the enemy.

ARMIES OF KHORAJA

Khoraja is a Kothic kingdom carved out of territory once belonging to Shem. Unlike Khauran, the founders of Khoraja enlisted the assistance of the local population. This gives them an exceptionally flexible military, combining Shemite nomad archers with traditional Kothic spearmen and highly trained Kothic knights.

The armies of Khoraja contain the following units:

Hill Cavalry (Conscripts)

The hill cavalry of Khoraja are Shemite nomads who work for the kingdom in return for gold. They are relatively loyal and willing fight for the cause if need arises. However, they will not fight a sustained war for anyone, so cannot be counted on to stem a large invasion.

Allegiances: Mercenaries typically hold an allegiance to whichever lord is paying them and their unit commander.

Identification: Shemite mercenaries utilise symbols representing the Shemite city they originated from. Green and gold fields are common in Shemite heraldry, representing the dual nature of Shem: the meadows and the desert.

Numbers: Khoraja's king can command up to 25 units of hill cavalry. Of these, perhaps 10 are immediately available.

MC: 8

Equipment: The hill cavalry wear mail hauberks topped with steel helms. They carry Shemite bow, a quiver of 20 arrows, and scimitars into battle.

Khorajan Knights (Professionals)

Khoraja has refined the traditions of Kothian knighthood to a high degree. Her noble soldiers armoured in plate and wearing visored helms, can stand shoulder to shoulder with the Poitainians in terms of skill and tenacity. Unfortunately they are a small part of the greater Khorajan army.

Like most Hyborian nations Khoraja relies on their heavy cavalry to carry the day on the field of battle. The king traditionally saves his knights for a final charge, though he may order this 'final assault' very early in the battle if things seem to be going against him.

Allegiances: Khorajan nobility, unit commanders, Khoraja.

Identification: A yellow field divided by the emblem of a towered wall with three dots beneath identifies the Khorajan knight, a device showing Khoraja's role as a gateway between the east and west. Individual units may add their own crest to the design.

Numbers: The king can command up to 10 units of knights. These knights are always available unless otherwise engaged.

MC: 10

Equipment: Each knight carries a heavy lance, a large shield and a broadsword.

Palace Guard (Professionals)

The palace guard of Khoraja are a drinking, fun-loving lot that earn their keep whenever the city turns against its ruler. These heavy-handed men can, almost without support, suppress restless citizens with only a minimum of deaths. They also form the king's personal guard when he personally takes the field.

Unlike most Hyborian elite guards, the palace guards do not ride horses. Instead, they wield massive bardiches for both intimidation and awe-inspiring damage. Just the presence of these breastplate wearing soldiers has turned more than one nomad incursion back into the sandy desert without a blow being struck.

Allegiances: Khorajan nobility, unit commanders, Khoraja.

Identification: A yellow field divided by the emblem of a towered wall with three dots beneath identifies the Khorajan Knight, a device showing Khoraja's role as a gateway between the east and west.

Numbers: The king commands one unit of palace guards. They are always with him.

MC: 9

Equipment: Each member of the palace guard carries a bardiche, an arming sword and wears an ornately lacquered breastplate and steel cap.

Veteran Spearmen (Professionals)

Before Koth tried to adopt the Aquilonian practice of using pikes they trained effective spearmen. The Khorajan spearmen come from this original tradition, and to some extent resent the sudden appearance of pikemen in their ancestral homeland.

Allegiances: Khorajan nobility, unit commanders, Khoraja.

Identification: A yellow field divided by the emblem of a towered wall with three dots beneath identifies the Khorajan knight, a device showing Khoraja's role as a gateway between the east and west. Individual units may add their own crest to the design.

Numbers: The king commands three full units of veteran spearmen. These units are always available unless otherwise engaged.

MC: 10

Equipment: These skilled spearmen wield war spears and daggers. They wear quilted jerkins topped with steel caps.

ARMIES OF KOTH

Koth is a major regional power, second only to the warring giants of Aquilonia and Nemedra. They exert considerable influence over Shem, Argos, Ophir and Zamora, but consistently fail to achieve imperial status. Their armies follow the ancient Hyborian model, with strong heavy cavalry and weaker footmen. They recently began the process of training pikemen to replace their traditional spear carrying infantry.

Kothian Knights (Professional)

Kothian knights present the model of military organisation for most of the region. Extremely well equipped, the knights spend the majority of their time in professional training. The expense of fielding a single knight is enormous; fortunately, the impact of a massed charge more than makes up for it.

Allegiances: Koth, King Balardus, Unit Commander, rebel baron.

Identification: Livery embossed with the golden helmet of Koth.

Numbers: Koth's king can call up 10 units of knights. These units available at any time unless they are otherwise engaged.

MC: 11

Equipment: Kothian knights wear plate topped with visored helms. They carry large shields, heavy lances and arming swords into combat.

Kothian Pikemen (Professional)

Structurally the equivalent of Aquilonia's men-at-arms, the Kothian pikemen are a relatively new organisation in the ancient Kothian army. They are slowly replacing the spearmen, who once dominated the battlefield. This transition has not come without some tension. Older military men are less willing to fight with the new pikemen, leaving them with young untried leaders or mercenary captains.

Allegiances: Koth, King Balardus, Unit Commander.

Identification: Livery embossed with the golden helmet of Koth.

Numbers: Koth's king can call up six units of pikemen. Of these, two are available for immediate deployment. The other four work in garrisons or patrol the vast meadowlands.

MC: 10

Equipment: Koth cannot yet afford to equip its pikemen with heavy armour. Instead, they must make do with leather jerkins and steel caps. In addition to their pike they carry an arming sword as a back-up weapon.

Royal Cavalry (Professional)

The Royal Cavalry contains the greatest warriors in all of Koth. They have the best training, the heaviest weapons and the most sophisticated logistical support available. Their members are justifiably proud of their reputation as being some of the most skilled knights in existence. Of course, the Poitainians disagree with this assessment, but the distance separating the two elite forces means that they may never get a chance to settle their differences.

Allegiances: Koth, King Balardus, Unit Commander.

Identification: Livery embossed with the golden helmet of Koth.

Numbers: Koth's king can call up five units of royal cavalry. These units available at any time unless they are otherwise engaged.

MC: 12

Equipment: Each member of the Royal guard wears plate armour and a great helm. They carry heavy lances, broadswords, and large shields into battle.

Shemite Mercenaries (Professional)

These mercenaries provide the Kothian army with light infantry and mobile archery support.

Allegiances: Mercenaries typically hold an allegiance to whichever lord is paying them and their unit commander.

Identification: Shemite mercenaries utilise symbols representing the Shemite city they originated from. Green and gold fields are common in Shemite heraldry, representing the dual nature of Shem: the meadows and the desert.

Numbers: Koth employs 15 units of Shemite Mercenaries.

MC: 10

Equipment: Each mercenary carries a quiver with 40 arrows and a good Shemite bow. They wear mail shirts and have steel caps under their turbans. Shemite mercenaries wield hawk-pommel scimitars. The material the hawk pommel is made of displays the prowess of the mercenary. A bronze hawk indicates 20 slayings in war, while a silver hawk shows 50 confirmed kills. A Shemite mercenary with over 100 deaths to his blade is given a gold hawk pommel.

Spahis (Professional)

The Spahis are men of Shemite descent who serve the crown of Koth in return for land. They serve for a period of five years. At the end of that time they receive a grant directly from the crown. This land is theirs so long as they draw breath, but will revert to the king's hands when they die. In effect the system creates a kind of bonded military service from the once-free Shemite nomads; in order to keep their family lands the first born son of each family must serve the king.

The Spahis are unarmoured, relying on speed and wit to survive in battle rather than heavy armour. They are mostly used as scouts, but make occasional suicide charges to displace the enemy in preparation for an onslaught by the Royal Cavalry.

Allegiances: Koth, King Balardus, Unit Commander, rebel baron.

Identification: Livery embossed with the golden helmet of Koth.

Numbers: Koth's king can call up 12 units of Spahis. These units available at any time unless they are otherwise engaged.

MC: 11

Equipment: Mounted on light warhorses, Spahis use brigandine, light lances, broadswords and shields.

Veteran Kothic Spearmen (Professional)

The Kothian army has no intention of training new spearmen, causing these ageing units a considerable amount of concern. However, they are also some of the most veteran units in the Kothian army. This makes them an invaluable resource on the battlefield, both as a heavy infantry unit and as a source of experience for the younger generation.

Allegiances: Koth, King Balardus, Unit Commander, rebel baron.

Identification: Livery embossed with the golden helmet of Koth.

Numbers: Koth's king can call up 10 units of veteran spearmen. Of these, five are available for immediate deployment. The other five work in garrisons or patrol the vast meadowlands.

MC: 11

Equipment: Kothian spearmen wear mail shirts topped with steel helms. They carry war spears with arming swords as a backup weapon.

ARMIES OF KUSH AND THE BLACK KINGDOMS

Kush, and indeed all of the Black Kingdoms of the south do not have what the Hyborians would think of as a standing army. Instead, they have warrior traditions similar to those of other barbarian nations. These traditions emphasise the right of each male to fight, and to kill, at the command of a chieftain. Each king also maintains a somewhat more professional 'palace' guard that forms the centre of his power. If the guard deserts the 'king' has only his own charisma to bully the common folk into submission.

Black Corsairs (Conscript)

The Black Corsairs range along the coasts of the Black Kingdoms. They inflict terrible punishment on the settlers, the livestock and the trade that keeps the area prosperous. However, some kings are willing to strike deals with them. Some bargain for their lives. Others hire the corsairs as mercenaries, troops to support them in whatever bid for power they wish to make.

The corsairs make uncertain allies. Although their knowledge of Shemish archery makes them very dangerous to the unarmoured barbarians of the south, they are also a very fickle lot. They will turn on their employers as quickly as they sign on for a stint as a mercenary.

Allegiances: Corsair captain, unit commander, whomever is paying them gold.

Identification: Varies widely. Tattooing, ritual scarring, feathers and other tokens are often used to identify one unit from another.

Numbers: A raiding party has a 20% chance of having a single prince's guard unit. A horde will have 1d6 prince's guard units per 30 units.

MC: 9

Equipment: Most Black Corsair crews are unarmoured. They carry large shields and hunting spears for melee combat.

They also use Shemite bows and quivers containing up to 60 arrows.

Southern Horde (Conscript)

Kushites, and the other men of the Black Kingdoms, gather into large hordes when their lands come under threat. These 'units' are undisciplined mobs that charge in whatever direction the chieftain points. They are excellent at dying, and almost as good at taking soldiers down into death with them. Much like other hordes they rely on strength of numbers and ferocious behaviour to win the day rather than strategy or tactics.

Allegiances: Tribal chief, shaman, unit commander, whomever is paying them.

Identification: Varies widely. Tattooing, ritual scarring, feathers and other tokens are often used to identify one unit from another.

Numbers: Each village can call up a unit of the Southern Horde. A kingdom like Kush or Punt can call up 15 units of the horde at a time without severely impacting their economic production. They could double that number by stripping their lands of all men of fighting age.

MC: 8

Equipment: Most Southern Hordes are unarmoured. They carry large shields and hunting spears for melee combat. They also use hunting bows and quivers containing up to 20 arrows.



Veteran Palace Guards (Professional)

These guards are generally just as corrupt and weak as their leaders. They may be good for bullying those who cannot defend themselves but would present little challenge to a skilled or disciplined fighting force.

Allegiances: Royalty, unit commanders, whomever pays them.

Identification: Varies widely. Tattooing, ritual scarring, feathers and other tokens are often used to identify one unit from another.

Numbers: Most village headsmen cannot muster a unit of palace guards. The kings of the great southern kingdoms can muster up to eight units of guards each.

MC: 11

Equipment: Members of the veteran place guard wear elaborate head-dresses, carry large shields and wield hunting spears in battle. Most wear the equivalent of quilted armour, although a few go without armour entirely.

ARMIES OF NEMEDIA

Nemedia is Aquilonia's chief rival for dominance during the Hyborian Age. Her armies constantly contend with those of her southern neighbour. Her pikemen, modelled after those of Gunderland, are rapidly helping to usher in the death of the traditional Hyborian military models. However, they still have not mastered the Gunderland pike and shield techniques that give Aquilonia such an advantage.

Nemedia also lags behind their nearest rival in the not so subtle art of military logistics. Her king cannot command absolute loyalty nor does he have the right to use Nemedia's noble's fortresses to house his own troops. Most of the time he has to either bring all of the central army's resources with him, stretching his supply lines dangerously thin, or threaten his own nobles with extensive violence in order to secure their co-operation.

Nemedian Adventurers (Professionals)

The Nemedian Adventurers are a class of soldiers unique to the Nemedian army. Individuals desiring to advance themselves, or those wishing to escape the sins of a prior lifestyle, may join the Adventurers without any questions asked. While they serve the crown no man may question them or bring them to accounting for their past crimes. When the Adventurer retires, the protection lifts and old sins come back to roost.

The Adventurers are both a standing military unit in the Nemedian army and a mercenary company engaged in battles around the world. The crown spends their lives like coppers,

as there are always more eager blades looking for a new start on life. A unit of Adventurers may be found anywhere a king has sufficient coin to hire them.

It is possible, if unlikely, for an Adventurer to distinguish himself enough to earn a royal pardon and some even manage to enter (or re-enter) the ranks of nobility though military service.

Allegiances: Nemedica, King Tarascus, unit commander, whomever pays their wages.

Identification: The scarlet dragon of Nemedica on a gold field.

Numbers: There are 45 active units of Adventurers. The king keeps 10 on hand at any given time. The remainder are either in training or engaged in mercenary contracts.

MC: 12

Equipment: Each Adventurer wears a grey mail hauberk and a steel cap. They all wield greatswords in battle. They are expected to know how to ride, but generally act as mounted infantry, riding into battle and then fighting on foot. They will charge with the knights if given an opportunity, but do not carry lances or other weapons suited to the task.

Nemedian Crossbowmen (Professionals)

Nemedian crossbowmen use powerful arbalests to pound the enemy's ranks. These weapons can inflict terrible damage on even heavily armoured knights. Unfortunately, they also have a considerably shorter range than the Bossonian longbows used by Aquilonian troops. As such, they are considered as much a liability as an asset on the battlefield. However, until the Nemedian kings can come up with a better replacement, the crossbowmen will continue to get royal support.

Allegiances: Nemedica, King Tarascus, unit commander, individual lords and ladies of Nemedica.

Identification: Scarlet dragon on a gold field if fighting for the king of Nemedica, otherwise they use the individual heraldry emblems of whichever lord they serve.

Numbers: Nemedica's king can call up 17 units of crossbowmen. Most of these are stationed on the Aquilonia border, but six are available for immediate deployment anywhere in the country.

MC: 12

Equipment: Crossbowmen wear leather jerkins and steel helms. Most carry a

buckler and poniard in addition to their arbalest and a quiver of 20 quarrels.

Nemedian Pikemen (Professionals)

Like Koth to the south, Nemedica is attempting to duplicate the success of Aquilonia's Gunderland pikemen. Though they have not yet reached that level of success they have trained sufficient qualities of pikemen to make Aquilonia's knights think twice about riding headlong into their formations.

Allegiances: Nemedica, King Tarascus, unit commander, individual lords and ladies of Nemedica.

Identification: Scarlet dragon on a gold field if fighting for the king of Nemedica, otherwise they use the individual heraldry emblems of whichever lord they serve.

Numbers: Nemedica's king can call up 60 units of pikemen. The majority of these units are stationed on the Aquilonia border.

MC: 11

Equipment: The king equips his pikemen with brigandine coats and steel caps. They also carry their signature pikes, as well as arming swords for close combat. If a man loses his arming sword he must replace it from his own funds.

Veteran Nemedian Knights (Professionals)

Much like the nobles of other Hyborian nations, the knights of Nemedica ride in the vanguard of her armies. Despite their boasts the Nemedian knights do not bring anything unusual to the battlefield in terms of skill or tactics. They are, however, heavily armed and armoured, which makes them difficult foes

Allegiances: Nemedica, King Tarascus, unit commander, individual lords and ladies of Nemedica.

Identification: Scarlet dragon on a gold field if fighting for the king of Nemedica, otherwise they use the individual heraldry emblems of whichever lord they serve or their own family crests and heraldry.

Numbers: Nemedica's king can call up 50 units of knights to his service. These knights are generally the retinues of powerful lords, and therefore come in groups of around 200 rather than the more typical Hyborian unit of 50 knights.

MC: 13

Equipment: These highly trained warriors wear full plate and great helms. They

carry heavy lances and arming swords along with their large shields.

ARMIES OF NORDHEIM

The barbaric warriors of Nordheim war mostly with one another, though they do raid across into Cimmerian and Hyperborean lands on a regular basis. Like most barbaric people they do not have a standing army; instead each man acts as both farmer and soldier as the need arises. They lack the resources to engage in an extended strategic war, but can manage fairly devastating raids against civilised peoples.

Nordheim armies come in two sorts: the northern horde and a band of brothers working together towards a common goal. Of the two, characters will encounter the northern hordes more often. They plague Hyperborea, Cimmeria and occasionally the Border Kingdom.

Northern Horde (Conscript)

The horde uses basic battlefield tactics: charges, surges and the occasional fall back to strike against the flanks. They are not trained in close formation fighting, so pikemen or other professional soldiers can usually hold them off almost indefinitely.

Allegiances: The mighty Nordheimer tend to pledge allegiance to particularly brave warriors of their villages, to kings who are both proud and honourable and to causes.

Identification: The Nordheimer have not developed a system of heraldry or unit identification. The Æsir usually have gold hair and those of Vanaheim tend to have red hair.

Numbers: Each Nordheim village can raise a unit of the northern horde if the need arises. These men come from both the village and the surrounding area.

MC: 9

Equipment: A typical member of the northern horde wears a horned helm and a leather jerkin. He has lashed boots and a broad bladed sword at his belt, next to it he slings a hatchet, often used as a throw weapon. Most carry a leather-wrapped round shield, with a thin ring of black iron wrapped around the edge.

Ring of Brothers (Professional)

The Nordheimer version of a band of brothers gathers around a single, charismatic leader who promises them fame and glory. They spend years working together, sharing every aspect of one another's lives. Many choose to forgo marriage rather than break their fellowship's bond with 'the weakness of children and women'.



In the north these elite groups usually war with one another. They occasionally strike south to gather goods from the southern lands, or to take up a mercenary contract far away from home.

Allegiances: A charismatic leader, their own ring, kings.

Identification: The Nordheimer have not developed a system of heraldry or unit identification. The Æsir usually have gold hair and those of Vanaheim tend to have red hair.

Numbers: Each Nordheim village can raise a unit of the northern horde if the need arises. These men come from both the village and the surrounding area.

MC: 11

Equipment: Each member of this ring of elite warriors wears a heavy scale hauberk and carries a battered large shield. His worn broadsword is a symbol of his honour; even if the blade breaks he keeps the hilt so his hands never have to grasp an unfamiliar surface.

ARMIES OF OPHIR

Ophir is a small, wealthy Hyborian country. Its king does not possess sufficient power to raise an army from the noble classes, so he hires in most of the country's standing military forces. However, in true Hyborian tradition the nobles maintain themselves as a heavily armoured fighting force. They will not fight for the king, but they will take to the field if one of their larger, stronger neighbours invades.

This disharmony between the nobles and their king cripples Ophir's ability to project force into the world stage. Unable to be a leader they have become a follower, serving the interests of Nemedica and Aquilonia in turn. Which master they serve depends on the relative strength of the two; whichever is in ascendance gains the dubious pleasure of their loyalty. This loyalty carries with it access to some of the richest mines in the world, a fact not lost on the great country's kings.

Mercenary Infantry (Professional)

Ophir's kings use her great wealth to employ an army of mercenary troops. These are usually Free Company units, hired on a seasonal contract.

Allegiances: King Ludovic, Ophir, whomever hires them.

Identification: Varies with each individual unit.

Numbers: Ophir usually has 20 units of Free Company infantry in the kingdom at any given time.

MC: 10

Equipment: Varies with the individual unit.

Ophirean Crossbowmen (Professional)

Ophiri crossbowmen train in the Nemedian fashion. They use powerful arbalests to disrupt the enemy ranks then sweep the reserves while the heavy cavalry does the majority of the work. Like their Nemedian counterparts they do not fare well in battle against the faster, longer ranged Bossonian longbows wielded by Aquilonian troops.

Allegiances: King Ludovic, Ophir, Unit Commander.

Identification: Multi-hued gemstones mounted on a golden crown on a scarlet field is the major theme displayed by Ophirean troops.

Numbers: Ophir's king can call up 20 units of crossbowmen. Since these soldiers form the backbone of his professional army, up to 10 of these units are available for immediate deployment. The rest are stationed in various towns or border forts.

MC: 10

Equipment: Crossbowmen wear quilted jerkins and steel helms. Most carry a buckler and an arming sword in addition to their arbalest and a quiver of 20 quarrels.

Veteran Ophirean Knights (Professional)

Ophir's nobles train, just as their fathers and their father's fathers did, in the art of mounted warfare. Unlike the more warlike areas to the north, most nobles regard this activity as a traditional pastime rather than a matter of life or death. Although this does not impair their abilities in terms of their fighting effectiveness, it does mean that they spend considerably less on their equipment.

Allegiances: King Ludovic, Ophir, Unit Commander.

Identification: A star-shaped emblem, usually on a scarlet field.

Numbers: Ophiri knights do not come when the king calls. Instead, they respond when and as they choose. The country can muster approximately 50 units of knights. Of these, only 10 will be available for out of border activities. The full 50 will respond within one week if the country suffers an invasion.

MC: 11

Equipment: The knights wear gilded mail hauberks topped with great plumed helms. They carry broadswords, heavy lances and large shields into battle.

ARMIES OF THE PICTISH WILDERNESS

The vast forests of the Pictish Wilderness conceal more than prehistoric beasts. It holds within its shrouded glens a barbaric force that will, one day, rise up to destroy the civilised world. For now, the faint forerunners of this rising wave batter against the walls of Aquilonia.

The Picts spend most of their time fighting among themselves. They will occasionally gather together a horde to fling against the Aquilonian border. This horde lacks logistical support or strategic co-ordination, but makes up for it in strength of numbers.

Pictish Horde (Conscript)

A Pictish horde unit represents all of the fighting men of a single village. They prefer to strike from stealth or from an unexpected direction rather than facing battle lines manned by men in armour.

Unlike most barbarian hordes the Picts place great value on military intelligence. Their leaders send scouts deep into enemy territory before attacking. They always choose the time and place of their strikes to make it difficult, if not impossible, for regular military services to respond in time.

Allegiances: War chiefs, elders, speakers, councils, shamans.

Identification: Tribal identification varies from tribe to tribe. Feathers and other ornaments worn in the hair in certain manners are typical.

Numbers: There are thousands of units of Picts scattered throughout the wilderness. If a leader were to emerge with the ability to weld them into a fighting force they could become a fearsome threat to civilisation.

MC: 15 from ambush or thickly wooded terrain, but only 10 in open battle.

Equipment: A member of the Pict horde wears feathers, a loincloth and war paint. He wields a club or hatchet, though some carry both. All carry crude hunting bows and a quiver of 20 stone tipped arrows.

ARMIES OF SHEM

Shem is an ancient civilisation, predating the Hyborean conquests by centuries. They fractious kingdoms of western Shem provide the world with their famous Asshuri, the so-called 'Shemite Mercenaries'. The eastern deserts house the Shemite Horde, a loose group of nomads similar in many ways to the aggressive Turanian and Hyrkanian Hordes of the north.

Asshuri (Professional)

The asshuri are from the Meadow Cities in the western part of Shem. They draw their numbers from the free men of the city with good wages and a tradition of civic service. The king of each city supplies his asshuri with the best equipment he can afford, as well military training. A soldier may serve in the asshuri for as long as he wishes, though few choose to make a life of it. Most take the training and the equipment, earn their gold, then move on to more lucrative careers as a piece in Shem's merchant empires.

Each asshuri trains in archery, mounted warfare and swordplay. They ride horses supplied by the desert nomads in eastern Shem.

Allegiances: Mercenaries typically hold an allegiance to whichever lord is paying them and their unit commander.

Identification: Shemite mercenaries utilise symbols representing the Shemite city they originated from. Green and gold fields are common in Shemite heraldry, representing the dual nature of Shem: the meadows and the desert.

Numbers: A city in Shem can muster approximately 15 units of asshuri. Of these, between seven and ten are assigned to mercenary duty. They can be recalled, but it may take months for them to return from their current assignment.

MC: 10

Equipment: In battle, the asshuri wear scale hauberks topped with cylindrical steel caps. Most wield light lances, hawk-pommel scimitars, and Shemite bows. When they serve as scouts they carry a quiver of 40 arrows. When working as archers or mounted archers each asshuri carries a double load of arrows. The material the hawk-pommel is made of displays the prowess of the mercenary. A bronze hawk indicates twenty slayings in war, while a silver hawk shows fifty confirmed kills. A mercenary with over a hundred deaths to his blade is given a gold hawk pommel.

Shemite Horde (Conscript)

Each unit of the 'Shemite Horde' represents the fighting men of a single nomad tribe. These fighters spend most of their time herding sheep, cattle and goats rather than training for war. Fortunately, the rigors of their lives prepare them for battle just as well as a soldier or other warrior from the civilised lands.

The leaders of the Shemite Horde learned tactics and strategy from their western brothers. Although they rarely speak of it, they make extensive use of entrapments, military intelligence and mobility warfare tactics quite unlike the 'charge and destroy' methods enjoyed by other hordes. These sophisticated skills, combined with the raw strength of their spirit, make them a formidable adversary for the Stygian soldiers who constantly threaten their lands.

Allegiances: Shemite sheik or chief, unit commander.

Identification: Shemite mercenaries utilise symbols representing the Shemite tribe they originated from. Green and gold fields are common in Shemite heraldry, representing the dual nature of Shem: the meadows and the desert.

Numbers: Each tribe can muster one unit.

MC: 8

Equipment: The nomads in a Shemite Horde unit wear mail hauberks topped with steel caps in battle. They wield Shemite bows, light lances and scimitars. Most carry a supply of 80 arrows at all times.

ARMIES OF STYGIA

Brooding Stygia, a land of sorcerers and dark arts, maintains a large, antiquated army. Their weapons and tactics have not changed for centuries. Their methods of training remain the same as they have always been. Much to everyone's amazement they still even use chariots, even though they know full well that chariots cannot face cavalry on anything remotely resembling even terms.

In truth though this army is as much for show as it is for use. It gives the nobles something to do while the priests rule their country. It also gives foreign countries a reason not to invade. Though the Stygian army could not stand against Aquilonia or even a concentrated attack from Shem, its presence provides a plausible excuse.

The truth, though, is that the sorcerer-priests of this dangerous land protect it with spells and alchemical concoctions. An invading army will not fall under the spears of the Kushites or the arrows of its charioteers; instead it will die of plagues pulled from long-forgotten tombs and fire that burns in water. The priests will spend the army like clipped coins if they must in order to buy time for their preparations.

Free Companies Mercenaries (Professional)

Stygia's temples also employ a large force of Free Companies. These men, trained in modern warfare, tend to avoid the archaic native forces. The priests employ them to attack other countries or to keep order if a noble decides to engage in another ineffective rebellion. They are stationed on the northern border unless the temples wish to attack Kush or a southern neighbour.

Allegiances: Mercenaries typically hold an allegiance to whichever lord is paying them and their unit commander.

Identification: Varies

Numbers: There are approximately 50 units of mercenaries in the country at any one time, 20 of these units are cavalry units: the other 30 are infantry units.

MC: 10

Equipment: Varies according to the type and nationality of the mercenary unit.

Kushite Spearmen (Professional)

These poorly trained warriors serve the priest's needs nicely. They are tough enough to take a few charges without breaking, die quickly enough to be useful sacrifices and obey without question. The majority of these units can be found along Stygia's northern border.

Allegiances: Mercenaries typically hold an allegiance to whichever lord is paying them and their unit commander.

Identification: Varies. Each Kushite tribe tends to have its own unique look, but often it takes another Kushite to really tell the difference.

Numbers: The priests of Stygia employ 30 units of Kushite spearmen.

MC: 10

Equipment: Most Kushite spearmen are unarmoured. They carry large shields and hunting spears for melee combat. They also use hunting bows and quivers containing up to 20 arrows.

Stygian Archers (Professional)

The numerous Stygian archers might once have commanded great fear from armies and nations. Their powerful bows can launch waves of steel-tipped death into the air, blasting through flesh and bone. Then the Hyborians came, with heavy armour, massive shields and cavalry that could cover ground faster than her archers could destroy them. Now, these unarmoured archers are considered something of a joke by the world's great powers. However, they can still inflict incredible punishment on those foolish enough to underestimate them. The nobles station the majority of these forces around Luxur.

Allegiances: The Priesthood, Stygian nobility, Unit Commanders.

Identification: The Lotus and the Serpent of Set are the two most prominent symbols on Stygian emblems. The Stygian archers have combined the images to create a symbol of ancient power.

Numbers: There are 10 remaining units of Stygian archers.

MC: 11

Equipment: Each archer is clad a light shirt and trousers. They carry daggers and a sheaf of 30 arrows into battle, along with their signature bows.

Stygian War Chariots (Professional)

Stygia maintains almost 3,000 chariot teams, each consisting of a chariot driver, a noble-born soldier or archer and a two-horse team. These units usually spend time in the Luxur garrison rather than on the various fronts. These ponderous devices require relatively level surfaces, have a wide turning radius and are notoriously vulnerable at the wheels. Nobles primarily use them for racing and demonstrations of martial skill rather than real fighting.

Each chariot unit consists of 10 chariots. Chariots cannot cross broken ground or scale more than a 45 degree incline. Wet ground, or worse mud, causes them to stop completely.

Allegiances: The Priesthood, Stygian nobility, Unit Commanders.

Identification: The Lotus and the Serpent of Set are the two most prominent symbols on Stygian emblems. The Stygian charioteers have

combined those images with that of a chariot wheel to create a symbol of mobile power.

Numbers: The Stygian army can field 10 chariot units.

MC: 11

Equipment: The chariot's driver is unarmoured and unarmed. The noble typically wears an archaic mail hauberk, overlaid with plates of strange pattern and design. This armour comes from patterns laid down from before the temple records and may be of even more ancient origin. It is not particularly effective, but does present an imposing sight on the battlefield. Each noble is also expected to sling a battleaxe of curious design from his belt. Most ignore it in battle, but a few have been known to draw it when in dire straits.

ARMIES OF TURAN

Turan, the wealthy kingdom on the shores of the Vilayet Sea, straddles the boundary between nomadic fervour and civilised warfare. Their nomad hordes still ride the plains, but their generals study the military science first established by the Hyborians centuries ago. They still value the raider's freedom, but recognise the importance of disciplined action controlled by strategic intent. This combination of old and new makes them perhaps the only real challengers to Hyborian hegemony in the current age.

The massive Turan army is composed of two separate types of troops:

Mighty Archers (Professional)

The Mighty Archers are an elite Turanian unit designed in part to prove the superiority of modern methods of warfare. They draw their numbers from among the elite archers of the realm, and it is said they have never been beaten in battle. Those who wear the spiral helm and leopard skin cloak of a Mighty Archer have proven, in battle, that they stand for the future.

Allegiances: The king of Turan, Turanian nobility, Unit Commanders.

Identification: The White Wolf is a symbol of old Turan used by the Mighty Archers.

Numbers: The king of Turan can command up to 1000 units of these Mighty Archers, but it would take a year to gather so many.

MC: 10

Equipment: Mighty Archers carry Hyrkanian bows and daggers into battle. They wear loincloths, spiral helms and leopard skin cloaks. Most carry at least 36 arrows; many carry twice that number if they expect a protracted engagement.

Turanian Horde (Conscript)

The riders of Turan are not much different than their Hyrkanian ancestors. They ride the steppes, herd cattle and make war on their enemies. However, unlike their purely nomadic ancestors they have access to some of the wealthiest cities in the world. They wear bright silks, can afford scale armour and weapons of fine steel. They can also afford a professional military caste, something true nomads could never imagine.

When the nomads gather into an army, they obey not their chiefs but the leaders and commanders appointed by the king. These professional warriors study military science in addition to the ancient ways. They have at least one level in soldier in addition to their levels of nomad or noble.

Allegiances: The king of Turan, Turanian nobility, Unit Commanders.

Identification: The great Turanian Horde uses a golden griffon on a red field as its emblem.

Numbers: Each unit contains 100 cavalry. A division contains 100 units. The king of Turan can command up to 20 divisions, or 2000 units of cavalry, though it would take at least a year to gather that many of the nomads from their wanderings.

MC: 9



Equipment: The Turanian Horde carries Scimitar, lances, Hyrkanian bows, about 20 arrows. They wear turbans, sashes, loose-fitting trousers, gold spired helmets, white silk shirts, sleeveless mail and tiger-skin cloaks. Commanders carry flags and lanterns to signal the troops with.

ARMIES OF VENDHYA

Vendhya is an exotic land, but her people have kept abreast of the changes in the world. They carefully study the rapidly evolving art of war, making changes to their armies as need dictates. The presence of the *kozaks* on their border, and these hillmen's constant exposure to outside mercenaries, forces them to maintain a high level of combat readiness.

In keeping with the traditions of their people, the various units of soldiers actually form their own distinct castes. Fathers begin teaching their sons the ways of battle as soon as the boys can stand on their sturdy little legs. Where other children play with balls of string, they play with miniature weapons of war. When other children learn letters and the tradesmen's crafts, they learn how to kill with the weapon of their ancestors. This training includes both practical and ritual knowledge, although most outsiders have trouble telling the difference between the two.

Unlike other countries, Vendhya will not call up conscripts and levies from the working castes. The workers may have the skill to defend themselves: some of them even have considerable martial training. However, it would dishonour the noble and soldier castes to demand assistance from those they long ago swore to protect. This means that, unlike most other nations, a war does not disturb the Vendhyan production economy. This gives them an unmatched ability to supply their forces with fresh supplies as well as an enviable ability to protect logistical force past their own borders if the situation arises.

Vendhya's army contains the following units.

Kshatriya Nobles (Professional)

The Kshatriya Nobles form the backbone of Vendhya's fighting forces. These caste soldiers train for war their entire lives. Many are not truly suited for it; they lack the willingness to kill or the reflexes needed to keep them alive. However, just as many can wield a scimitar, light lance and bow just as easily as they speak of privileges or force lower caste women to their beds.

Allegiances: The Devi, Kshatriyas, Vendhya, Unit Commanders.

Identification: The Triple Lion is used as the emblem of Vendhya's Kshatriya nobles.

Numbers: The Devi can call up 75 units of Kshatriya nobles to fight for her. Roughly half of these nobles will respond immediately.

MC: 12

Equipment: Each Kshatriya wears a scale corselet topped with a steel cap. They carry light lances for use on horseback and scimitars for hand-to-hand fighting. Most also carry a short but powerful bow, giving them the ability to act as archers if the need arises. Although they are trained in the art of archery they must dismount to make an effective archer unit.

Vendhyan Archers (Professional)

The Vendhyan archers form another caste of soldiers. They wield their traditional hunting bows with care, knowing that the Kshatriya may be able to shoot but will likely be too busy managing their horses to be of much use. They practice for hours every day, working on both pinpoint accuracy and rapid volleys of arching arrows.

Allegiances: The Devi, Kshatriyas, Vendhya, Unit Commanders.

Identification: Workhorses of the military, the archers use the elephant for their emblem. A kora is usually superimposed over the elephant as a central image.

Numbers: The Devi can call 25 units of them into battle, with roughly half being available immediately and the other half being involved with garrison or patrol work.

MC: 11

Equipment: The Vendhyan archers wield hunting bows and battleaxes. They wear leather jerkins and steel caps in battle.

Vendhyan Warriors (Professional)

The Vendhyan warriors, like their archer brothers, recognise their responsibility for keeping the Kshatriya alive during the ebb and flow of battle. They are taught from birth that it is their sacred duty to fight, and to die if they must, to preserve those higher echelons of society. In addition, they learn the subtle arts of spear and shield, as taught in their caste for generations.

Allegiances: The Devi, Kshatriyas, Vendhya, Unit Commanders.

Identification: The Vendhyan warriors use the Tiger rampant over a gada as their emblem.

Numbers: The Devi can call up 50 units of warriors. Of these, 25

are available immediately and the other 25 are engaged in training or garrison work.

MC: 11

Equipment: Each warrior wears a leather jerkin and protects himself with a large shield. He carries a wide bladed hunting spear, useful more for pinning tribesmen to the ground than hunting game.

ARMIES OF ZAMORA

The armies of Zamora serve more as an arm of the civil government rather than a defence force. They keep what little peace can be found on the streets, collect taxes and carry out the king's orders. A small, professional military force also guards the border with Koth. This group, the Harriers, uses the kind of tactics that make men shake around their campfires to keep their ancestral home safe from Hyborean invasion.

Royal Guard (Professional)

The Zamoran Royal Guard protects the palace and the king. They are veteran soldiers from the regular army. They primarily train with spear and shield, but can use just about any two-weapon combination with a relatively high level of effectiveness.

The guard only leaves the place in force when the king leads the 'army' into battle. This would require the army to muster out of the drinking-dens and brothels, so only happens in moments of great national emergency.

Allegiances: The king of Zamora, Zamorian nobility, Unit Commanders.

Identification: The Royal Guard of Zamora uses an azure spider on a gold field as its emblem.

Numbers: The king can call on three units of the Royal Guard.

MC: 13

Equipment: Each royal guard wears a breastplate topped with a crested helm. They carry gilded spears and broad shields into battle.

Zamorian Harriers (Professional)

Zamora's harriers are a veteran unit that travel the border in small, highly mobile groups. They officially remain within Zamora, but often 'patrol' deep into Kothian territory. They are responsible for insuring that Koth can never invade Zamora, using whatever means they feel may be necessary. This typically involves no more than waylaying the occasional

messenger, but the destruction of crops, removal of key supply depots, and even small pitched battles are not unheard of.

Each group of 50 harriers is lead by a seasoned professional (thief 6) who is absolutely loyal to his country if not his king. Harriers typically wear no armour, preferring speed and subtlety to outright combat. They

Allegiances: The king of Zamora, Zamora, Zamorian nobility, Unit Commanders.

Identification: Zamorian harriers use an emerald spider on a gold field.

Numbers: Officially there are only three units of harriers employed by the Zamoran crown. Unofficially, the harriers have almost twenty units masquerading as bandits in the various Hyborian kingdoms. They might be used in a pitched battle, but it is unlikely the king would risk his finest troops in a role they are so manifestly unsuited for.

MC: 13

Equipment: Each harrier carries twin short swords that they use in battle, in addition to hunting bows and a quiver of 20 arrows.

Zamorian Regular Army (Conscripts)

The Zamoran regular army lacks either extensive training or much in the way of professional equipment. It consists of drafted commoners who given basic spear and shield training then thrust onto the field of battle. Most fully expect to die in some pointless gesture of independence, after which the Zamoran king will pay the Hyborian princes some unknown amount of gold.

Allegiances: The king of Zamora, Zamora, Zamorian nobility, Unit Commanders.

Identification: The Zamorian regular army uses a red spider on a gold field.

Numbers: The king can call up 20 units of the regular army. Five of these units are immediately available. The others are stationed on the Kothian border.

MC: 10

Equipment: They carry large shields and broad-bladed spears into battle. Most wear breastplates and crested helms, although a few sell their breastplates and use the funds to purchase a mail hauberk and a short sword or close meleé weapon

ARMIES OF ZINGARA

The 'armies' of Zingara are nominally united under the king. However, in truth each lord maintains his own troops he might lend to the common cause or not depending on his own agenda. More often, he uses his troops to engage in open rebellion against the throne.

When it does gather for battle the Zingaran army wields as much power as any Hyborian army. They have, in fact, adopted a lot of Hyborian tactics and strategic training methods, down to the duplication of the heavy cavalry charge that enabled them to conquer their empire in the first place.

Arbalesters (Professional)

The Zingaran Arbalesters train in a manner similar to those of Nemedica, except with more emphasis on swordsmanship than on archery. Most lords field their own arbalesters and the king uses his own funds to maintain a unit as well.

Arbalesters are not as effective as Bossonian Longbow men on the field of battle but they can have a significant impact on cavalry or other massed troops. The various units of arbalester's work reasonably well together though those loyal to opposed lords have been known to 'miss' an occasional order if it will get their rivals killed.

Allegiances: Zingara, king of Zingara, individual Zingaran lords, unit commanders.

Identification: Individual units use the heraldry of their individual lords. The shield of the royal troops has a yellow field divided into thirds by two wavy bands of blue (representing the Black and Thunder rivers). A black tower is the central device in the royal shield. Other nobles use a differing central symbol between the two 'rivers'.

Numbers: There are approximately 30 units of arbalesters in Zingara.

MC: 11

Equipment: Each arbalester carries an arbalest, 30 bolts and an arming sword. He wears a mail shirt covered with a surcoat showing his lord's crest.

Freebooters (Conscript)

Many lords will hire a crew of Zingaran Freebooters to serve as guards, assault forces or raiders. These pirates are not the most loyal of retainers, but will serve if the gold seems good enough.

Allegiances: The king of Zingara, Zingaran nobility, officers, unit commanders.

Identification: Individual captains may design their own flags. Otherwise there is no specific identifying mark worn by the freebooters.

Numbers: No one really knows how many freebooters work the oceans. However, no more than 30 units of these swaggering sea dogs can be found on land at any given time.

MC: 9

Equipment: Zingaran freebooters generally wear leather jerkins and steel caps. They wield broadswords or arming swords in personal combat, and primarily use bows for ranged attacks. A handful use crossbows, but most such weapons cannot survive the harsh, wet conditions found on the open seas.

Zingaran Knights (Professional)

Zingara's elite knights are just as skilled as their Poitainian enemies, and perhaps somewhat more numerous. However, given the difficulties in fielding even a single unit of knights it is unlikely that this numeric superiority will ever translate into a distinct military advantage. Their absolute numbers may be higher, but their lack of central authority means their full numbers will never take the field.

Each unit of Zingaran knights centres around a single, charismatic noble. This noble will often be a named character, acting with the support of his troops.

Allegiances: The king of Zingara, Family, Zingaran nobility, unit commanders.

Identification: Individual units use the heraldry of their individual lords. The shield of the royal troops has a yellow field divided into thirds by two wavy bands of blue (representing the Black and Thunder rivers). A black tower is the central device in the royal shield. Other nobles use a differing central symbol between the two 'rivers'.

Numbers: Zingara can mount roughly 60 units of knights.

MC: 15

Equipment: Each knight wears plate armour and a great helm. They carry heavy lances, broadswords and large shields into battle.

Zingaran Men-at-Arms (Professional)

The Zingaran men-at-arms have risen from the ranks of soldiers to begin their long march to glory. Or at least, they have survived long enough not to be considered completely expendable by their lords. Zingaran men-at-arms

ride into battle beside their noble leaders. Each knight unit will have two units of men-at-arms to act as support.

Allegiances: The king of Zingara, Family, Zingaran nobility, unit commanders.

Identification: Individual units use the heraldry of their individual lords. The shield of the royal troops has a yellow field divided into thirds by two wavy bands of blue (representing the Black and Thunder rivers). A black tower is the central device in the royal shield. Other nobles use a differing central symbol between the two 'rivers'.

Numbers: There are a total of 120 men-at-arms units in Zingara.

MC: 11

Equipment: Most have decent warhorses to ride as well as good mail hauberks and steel caps to ward off arrows. They do not use large shields.

Zingaran Soldiers (Conscript)

The infantrymen of Zingara simply try to stay alive. They did receive some training with their pikes before being sent out to face down heavy cavalry, but nowhere near enough to hold their ground after repeated charges. Fortunately, the nobles do not really expect them to. So long as they blunt the first charge most nobles will forgive them if they throw down their pikes and run for their lives.

Allegiances: The king of Zingara, Family, Zingaran nobility, unit commanders.

Identification: Individual units use the heraldry of their individual lords. The shield of the royal troops has a yellow field divided into thirds by two wavy bands of blue (representing the Black and Thunder rivers). A black tower is the central device in the royal shield. Other nobles use a differing central symbol between the two 'rivers'.

Numbers: The king can field nearly any number of conscripts simply by forcing his people to wield arms.

MC: 10

Equipment: Each soldier wields a pike and a broadsword. He wears a leather jerkin topped with a steel cap. A few carry large shields strapped to their backs, but most do not bother; there is never enough time to sling it down before the pikes break and the nobles in plate armour rage though the lines.

MILITIA

Characters may encounter the following units anywhere in the world.

Militia and Local Watches (Professional)

Militia and local watches spend a part of their day training with weapons. Although they lack the combat experience that makes mercenaries so dangerous, they make up for their inexperience with weight of numbers. They also have a tendency to use ranged and reach weapons to reduce the advantage that superior experience gives a talented foe.

When not on active duty militia members have jobs (usually farming) through which they support their families. They only take up arms when patrolling the area around their settlement or when under attack. Unless they have a skilled leader they will only fight to the death if forced to protect their family or homes.

Most militias have at least one sergeant (soldier 3) who organises the defences. Militias with over one hundred members may also have a veteran soldier (5th level or higher) who trains them in return for room and board. This soldier may have wounds that prevent him from fighting, or he may take up arms when the settlement comes under direct attack.

The militia units displayed here are 'generic'; that is, one can find leather clad spear wielders just about anywhere in the world. More detailed information about the inhabitants of various lands can be found in the *Conan: The Road of Kings*.

Allegiances: Any.

Identification: Any. Most will wear an emblem designated as defining the city employing the watch or militia. Some will have unit designs.

Numbers: Approximately one unit per 100 inhabitants of a village or city.

MC: 10

Equipment: Militia use spears to keep their opponents at bay or bows if they have sufficient range. When the targets close they draw short swords and try to hold the target until more skilled troops arrive to dispatch them.

Villagers (Conscript)

Villagers are much the same the world over. These common, simple folk attempt to live out their days without encountering too much violence. When the red tide of war sweeps over them, they fight as best they can but die by the hundreds at the hands of well-equipped fighting men. In fact



some mercenaries consider killing villagers a sport; certainly it entails far fewer risks than engaging trained warriors in battle.

If given the opportunity most villagers flee rather than engage in pitched battle. They can always rebuild their crude homes; what possessions they have fit on their backs. If caught unaware they fight with what skills they have.

Villages and towns have an 80% chance of being lead by a commoner (level 1d8+1). 20% of the time the leader is of the race's favoured class (level 1d8+1). This leader will attempt to deal with the pirates or send for help before engaging in battle.

Allegiances: Any.

Identification: None

Numbers: Any

MC: 6

Equipment: Spears, hand axes and pole arms are the most common means of equipping villagers.

FORTIFICATIONS

In most of the world's ages conquerors dream of foes foolish enough to meet them on open fields. Unfortunately for them, most people have the good sense to retreat behind some kind of protection when faced with overwhelming opposition. Although poets may weep to see dreams unfulfilled, the rest of the world rests secure behind stout stonewalls and fences made with the most sophisticated protective technology their cultures can afford.

Conquerors from any age, though, tend to be a resilient breed. When faced with walls they bring out rams. When the defenders respond with arrows they build turtles. This constant interplay between attacker and defender forms the so called 'cycle of warfare', in which defenders dream up new ways to protect themselves and attackers smash through those protections to engage in their age old pastimes of pillaging and destruction.

FORTIFICATION CATEGORIES

Fortifications, at least for this purpose, fall into one of four categories: ancient ruins, fortresses, presentable fences and walled cities. Each of these categories incorporates a wide variety of possible defences, only a handful of which are detailed below.

Ancient Ruins

By the time of the Hyborian Age civilisations untold have risen from the ashes, thrived, then fallen to leave their buildings strewn about the world like bones on a banquet hall floor. These ruins crouch, enigmatic and dangerous, in nearly every country in the world. The barbarian peoples have enough sense to leave them alone; civilised peoples regularly convert them into new fortresses or snatch stones from them to build their own structures. In so doing they gain access to the wonders of a previous age but also expose themselves to potential destruction.

Ancient ruins come in three categories: converted foundations, converted ruins and piece-meal additions. All three have a deserved reputation for curses, hauntings and aggressive ghosts. How often these phenomena manifest depends on how much of the ruin remains intact and how much violence occurs around the site on a regular basis.

Converted Foundation: Humans, from whatever age, rarely take the hard road when an easier path presents itself. This tendency leads them use the same roads for thousands of years, repeating behaviour long after their reason vanishes into dust, and conversely to

convert existing foundations to new buildings. Indeed, many of the Hyborian Age's greatest fortifications stand on sites whose origins stretch so far back into history even the great scholars of Atlantis did not know their beginnings.

If the foundation conversion occurred within the last one hundred years the ancient magic lingering in the spot causes the fortress to become haunted. After a century the magic fades, awakening only when crimson waves of blood call it forth. These ancient ruins act like a fortress of the appropriate type in all other respects.

Converted Ruin: Sometimes enough walls and structure remains in a ruin for fearless men to haul common rock onto the green stone, building up a fortress that contains elements of both ancient and modern architecture. Only an uncommonly skilled architect can make these ruins look like anything other than what they are: stop gap structures incorporating decadent architecture into the bold modern world.

Converted ruins may remain useful for a short time, but the lingering taint of black magic will eventually drive everyone who tries to inhabit them insane. Curses, dreams, hauntings and visions plague the inhabitants, reaching a crescendo when they join in bloody battle around its walls.

Converted ruins always act as fortresses in addition to their other, supernatural functions.

Piece-meal Addition: Fashioning bricks or stone takes a great deal of time and effort. If a ruin contains sufficient quantities of worked stone, men will use it as a quarry rather than waste time fashioning these materials themselves. A building composed of over 10% stone or material reclaimed from a ruin subjects its inhabitants to strange dreams, hauntings and visions on a fairly regular basis.

Other than the occasional magical influence a piece-meal addition functions like a normal version of its fortification type.

The Games Master rolls the chance for each of the effects whenever a significant event occurs within the fortification. Significant events include: a character over 10th level entering the structure, a battle, a murder, an act of treachery or any character within the walls gaining Corruption.

Curse: When a curse occurs everyone within the structure comes under its influence. They may make a Will saving

Chance of Effect

| Ruin Type | Curse | Dream | Haunting | Vision |
|----------------------|-------|-------|----------|--------|
| Converted Foundation | 10% | 20% | 50% | 10% |
| Converted Ruin | 50% | 80% | 80% | 20% |
| Piece-meal Additions | 20% | 10% | 10% | 10% |

throw (DC 25) to resist the effect. Those that fail will suffer one catastrophic failure on a attack roll or skill check sometime during the next month.

Dream: When a dream occurs everyone within the structure at the time of the triggering event will have a vivid dream of the past within 1d4 days. This dream takes the dreamer back to the ruin's heyday, just before its cataclysmic fall. The dreamer experiences the fall as if he were there physically, down to taking damage from attacks and suffering the effects of spells or poisons. If the dreamer survives the experience he emerges somewhat wiser about the history of the world although scared by the experience.

Haunting: When a haunting occurs ancient ghosts stir into a mockery of life. The number of ghosts equals the number of individuals within the fortification when the event occurs. These ghosts have no love of living beings, but will only harm those engaged in combat on their grounds. Systemically each ghost is equal to a 10th level character of some sort, usually either a soldier or a scholar with extensive knowledge of curses and necromancy. These ghosts remain active for 2d4 days though they may only appear before the living in brief flashes.

Vision: A vision resembles both a dream and a haunting rolled into one horrible moment. The ruin takes on its original grandeur and power then becomes inhabited by the ghosts of those who dwelt within it during its final days. Everyone, whether they were in the ruin at the moment of the triggering event or not, must deal with the horror and the terror as the events of those last days play out around them. Anyone within the fortification, or entering it during the vision, cannot escape until the vision ends or they pass on to whatever fate awaits them after death.

Characters killed in a vision sequence vanish forever.

Fortresses

Most fortifications mercenary soldiers trouble themselves with fall into the fortress category. These fortifications dot the countryside, providing rebels and national armies alike with strong points from which to fight. Many contain vast reserves of arms, armour and other logistical supplies, allowing the inhabitants to remain inside for extended periods of time or to fight battle after battle secure in the knowledge they will be able to survive.

Fortresses differentiate themselves from the other types of fortifications by having defences capable of checking their attackers rather than hindering or impeding them. In order to enter the fortress the attacker must circumvent or destroy these defences, thereby removing the check and allowing them access to the defenders. While they attempt to do so the defenders may launch attacks against them with relative

impunity, although attacker's ranged attacks may be able to reach the defenders as well.

Fortresses, regardless of the materials used in their construction, have at least one attribute capable of inflicting a full 'check'.

Presentable Fence

Much to the dismay of peasants the world over, nobles rarely spend the time and effort required to build fortresses to defend every village and town in their lands. Instead the artisans and farmers responsible for producing the wealth mercenaries steal at sword point must rely on those defences they can construct during the hours they do not spend working away at whatever job occupies their attentions.

Non-fortress fortifications are distinguished by the presence of 'a presentable fence'; an object or structure hindering or impeding the attacker's progress. The attacker does not have to destroy the structure in order to penetrate the defences but does expose himself to danger during his slowed movement period.

A Games Master wishing to create a more detailed village encounters (instead of generic villages as fortresses) may find the village generation system in *Conan: Pirate Isles* more suitable to that task.

FORTIFICATION ATTRIBUTES

All fortifications may purchase a number of attributes based on their size. Larger fortifications may have considerably heavier defences, or may have larger storage spaces and greater garrison size.

Fortification Attributes By Size

| Fortification Size | Attributes |
|--------------------|------------|
| Bastion | 8 |
| Farmstead | 2 |
| Hovel | 1 |
| Tower | 3 |
| Town | 7 |
| Village | 4 |

Each fortification may purchase one or more of the following attributes:

Ditch: A ditch serves to hinder progress into the defended area. A character can move though the ditch by spending 10 feet of movement or jump it as part of a normal move by making a Jump skill check (DC 15).

Fence (Stone): A low fence of stone and wood surrounds the defended area. A character can penetrate the fence by spending 10 feet of movement or move over it as part of a normal move action by making a Tumble skill check (DC 15). If the character spends movement to penetrate the fence he cannot respond to melee attacks made against him that round.

Fence (Wood): A high fence of wooden stakes surrounds the defended area. A character can penetrate the fence by spending 20 feet of movement or climb it in a single round by making a Climb skill check (DC 15). If the character spends movement to penetrate the fence he cannot respond to melee attacks made against him that round.

Garrison: The defended area has sufficient shelter space to contain a single military unit. A garrison can contain two units, but both units will suffer a -1 penalty to all attack and damage rolls and saving throws for the duration of the garrison duty.

Ranged Defence: The defended area provides significant cover against ranged attacks. Each time the fortification selects this attribute it increases the Defence Value against ranged attacks of all characters and units within the fortification by +2.

Supply Storage: The defended area has enough supplies to last one unit one year. The supplies also include arms and armour enough to a single unit though six major battles. The fortification commander may divide these stores among multiple units as he sees fit.

Wall (Stone): A tall wall of stone prevents progress into the defended area. The weight and strength of the wall make it difficult to destroy, but it can be climbed as one full round action by making a Climb skill check (DC 25). Each time the fortification adds this attribute it increases the total number of full round actions required to climb the wall by +1.

Wall (Wood): A tall wall of wood prevents progress into the defended area. The weight and strength of the wall make it difficult to destroy, but it can be climbed as one full round action by making a Climb skill check (DC 25). Each time the fortification adds this attribute it increases the total number of full round actions required to climb the wall by +1.

Castles and Walled Cities

A castle consists of a bastion and one or more towers. A walled city contains one or more bastions and at least four other towers.

How big is the 'Protected Area'?

A protected area generically describes the boundaries of a farmstead, fortress or village. It could be of any size; the issue is one of resource

concentration and distribution rather than architecture and mapping.

EXAMPLE FORTIFICATIONS

The following examples show how the above system allows for the construction of various in-game fortifications:

Aquilonian Weapon Cache (Presentable Fence)

Size: Farmstead

Attributes: 2 Supply Storage

This sizeable stone building contains few defences but a vast amount of arms, armour and food. The Aquilonian army uses them to bypass internal supply lines and re-provision after extremely tough battles.

Hyborian Castle (Fortress)

Size: Bastion and two Towers (one gatehouse, one fastness)

Attributes: Fence (wooden), Garrison (3 units), Ranged Defence (+6 DV), Supply Storage (3), Wall (stone, 3 rounds)

This traditional old castle, crouched on top of a tall hill, houses a knight and his men-at-arms. A low fence surrounds the base of the hill, serving as a range marker for the castle's archers. The fortified gatehouse and old keep rise just above the tall stone walls, while a new inner tower stands almost twice as tall as the chipped old stones that have turned aside hundreds of attackers over the years.



The Secrets of War

Mercenary Skills & Feats

THE RISE OF the Hyborian people sparked the resurgence of the art of war. The indigenous races were either too barbaric or too focused on the dark arts to truly develop tactical and strategic abilities. However, centuries of incorporating these qualities have produced unique abilities and stores of knowledge, available to those who wish to master the art of war.

NEW SKILL

KNOWLEDGE (WARFARE) (INT; TRAINED ONLY)

You have trained and studied hard the lessons of history, absorbing accounts and details concerning all forms and manners of warfare. Your knowledge in this area of expertise includes, but is not limited to, tactics, strategy, military command, military history and troop deployments.

Check: Answering a question within your field of study has a DC of 10 for really easy questions, 15 for basic questions and a range from 20 to 30 for really tough questions.

In many cases, you can use this skill to identify monsters and their special powers or vulnerabilities. In general, the DC of such a check equals 10 + the monster's Hit Dice. A successful check allows you to remember a bit of useful information about that monster.

For every 5 points by which your check result exceeds the DC, you recall another piece of useful information.

Action: Usually none. In most cases, making a Knowledge check does not take an action; you simply know the answer or you do not.

Try Again: No. The check represents what you know. Thinking about a topic a second time does not let you know something that you never learned in the first place.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (tactics), you get a +2 bonus on Initiative checks.

NEW FEATS

Soldiers may select any of the feats below as bonus feats.

AIDE DE CAMP

This feat allows you to aid in the command of men on the battlefield, passing down orders clearly and concisely. Units with the benefit of an aide de camp are less likely to become disorientated or to rout.

Prerequisites: Charisma 12+, Knowledge (warfare) 5 ranks

Benefit: As an aide de camp you hold a prestigious position within any military structure adding +2 to your Reputation score. An aide de camp also adds +2 competence bonus to a unit's Military Cohesion score. This bonus stacks with all other bonuses to a unit's Military Cohesion. An aide de camp's input does not act as a penalty, but the amount of support he can lend to his unit is limited to +2, regardless of how many ranks of Knowledge (warfare) he has. An aide de camp automatically negates any penalties that units may incur from having multiple characters with high Knowledge (warfare) ranks as described on pg. 92. A unit can only ever have one aide de camp at any one time.

AWAKEN THE THUNDER (GENERAL)

You have learned how to spur your brothers and yourself to greater heights of daring when on horseback.

Prerequisites: Soldier level 3, heavy cavalry formation

Benefit: When you make a charge attack you gain a +2 morale bonus to your damage. When you make a charge attack as part of a unit you give this bonus to every member of your unit (up to a maximum of 50). This bonus is in addition to the bonus gained from making a normal charge and is affected by modifications from other feats (e.g. Spirited Charge).

BATTLE LEADER (GENERAL)

This feat allows you to command men on the battlefield, giving them clear and concise orders

General Feats

Aide de Camp

Awaken the Thunder

Battle Leader

Battle Tactics

Bronze Man

Disciple of Archery

Disciple of Cavalry

Disciple of Infantry

Live in the Saddle

Gold Man

Inspiring Leader

Legendary Leader

Live off the Land

Master of the Art

Master of Archery

Master of Cavalry

Master of Infantry

Man of Will

Motivational Speaker

Patterns of Protection

Patterns of Shelter

Painter of Dreams and Visions

Reap the Whirlwind

Roaring Rage

Sorcerous Tactics

Tactical Mind

Take the Charge

Prerequisites

Charisma 12+, Knowledge (warfare) 5 ranks

Soldier level 3, heavy cavalry formation

Charisma 15+, Leadership, Battle Tactics

Knowledge (warfare) 10 ranks, Wisdom 15+

Shemite, 20 kills

Soldier level 1, Dexterity 12, Point Blank Shot

Soldier level 1, Dexterity 12, Skill Focus (Ride)

Soldier level 1, Strength 12, Weapon Focus (one melee weapon)

Ride 4 ranks

Shemite, 100 kills, Bronze Man

Leadership

Charisma 15, Leadership

Craft (woodworking) 3 ranks

Intelligence 13, Tactical Mind

Soldier level 5, Dexterity 12, Disciple of Archery, Point Blank Shot

Soldier level 5, Dexterity 12, Disciple of Cavalry, Skill Focus (Ride)

Soldier level 5, Strength 12, Disciple of Infantry, Weapon Focus (one melee weapon)

Soldier level 7, Iron Will, Hyborean only

Charisma 13+, Leadership

Intelligence 14, Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks, Dabbler, Painter of Visions and Dreams

Intelligence 14, Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks, Dabbler, Painter of Visions and Dreams

Intelligence 14, Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks, Dabbler

Soldier level 3, light cavalry formation

Charisma 15, Intimidate 16 ranks, Menacing Aura, Steely Gaze

Scholar level 3, Sorcery Style: Divination

Intelligence 13

Soldier level 3, heavy infantry formation

they can obey without becoming disoriented. Troops commanded in this way are less likely to move off after the wrong objective, or to rout uncontrollably.

Prerequisite: Charisma 15+, Leadership, Battle Tactics.

Benefit: So long as they can hear your words and understand them, a single body of allied men can be given orders on a battlefield that they will then automatically obey to the best of their ability. This feat can also be used to automatically rally troops who have routed, provided they have time to be influenced by your words.

BATTLE TACTICS (GENERAL)

Battle Tactics allows you to make correct decisions on the battlefield, positioning troops to the best advantage, taking into account terrain, weather and other factors, then manoeuvring and commanding them to best advantage during the battle.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (warfare) 10 ranks
Wisdom 15+

Benefit: You can assess the lay of the land and thereby know how best to position your men. If you command troops, you can place them according to your understanding of the field of battle and the likely strengths of the enemy. This will grant them a +1 armour bonus against all ranged attacks made at beyond the first range increment, provided there is some feature in the terrain which would provide shelter. This bonus increases to +2 if you also possess the Leadership feat. A similar +1 bonus to all Reflex saving throws against spells is also gained. Battle Tactics requires you to be able to observe and assess the battlefield.

BRONZE MAN (GENERAL)

Your reputation as a warrior strengthens your brothers' fighting spirit.

Prerequisites: Shemite, 20 kills

Benefits: When your followers and cohorts are uniformly of Shemite descent you gain a +4 bonus to your Leadership score. Anyone of Shemite blood within 30 feet of your position gains a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls each round you make a full attack.

DISCIPLINE OF ARCHERY (GENERAL)

Your training in the discipline of archery makes you a more effective archer in mass combat situations.

Prerequisites: Soldier level

1, Dexterity 12, Point

Blank Shot

Benefits: When you make a ranged attack in a mass combat you reduce the range increment penalty for any shot by 2 to a minimum of 0. However, when you use this feat you may not specifically target any character or creature. Instead, your shot strikes a single enemy at random.

DISCIPLINE OF CAVALRY (GENERAL)

Your training in the discipline of cavalry makes you more effective on horseback in mass combat situations.

Prerequisites: Soldier level 1, Dexterity 12, Skill Focus (Ride)

Benefits: When you make a melee attack from horseback you may use your Strength modifier or your mounts, whichever is higher, to determine your bonus to attack and damage rolls.

DISCIPLINE OF INFANTRY (GENERAL)

Your training in the discipline of infantry fighting makes you more effective when you stand shield to shield with your brothers on the field of battle.

Prerequisites: Soldier level 1, Strength 12, Weapon Focus (one melee weapon)

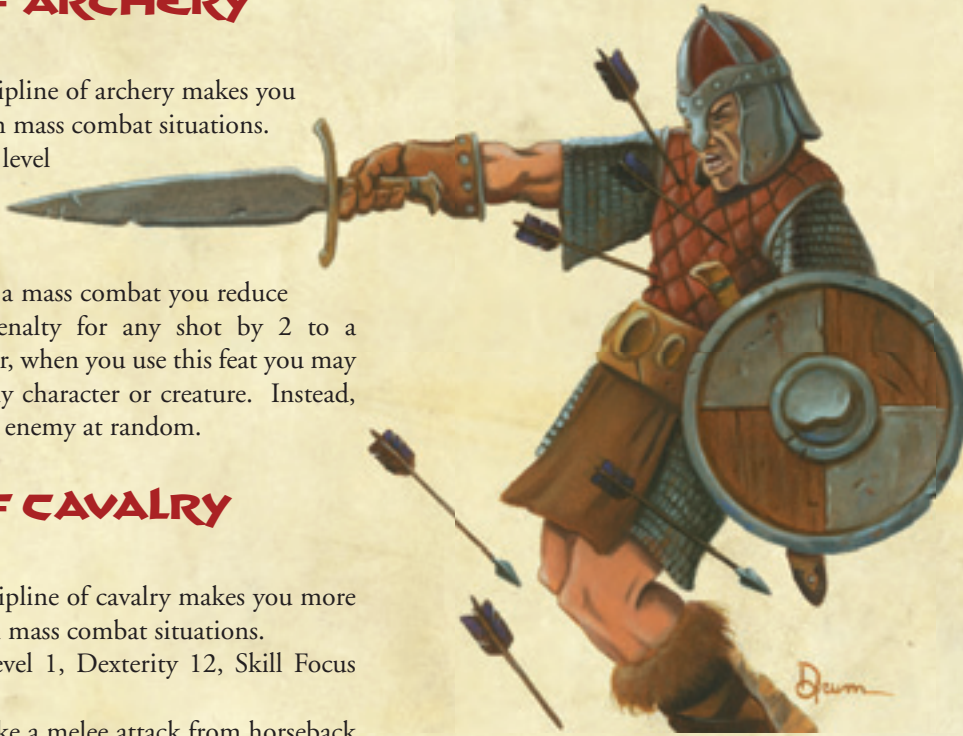
Benefits: When you make a melee attack against a flanked target you may ignore the target's Dexterity bonus to his Dodge DV and his Strength bonus to his Parry DV.

GOLD MAN (GENERAL)

Your reputation makes you a living banner for the Shemite asshuri. So long as you stand your brothers will not allow themselves to fail.

Prerequisites: Shemite, 100 kills, Bronze Man

Benefits: When your followers and cohorts are uniformly of Shemite descent you gain a +4 bonus to your Leadership score. When you make a full attack any Shemite within a 60-foot radius who suffers from a morale penalty may make a Will save (DC 10 + the total penalty). If he succeeds he throws the penalty off for the next round.



INSPIRING LEADER (GENERAL)

Your people will follow you to whatever end.

Prerequisite: Leadership

Benefits: A unit you lead in mass combat gains a +2 morale bonus to Will saving throws. This bonus stacks with any bonus derived from the Iron Will feat.

LIVE IN THE SADDLE (GENERAL)

You can do nearly anything in the saddle, including getting a good night's sleep.

Prerequisite: Ride 4 ranks

Benefits: You may substitute your Ride skill rank for your Concentration skill rank for any Concentration skill check you must make while in the saddle. You may also make a Ride skill check (DC 15) to sleep peacefully in the saddle. This trick allows nomads to travel for long distances by alternating sleeping and guiding with other members of the tribe.

LIVE OFF THE LAND (GENERAL)

You know how to quickly manufacture the basic tools of your trade.

Prerequisites: Craft (woodworking) 3 ranks

Benefit: In any forest, jungle or swamp you may make a large shield and hunting spear in one day without making a Craft skill check. You may make a Craft (woodworking) skill check (DC 25) to make one of these items as a full round action. Items created using this second method have Hardness 1 and 1 hit point.

LEGENDARY LEADER

You know how to use your Reputation as a weapon in battle.

Prerequisites: Soldier level 10 or Noble level 8, Charisma 15, Leadership

Benefit: Once per battle you may add your Reputation modifier to any one unit's attack or damage roll. The unit must be within 60 feet and no larger than 20 men.

MASTER OF THE ART

You have mastered the arts of strategy and tactics.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 13, Tactical Mind

Benefits: You gain a +2 bonus to your Knowledge (warfare) checks. This bonus does stack with the bonus gained from Tactical Mind. If your opponent does not have the Tactical Mind feat your bonus increases to +6.

Normal: You gain a bonus to your tactical check equal to your Intelligence modifier plus your base attack bonus.

MASTER OF ARCHERY

Your mastery of the discipline of battle archery makes you a formidable foe.

Prerequisites: Soldier level 5, Dexterity 12, Disciple of Archery, Point Blank Shot

Benefit: When you make a ranged attack using a bow, javelin or spear you may ignore bonuses provided by the target's shield.

MASTER OF CAVALRY

Your mastery of the discipline of close cavalry combat makes you a formidable foe.

Prerequisites: Soldier level 5, Dexterity 12, Disciple of Cavalry, Skill Focus (Ride)

Benefits: When you make a charge attack on an enemy unit you may divide your total damage roll between all creatures in a 10-foot area rather than to a specific character or creature.

MASTER OF INFANTRY

Your mastery of the discipline of close quarters melee combat makes you a formidable foe.

Prerequisites: Soldier level 5, Str. 12, Disciple of Infantry, Weapon Focus (one melee weapon)

Benefits: When you are on-foot and using a large shield in mass combat you may take a standard action to lock shields increase your Parry Defence Damage Value against melee or ranged attacks by +1. Additionally, all characters locking shields in a shield wall may use your Parry Defence Damage Value against melee or ranged attacks for their own checks.

MAN OF WILL

Your pure Hyborian blood, refined in the fire of battle, grants you incredible strength when faced with sorcery and its creations.

Prerequisites: Soldier level 7, Iron Will, Hyborian only

Benefit: When a sorcerer targets you with a spell and you make your saving throw you immediately gain a +1 bonus to your attack rolls, damage rolls and saving throws for a number of rounds equal to your Constitution modifier.

MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER (GENERAL)

This feat allows you to command bodies of men to perform a specific task on behalf of a larger force. Speaking to the crowd, you so sway them with the passion of your words that they are temporarily inspired by the same devotion you demonstrate. These tasks cannot be directly combat-orientated, nor can they last for more than a day. Typical examples might include building defences before the arrival of an enemy force, giving up hidden supplies or moving en masse to another location.

Prerequisite: Charisma 13+, Leadership.

Benefit: You can sway all 1st level characters within earshot so long as they are all of the same allegiance as yourself, and there are no distractions or voices muttering in opposition to your command. No more than 50% of any given crowd may be of a different allegiance. Up to 10 1st level characters times your character level may be commanded to perform any non-combat related task for a period of one day, so long as it contributes in some way to the current conflict taking place.



PAINTER OF DREAMS AND VISIONS

You know the secrets of mixing pigments and painting patterns capable of providing modest protection against the whims of fortune.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 14, Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks, Dabbler

Benefits: When you take a full day to paint a large shield using hand-made pigments you can grant it a minor charm capable of expressing the wielder's true spirit. If the wielder is a southerner (Chaga, Darfari, Ghanta, Kushite, Northern Black Kingdom Tribesman, Southern Black Kingdom Tribesman or Southern Islander) he gains a bonus equal to his Strength modifier to any Intimidate skill checks he makes. You cannot combine this effect with the bonus granted by either Patterns of Protection or Patterns of Shelter.

PATTERNS OF PROTECTION

You know the secret patterns and pigments that capable of turning aside spells.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 14, Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks, Dabbler, Painter of Dreams and Visions

Benefits: When you take a day to paint a large shield using hand-made pigments you can grant it a minor charm. This charm grants the bearer a +1 bonus to his saving throws against spells. This bonus does not protect the bearer from alchemical, mechanical or natural effects. You cannot combine this effect with the bonus granted by either Painter of Dreams and Visions or Patterns of Shelter.

PATTERNS OF SHELTER

You know the secret patterns and pigments capable of turning aside random arrow fire.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 14, Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks, Dabbler, Painter of Dreams and Visions

Benefits: When you take a day to paint a large shield using hand-made pigments you can grant it a minor charm capable of turning away missiles. The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Dodge DV against ranged attacks while wielding the shield. This bonus protects against any ranged attack, including alchemical items or sorcery spells requiring a ranged attack roll. You cannot combine this effect with the bonus granted by either Painter of Dreams and Visions or Patterns of Protection.

REAP THE WHIRLWIND

The wild joy of unfettered cavalry runs rampant through your veins.

Prerequisites: Soldier level 3, light cavalry formation

Benefits: Increase your DV by +1 when you are in a light cavalry unit. You can extend this bonus to other characters in the same unit within line of sight. You may grant this bonus to a number of characters equal to your Charisma modifier.

ROARING RAGE

Your rage is a thing of legends.

Prerequisites: Intimidate 16 ranks, Charisma 15+, Menacing Aura, Steely Gaze

Benefits: You may take 10 on an Intimidate check made as a free action through your Menacing Aura feat. This gives you an effective Terror value equal to 10 + your total Intimidation modifier when you take the Warrior's Roar action.

Normal: You must make an Intimidate skill check each time you target an opponent with your Menacing Aura.

SORCEROUS TACTICS

You have combined your knowledge of war and sorcery into a powerful weapon.

Prerequisites: Scholar level 3, Sorcery Style: Divination

Benefits: Your knowledge of sorcery is enhanced by the experience of the demon(s) you serve, giving you unique insights in the hearts of men. Coupled with the use of only the most devastating tactics, it allows you to harness their fears. You may add your magic attack bonus to your Knowledge (warfare) checks.

TACTICAL MIND

You have studied the art of war, although you have not yet mastered it.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 13

Benefits: You gain a +2 bonus to your Knowledge (warfare) checks. If one or more of your opponents does not possess the Tactical Mind feat, increase this bonus to +3.

TAKE THE CHARGE

You know how to absorb a cavalry charge.

Prerequisites: Soldier 3, heavy infantry formation

Benefits: You gain a +2 competence bonus to hit charging opponents. Your unit gains a +2 circumstance bonus to its Strength check to resist a surge attack. This later bonus does not stack with other instances of this feat in the same unit.

Rewards of Blood

The Life of a Mercenary

MERCENARIES AND SOLDIERS live a life of perpetual boredom punctuated by moments of absolute terror. In the long stretches between battles they strive to live as well as they can, forever haunted by the knowledge that their lives could end with the next blast of a trumpet or wave of a flag.

When characters take up the roles of mercenaries and soldiers they find themselves tightly circumscribed by the responsibilities of military life. However, those responsibilities are in and of themselves inherently adventurous when framed in the right context. This chapter creates that context by providing the rules and information for detailing interesting situations and interactions for characters to engage in.

MERCENARY MOTIVES

The Hyborian Age abounds with opportunities for common men to take up arms in the defence of their lives or the furtherance of their goals. Most men, though, do not make a career of it. They fight when they must, but spend most of their time engaged in other pursuits: crafting, farming or stealing being the most common.

What desires, then, drive a man to set aside his given profession for the dangerous life of a professional soldier? What could force him to set aside the comforts of hearth and home to place his mortal flesh before the unyielding steel of other men, similarly motivated?

ADVENTURE

When darkness falls, the men of the Hyborian Age gather around glowing hearths to tell tales of war. They tell tales of the war's glory, of the wonders found in far-off lands and of the wealth a warrior can reap with his blade. Invincible heroes, often mercenaries who fight for what the elder thinks of as right, sweep aside their enemies and grasp supple-waisted women in their mighty arms.

For children weaned on such stories the idea of the mercenary life seems intoxicating. They laugh and play at swordsmanship when they see soldiers pass by on patrol. When these children

come of age they run off to join a mercenary company, driven by images their elders do not remember planting in their heads.

For these children the desire for adventure comes up hard against the realities of a mercenary's life. The constant drudgery required of even a skilled soldier does not fit well with daydreams of bright blades and clean wine. Many fail to pass through their recruit training, becoming freelance adventurers with little skill and even fewer prospects.

Those that make it through their basic training make excellent soldiers. Their eagerness to explore new things and interact with native peoples allows them to regularly reach out past unit boundaries. This, in turn, gives them the opportunity to make local friends, greatly enhancing their ability to quickly gather rumours into useable information.

BLOODLUST

Civilised men like to hide their bloodlust behind careful manners and scented handkerchiefs. They channel it into public sports and private dens of iniquity where it boils forth in a host of perversions. Many also participate in blood sports, in which a proxy (usually an animal or slave) engages in bloody violence for the watcher's amusement.

Barbaric men feel less need to hide their anger in acceptable forms. When a man insults them they strike back. When they wish to kill they do so, savouring each moment of their conquest. However, even in the Pictish Wilderness men must obey the structures of society, killing only where and how they are commanded.

Civilised or barbaric, there exist men whose need for blood, whose love for the smell and taste and feel of it pumping over their hands as they wrench their blades from their enemies' bellies, exceeds what society will allow. These men must find some way to satisfy their lust. Some turn to crime; others become professional warriors. After a few years in a quiet militia unit, those who become soldiers typically move on to mercenary service. There they hope the roving life will allow them to revel in battle more often than any sane man would wish.

A mercenary driven to service by bloodlust rarely stops to consider the tactical situation or the strategic importance of



his actions. He takes each contract, each day and each duty separately, enduring them and awaiting the moment when he can dive into battle. Once he reaches battle he hacks and slays without reservation or remorse, bathing in his foe's blood.

CIVIC SERVICE

Barbaric and civilised men do not grow up in isolation. They are born into villages, towns and even great cities filled with teeming hordes of humanity. There they learn about community and duty, about history and responsibility. As they move into adulthood most children shed this education in civic pride. At most it creates in them vague feelings of guilt as they struggle against while seizing what they desire. These nascent stirrings of morality lead barbaric men to hold rough courts and civilised men to publicly donate to religious institutions.

For a handful of children, though, civic pride becomes something more than just a nagging thought that gnaws at their hearts. These children become men who seek out an opportunity to serve their communities. Some donate their time to religious institutions; others serve in the local militias or develop a deserved reputation for helping their neighbours.

In Kush and Shem men who feel a call to civic service often present themselves for mercenary service in their community company. These soldiers serve as much out of patriotism as for their own glory. Since they know each action reflects back on their community they take special care to do the best they

can when they come into the public eye. They are the ones who carry the company crest, polish their armour obsessively and always perform their duties punctually.

Individuals who believe enough in civic service to risk their own lives for the community's greater glory rarely understand those who do not have the same drive. The two sometimes seem to live in different worlds: worlds related to one another perhaps, but inhabited by two very different kinds of people.

CONSCRIPT

Professional mercenaries do not always set out to become soldiers. Many start their military service when their local noble calls them to duty, hands them a spear and sends them out onto the field of battle. There they face hundreds, if not thousands, of men in similar straits. They kill and are killed for other's gain, often without ever knowing anything about the conflict's cause.

Conscripts who survive their first few battles may find they like a soldier's life. The long periods between battles, filled with boredom and labour, resemble civilian life. More importantly a soldier always knows where his next meal will come from and when he will see a bit of silver to spend on beer and whores. When compared to the vagrancies of a commoner's life this certainty can seem terribly attractive.

When a conscript settles into mercenary service he becomes a steady worker and an unsteady combatant. So long as the company does not engage in battle he can focus on the 'good' things about mercenary life. Each time he faces a foe's bared steel, though, he faces his own mortality and the foolishness of selling his life for gold. In those moments he remembers the life he left behind and may decide to take the long journey home.

ESCAPE

Mercenaries, live in the present, both to avoid thinking about the death waiting for them tomorrow and to escape the weight of all the death in their pasts. Even the Shemite asshuri, who have a long tradition of service, keep their minds firmly in the present. Organisations like the Nemedian Adventurers and the Free Companies, who exist to gather together those who wish to flee their past, focus on the present with an almost religious conviction.

For many people this focus on the present offers them the only real way they can escape from their own past. They may have committed crimes, engaged in immoral activities or caused unthinkable harm to those they owed loyalty to. Whatever their transgressions the life of a wandering mercenary allows them to escape the limited reach of justice. Those that

spend their coin on diversions can also escape themselves, but only for a time.

Mercenaries driven by the need to escape have an edge of paranoia that keeps them constantly in tune with their environment. This paranoia allows them to spot trouble before it starts but also makes it more difficult for them to relate to other people.

WEALTH

None of the societies of the Hyborian Age, with the possible exceptions of Argos and Shem, support the idea of upward social mobility. Some, like Vendhya, have rigid caste systems specifically designed to prevent individuals from leaving their inherited station. Others follow a model in which individuals not of the nobility cannot own land even though they may work it. This prevents them from establishing or passing on stable wealth, though merchant princes do spring up from time to time.

Mercenaries, though, live outside of this rigid social structure. Alone among men, a mercenary proves his worth with his sword. He earns his gold with his blood and can rise as high in his own culture as his strength allows. A common barbarian can rise to become a captain, and in time perhaps even a king, while a nobleman might never rise above the rank of a file-leader.

A common man who becomes a mercenary can, if he lives, expect to see more gold in a season than most men see in a lifetime. Those who desire such things can easily quench their thirst for fine living with this gold; those with more practical tastes can eventually amass enough to purchase property in a town or rent a farm from one of the innumerable petty lords who rule the land.

Mercenaries driven by gold have an uncanny knack for sniffing out opportunities to gain a bit of extra coin. Some get so good at it that they begin to avoid battle entirely; after all, a soldier who dies cannot spend all of the gold he accumulates through graft and Corruption.

DUTIES OF THOSE WHO LIVE BY THE SWORD

A mercenary's defines his life by two things: his duties and his pleasures. His duties stem from the contracts his captain signs. If the captain finds a good contract he can have an easy duty while he pursues his life's other defining feature.

If not, then he will have to work for

his silver, sometimes literally, in whatever locale his captain commands.

When a mercenary signs a contract he accepts specific duties. These duties demand particular behaviours from the unit. It also outlines the risks they will undertake on their employers behalf and the amount and nature of the payment they will receive in return.

Most mercenaries know little or nothing about the complexities of contract negotiation. They go where their captain directs, fight where he orders and enjoy life the rest of the time. Captains and freelance mercenaries, on the other hand, must spend endless hours working over contract language to avoid accidentally signing away their souls. Governments and nobles regard mercenaries as disposable resources; if the captain does not wish for his people to die a brutal death on the front lines he must learn to take care of his own.

The traditional duties assigned to mercenary companies include the following:

LABOUR

Soldiers are a ready, available supply of strong backs for heavy labour. Some countries, like Khitai, assume their soldiers will work in the fields and build roads on command. Others, like Vendhya, have forbidden their soldiers from ever touching a tool. Most countries, however, fall somewhere in between the two extremes. Many soldiers spend enough time working stone or making buildings to pick up a second profession for their retirement.

When mercenary recruits dream about the valorous deeds they will commit they rarely, if ever, think about hauling giant stones or packing wet earth into the joints between mud and straw bricks. Unfortunately a remarkable amount of mercenary work involves just such grunt labour. When fussy captains finish whipping their camps into shape there are always more levies to build, walls to reinforce and fields to harvest before the first winter storms make the grain unusable.

Fortunately, labour contracts present an almost unmatched opportunity for larceny. When vast sums of gold change hands the unsophisticated accounting practices used in the Hyborian Age cannot stop a determined man from taking more than his fair share.

Architectural Design and City Planning

Engineering companies, especially those with modern roots, often receive contracts from kings and nobles immediately after a war to reconstruct damage cities, fortifications and roads. The patron hires them for their engineering skills and

often gives them access to reasonably large accounts with which to purchase construction materials and workers.

When the company begins this action the company captain assigns each engineer under his command one of the following roles:

Architect: The character becomes responsible for the overall design of whatever the company was hired to make. He must make a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) skill check (DC 25) each week. If he fails then the rest of the company wastes a week's work.

Accountant: The character becomes responsible for all materials and monies on the project. He must make a Profession (merchant) skill check (DC 25) each week. If he fails then the company stands idle while he and his assistants scrounge for materials.

Foreman: The character becomes responsible for leading a work gang of between five to 10 labourers. He must make a Diplomacy skill check (DC 20) each week. If he fails then his team fails to produce any useful work.

The company captain may also assign a character to assist any of the above roles. A character in an assistant role may either step in to make the skill check if something happens to the primary actor or take an aid another action to assist the principle.

If a character in an assistant or primary role wishes to divert funds into his own pockets he may do so by increasing the DC of his skill check by an amount equal to the number of gold luna per week he wishes to 'earn'.

Construction takes place using the normal craft rules. The rules assume the workers are unskilled labourers taking 10 on all actions.

Construction Labour

Non-engineering companies, particularly the poorer Free Companies and the Kushite Spearman, may find themselves working as heavy labourers. Their 'skills' with their weapons become entirely secondary to the strength of their backs and the ability for their patron to work them to death without fear of reprisals from the local community.

When a company engages in a season of construction labour each mercenary must make a Fortitude save (DC 10) in the first week. Each week after that the mercenary must make a Fortitude save with a DC equal to 10 + the total number of weeks worked -1.

If the mercenary fails this save he suffers a -2 penalty to attack and damage rolls until he receives a full week of uninterrupted rest. He no longer has to make Fortitude saves: he has already

expended his resources. If he rolls a natural one on the saving throw he takes 3d6 Constitution damage from an accident while on the job.

If the mercenary succeeds at this saving throw he receives a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls for the next week due to his improved physical condition. Should he somehow make it through an entire season of work (12 weeks) he receives a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls during the next season due to the changes wrought on his body by back-breaking labour.

Characters engaged in construction labour have few options for sneaking a little extra gold into their pockets.

Farming

Most mercenaries, somewhere in their backgrounds, fled a farm for the excitement of travel and adventure promised by the mercenary life. Much to their distaste, most mercenary companies lay down swords to help with the local harvest, regardless of whatever else they may be doing. Some, especially poorer companies, even have to farm specified lands while they wait for something, anything, to happen.

Mercenaries stuck with farming duties must make Profession (farmer) skill checks (DC 20) each season. Those that fail must give half of their pay back to the company so the supply corps can buy grain to make up for the shortfall they caused. Those that succeed get a bonus equal to half their normal pay for the season.

Farmers have little time for Corruption or graft.

Logistics and Supply

The final, and perhaps least dull, task in the labour duty allows the mercenary unit to work on logistics and supply for a military operation. The soldiers take the role of common teamsters and porters, hauling vast amounts of material from established distribution points to the battle lines. Each time they do so they have a chance to get involved with the action, dip into the loot coming back from the line or help another unit out of a jam.

A mercenary character assigned to this duty can take on one of the following roles:

Porter: A mercenary in the porter role carries supplies on his back. He must make a Strength check (DC 10) each week or take 1d4 Constitution damage from an accident while on the job.

Quartermaster: The mercenary takes responsibility for all of the loot and supplies for the entire army. He must make a Profession (quartermaster) skill check (DC 25) each week. If he succeeds

he correctly identifies which units will need resupply and can issue the appropriate orders to his assistants. If he fails then he increases the DC of all skill checks for his assistants and the teamsters by +4.

Quartermaster's Assistant: The mercenary takes responsibility for the loot and supplies of a single unit in the field. He must make a Profession (quartermaster) skill check (DC 20) each week or immediately after a major battle. If he succeeds he creates a supply packet he can hand off to a porter or teamster. If he fails he creates the packet but it does not contain the right materials to assist the assistant's unit.

Teamster: A teamster drives a cart or wagon packed to the brim with war supplies. He must make a Handle Animal skill check (DC 20) each week. If he succeeds he successfully resupplies one unit within a week's journey of his home base.

Corruption and logistics go hand in hand. A quartermaster's assistant or teamster can increase his weekly income by a number of silver pieces equal to the amount he increases the DC of his skill check. A quartermaster can increase his income by ten gold luna for each point of increase to his skill check DC.

GARRISON

One of the most boring of all possible assignments, garrison duty involves securing a fortress and defending it against any enemies. In good years, this mostly amounts to sending out occasional patrols and sleeping a lot. Good years are, unfortunately, few and far between. In the bad years the garrison troops spend endless hours in drill, along with even more hours waiting for the inevitable invasion.

Drawing garrison duty, especially on a relatively 'hot' border, is akin to drawing the short straw in the mercenary's life. The mercenary must stay in the garrison for at least a season, weathering any assaults the enemy may launch without the opportunity to supplement his meagre income with loot. He may also have to work as a common labourer in addition to his 'combat' duties. Fortunately this distasteful part of his life does not last long enough to make its way into the duty action roster.

Chasing After a Routed Attacker

One of the best moments in garrison duty comes when an enemy breaks himself on the fortification's walls. As he scrambles back the defender's sally, slashing a once well ordered unit or army into ribbons. As the attackers collapse they retreat from their camp usually leaving behind whatever wealth they had and all of their supplies. The defenders then receive their only chance to gather some loot. Whether this brief

splurge makes up for the long drudgery of garrison duty depends on the individual mercenary's own point of view.

When the defender breaks an attacking unit in combat the mercenary characters may use the looting rules (see Tools of Warfare on pg. 66) to draw personal loot from the field of battle and the mercenary's camp. See the section on Mercenary Camps (pg. 63) for more information about these structure's contents.

Defending the Line

Mercenaries on garrison duty may be called up to fight on the front lines in the event of an invasion. When this happens the soldier must put his life on the line knowing he will not get loot from the local surrounds but will receive a full share of the battlefield loot should he survive.

Games Masters and players may resolve this task using the rules presented in Fields Awash with Blood on pg. 87.

Scorched Earth

Sometimes things go poorly for the defenders. Indeed, sometimes the defenders have to fall back time and time again all the while fending off attacks by a superior foe. In order to slow down the attackers the defenders may resort to



a 'scorched earth' tactic, in which they destroy everything the enemy may use as a resource or supply.

Mercenaries involved with a scorched earth ploy may make a Search skill check (DC 25) once per day. If they succeed they negate one successful skill check associated with the invader's gather resources duty action. If they fail then they loot and burn the local countryside, but do little to slow the enemy down.

GUARD

Many cavalry units, and some heavy infantry units, guard the country's road system or merchant caravans from bandits or invaders. These units may be the only representative of central authority the peasants see for generations. Generally, this kind of work is light, even though it involves slogging through whatever unpleasant weather the world can throw in the man's path. Bandits rarely wish to fight fully armed and prepared groups of soldiers so what action the soldier sees will likely be very short.

Playing nanny to various merchant caravans rarely appeals to the bloody-minded soldiers who take up the mercenary lifestyle. However, these contracts always have fat purses and more than usual amount of opportunity to pick up a bit of graft. Freelancers often take guard contracts hoping to pick up enough silver to last through the lean winter months. Many talented soldiers enjoy a season of guard duty as a nice break between more dangerous assignments.

When a mercenary unit hires on for guard duty it usually splits into smaller groups (based on its chain of command) capable of spreading over an area. The characters gain the opportunity to act with relatively independence so long as they defend the people and the things under their care.

Protecting Merchants

When a merchant hires caravan guards, nine times out of ten he does not come under attack. However, those nine times of boredom do not make for interesting adventures or stories. So, at least once a season any time the Player Characters hire on as guards their caravan comes under attack by a force of bandits outnumbering the guards at least three to one.

In addition to the payment owed the unit for the mercenary's service most merchants pay each individual soldier 10% of his seasonal income as a 'bonus' for safe passage. If the bandit attack destroys the merchant's goods, or the merchant himself, he does not have to pay this bonus.

Road Protection

The mercenary and his small crew receive responsibility for protecting and maintaining a small section of the country's roadways (usually no more than 200 miles of roadway per group). The mercenary's unit is held responsible for any

loss of property or loss of life occurring along their assigned road.

On the positive side, the mercenary is almost expected to demand 'tolls' from those who pass. These tolls amount to 1 silver per mercenary per event. On busy roads this can amount to 3d10 silver a day. Less busy roads (like those in the national hinterlands) produce 3d10 silver a week for each mercenary on active duty.

INVASION

This is the 'classical' mercenary duty, in which the mercenary company invades their employer's enemy's territory. Maintaining order and protecting the civilian population fall in importance, while staying alive and killing the foe's soldiers before they kill you take on a new significance. However, although dangerous, invasion duty also gives the mercenaries their greatest opportunity for profit: looting. Invading armies rival locusts in their ability to strip a land bare of anything worthwhile, with the added danger of killing all the young men and stealing an entire generation of women.

Mercenaries of every sort and motivation enjoy the danger of invasion duties. They can march into enemy territory, cutting through legions of their foes on their way to glory and riches. In the heat of battle many otherwise sane men indulge their baser instincts, enjoying pleasures forbidden to them in normal life. Some freelancers, addicted to battle, will only serve with a company engaged in an invasion. They do not care one way or the other about the morality of the situation, only that they will have yet another opportunity to cross swords with a worthy foe.

Chasing After a Routed Defender

When a defender routes his units fall out of order. The attacking army commanders unleash their cut-throats, allowing them to loot and pillage as they please.

Characters may resolve this duty action by using the looting rules in Tools of Warfare on pg. 66.

Cutting Supply Lines

When a mercenary receives this duty his commanders order him to attack the defender's teamsters. The mercenaries use trackers and guides to hunt down an enemy teamster then attack it.

For each teamster destroyed one of the foe's units falls out of supply.

Joining Battle

When an invading force encounters defending troops they engage in combat. Games Masters and players

may resolve this task using the rules presented in Fields Awash with Blood on pg. 87.

Gathering Resources

An invading army outside of its supply lines must gather resources from the surrounding countryside. This process follows the looting rules outlined in Tools of Warfare on pg. 66. Each village pillaged can support a single unit for a week.

Setting a Siege

Once a defender settles into a fortification, even a crude one protected by little more than ditches and a wooden fence, hauling him out can prove to be a major chore. Fortunately most characters will not have to engage in the long, dull process of sitting for hours waiting for something to happen followed by the joy of crawling up a rickety ladder while defenders pour boiling lead down on them. They have survived such encounters in their past and can move on to more interesting activities, leaving the unnamed hordes to die in their place.

In order to lay siege to a fortification the attacker must outnumber the defender roughly two to one. This force allows the attacker to station two forces around the besieged point, enabling them to deal with the defender's full force if he chooses to attack.

Once the encirclement begins the attacker must spend time establishing a camp, picket lines and similar activities. Establishing each feature requires a separate skill check:

Camp: Profession (siege engineer) DC 20. Failure to properly establish the camp causes 10% of the attacking force to fall ill each week. This illness, usually a form of fever can lay an entire attacking army down in a matter of months.

Picket: Craft (woodworking) DC 20. Failure to properly establish the picket deprives the besiegers of their own defences. When the picket is built correctly it impedes the defender's movement, forcing them to stay within their fortification.

Guard Rotations: Diplomacy DC 20. Failure to properly establish guard rotations allows the defenders to slip through the attacker's pickets unnoticed. This increases the attacker's Listen and Spot DC's by 5 each.

Stores: Knowledge (engineering) DC 20. Failure to properly establish the stores causes the attacking units to consume twice as much food and equipment as they normally would. This excess consumption occurs through poor planning and logistics rather than a sudden fit of gluttony on the soldier's part.

PATROL

Cavalry and skirmisher units are often deployed on the nation's borders to patrol for enemy activity. They may also receive orders to violate those borders, checking on troop movements inside the other countries. These incursions are so common that they are no longer considered an act of war. Of course, that does not mean the other army will not put the invaders to death if they are caught.

Patrol duties involve travelling along the borders between the patron's lands and those of his neighbours. These patrols allow the patron to rest assured that his neighbours will not mount an invasion without at least some warning. Patrols often venture into other's territories, although they pretend to be 'lost' when captured in allied territory.

As with guard duty the mercenary unit splits into the smallest possible groups based on its chain of command. This means Shemite ashshuri break into pairs while Nemedian Adventurers tend to break either into solo mercenaries or full files of ten soldiers each.

Border Watch

The unit stretches out across the local border waiting for someone to attempt a crossing. Depending on their orders they may then have to stop the encroachment, allow it to pass unmolested or arrest it for further investigation. As a rule mercenaries prefer the first option, as by tradition they are allowed to pick through whatever belongings the encroacher possessed for their own profit.

Each week a character remains on border watch he must make a Spot skill check (DC 20). If he succeeds he spots someone moving through the border. This person could be anything from a lost shepherd to a disguised scout searching for information on troop dispositions on the mercenary's side of the border.

Courier Service

Cavalry units often sign up to do courier services during the off seasons. They parlay their reputation for speed and toughness into an opportunity to carry messages for nobles and extremely wealthy merchants. Although dull, this work keeps their mounts in shape and gives them a bit of extra coin.

Characters involved in courier duties can expect a tip equal to 10% of the total value of whatever they carry at either end of the journey.

Roughly 20% of the time the person giving the parcel to the courier has an ulterior motive: the character can sense this if he beats the person in a contested Bluff/Sense Motive skill check. These missions almost inevitably involve opposition:

usually nothing more than a handful of thugs or a rival courier.

Customs Search

A unit charged with customs searching has, in effect, hit the jackpot in terms of both looting and graft. They have the right to search any incoming or outgoing traffic for forbidden cargoes, seize those cargoes and collect taxes on goods brought into or taken out of the country. Each time they engage in any of these transactions they have one of three choices:

Play it straight: Gather the taxes, find the forbidden cargo and let the person go on.

Take a Bribe: If the characters find undeclared cargoes or forbidden materials he may choose not to report it. Traditionally the 'fee' for this activity is 10% of the total cargo value.

Take the Cargo: The characters may confiscate the undeclared cargo and fail to inform the central authority of their discovery. This forces them to fence the goods or otherwise dispose of them, keeping the majority of the profit for themselves. *Conan: Pirate Isles* contains detailed information on fencing cargoes.



Scouting

Mercenaries on patrol duty do not always stay in their little shelters waiting for the neighbours to come calling. Occasionally they cross friendly or not so friendly borders for a quick look around then return to make a report. Characters involved with these scouting duties have excellent opportunities to display their discretion and control but fewer chances to gather loot.

When a scouting party crosses the neighbouring border it makes a Hide skill check (DC 20) to avoid detection. If it succeeds it must make a similar skill check each hour to continue to avoid internal patrols and other hazards. Each hour one of the unit members may also make a Search skill check (DC 20). If successful he may gain information about one of the other units in the area including: its level, total number of members, affiliation or supply status.

Characters detected by the enemy have several options. In friendly territory they can flee or attempt to Bluff their way out. In enemy territory they can attack the discoverers or flee. In either case fleeing requires a chase to, and perhaps though, the unit's patron's border.

WATCH

Guarding city streets is, unfortunately, quite a bit more dangerous than guarding empty roads. The average citizen in most countries does not like the military. The thieves and cut-throats like anyone who might interfere with them even less than the common folk. However, a soldier with few scruples can find any number of people willing to help supplement his pay. Any number of petty larcenies, or even grand extortion rackets, plague peacetime watches.

Perhaps the most dangerous duty a mercenary company can take involves a stint as a city watch. When in the field or engaged with the enemy soldiers always know to be alert and from what direction their death comes. When working a watch though, they must deal with civilians and criminals whose intention can range from bribery to murder. Worse, that intention could change from one moment to the next.

Fortunately, watch contracts come with unparalleled opportunities for Corruption and graft. A corrupt watch unit can make gold hand over fist until finally relieved of duty. They can also make a lot of enemies: whether or not they care about those enemies depends entirely on their own point of view.

As with the previous two duties, mercenary units hired to perform watch duties break into their smallest possible command unit to perform these duties. This allows them to spread their force throughout the watched

DUTIES AND SCENARIO DESIGN

The Games Master does not have to treat the duty structures presented below as a straightjacket on their creativity. Instead, he should feel free to change each structure to fit the specific circumstances he wishes to portray. Similarly, players should look to the duty descriptions as a springboard into new adventures rather than as a series of hurdles to overcome while they wait for something interesting to happen.

area rather than concentrating forces as they do for combat operations.

Prison Guard

Working as a prison guard forces a soldier to engage in long, brutal hours of boredom seasoned with occasional opportunities to take bribes and help young ladies 'plead their belly' when faced with crimes involving a sentence of death. They can also, if so inclined, engage in various depraved behaviours best left to the imagination.

Once per week characters engaged in prison guard duty can make a Sense Motive skill check (DC 20). For each character that succeeds they discover one person among the throng of visitors who will willingly pay 1d4 gold luna to speak with a prisoner.

Protection

Mercenaries hired to watch an urban area often receive orders to provide particular protection to specific people. These 'protected' individuals usually hold some important position in the local power structure. Each protected individual receives enough soldiers to provide him with 24 hour coverage by no fewer than two trained mercenaries at any given time.

Although protection duties do not generally involve a lot of opportunity for graft they do offer the character unequalled access to the local power structure. Each week he can make a free Gather Information skill check with a +5 circumstance bonus to simulate his access to rumours and information beyond the pale of ordinary mercenary soldiers.

While the mercenary remains on protection duty his commander

expects him to lay down his life in order to protect the charge. In some cases this means little more than flattening a few rowdies from time to time. However, when the mercenary's charge comes under threat of assassination (or worse, sorcery) he must use every means at his disposal to keep the person alive.

Public Order

Mercenaries charged with maintaining public order do not, as a rule, have anything to do with solving crimes. Rather, they march into areas where citizens of all sorts gather together for purposes other than legitimate commerce and disperse them. They do this in order to keep the streets quiet not to prevent the crimes or solve intricate mysteries.

While performing this duty the mercenaries also become responsible for enforcing local curfews and breaking up gatherings over a specific number of members.

As with any form of watch duty, the mercenaries may take the opportunity to take a bribe in order to look the other way. Successfully convincing the people that they want to give the mercenary a bribe requires a Diplomacy check, moving the group from unfriendly to friendly. Dispersing a group without at least a show of force requires a similar skill check.

Bribe amounts usually come to 1d4 silvers per person in the offending group. On an average night the character will encounter no more than 1d6 groups.

Keeping public order in a conquered area requires the characters to deal with hostile populations. This causes the DC of any Diplomacy skill check to increase fairly dramatically.

Riot Control

When a population turns hostile the mercenaries don their heaviest armour and go out to restore order. If the fighting lasts for more than a day they may engage in looting, using the rules outlined in Tools of Warfare on pg. 66 to loot cities.

MERCENARY CONTRACTS OPPORTUNITIES

As described, the duties they undertake define a mercenary's life. However, most mercenaries do not have the ability to influence what contracts their captains take. Instead they simply have to suffer though whatever disasters the officers lead them into.

Captains (and sometimes other officers) can, however, use the following rules to sniff out contracts they might have an

interest in. Once they identify interesting opportunities they must use diplomacy and intrigue to cause it to come their way.

Individual mercenaries, called freelancers or Free Companions, can also use these rules when they wish to find opportunities for employment somewhere in the world. Of course, finding a rumour about possible employment only being the mercenary's travails: he must travel to the prospective client, fend off his rivals and convince the patron to take on his services.

FINDING A CONTRACT

When a character wishes to find a contract he must make a Gather Information skill check. The DC of this skill check depends on the kind of contract he wishes to find, the travel time to the contract and a host of other factors.

The character can make this Gather Information skill check once per week.

SECURING THE CONTRACT

Once the character discovers the contract he must decide whether or not to pursue it. If he chooses to go after the opportunity he will face 1d4 competitors of equal level and Reputation. The Games Master will have to adjudicate how the patron wishes to select between the competing mercenary groups.

When deciding between the various competitors the patron will make decisions based on his specific situation. Typical factors include:

- ❖ The captain's reputation related to the required duties.
- ❖ Who reaches them alive? Many mercenary captains arrange for their competitors to mysteriously 'vanish' on their way to speak with a specific patron.
- ❖ How the captain proposes to go about meeting the duty.
- ❖ Why the patron needs the duty fulfilled. A patron looking for

fodder will usually not hire Nemedian Adventurers for his tasks, while one looking for covert activity will tend to avoid Kushite spearmen.

- ❖ When the captain's forces become available for use.

MERCENARY CAMPS

Mercenaries spend almost their entire lives in designated camps of one form or another. These camps come in five basic types: civilian bivouacs, field camps, garrison barracks, siege camps. Each of these types carries with it a unique set of challenges and opportunities.

CIVILIAN BIVOUACS

When a group of mercenaries or soldiers lodge either in an inn or a private home they are in a 'civilian bivouac'. They generally do not pay for the space or the food they consume, although more enlightened governments will reimburse their citizens for their troubles. While they have these 'guests' the property's owners are effectively held hostage in their own homes, forced to provide whatever the soldiers need in return for whatever the occupiers wish to offer.

Mercenaries in a civilian bivouac in friendly territory generally come under some pressure to exhibit their best behaviour. Their patron does not necessarily want them to unduly anger the population. They are expected to pay a token amount for whatever food they eat, be reasonably polite and avoid criminal behaviour if at all possible.

The opposite rules apply when the mercenaries possess civilian quarters in hostile lands. The soldiers are often under orders to 'pacify' the opposing population using any means they deem necessary. This can include

Locating a Contract

| Pay | Base DC |
|---|---------|
| Loot only (loot gained from enemy forces) | 5 |
| One half normal (a full share of the loot and one-half the mercenary's normal pay) | 10 |
| Normal (a full share of the loot and the mercenary's normal pay) | 15 |
| Half Again (a full share of the loot and one and a half times the mercenary's normal pay) | 20 |
| Double (a full share of the loot and twice the mercenary's normal pay) | 25 |

Contract's Duration

| Duration | DC Modifier |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| One Season (3 months) | +0 |
| Two Seasons (6 months) | +3 |
| Three Seasons (9 months) | +6 |
| One Year (12 months) | +9 |

Travel Time to Place of Employ

| Travel Time | DC Modifier |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1d4 months | -5 |
| 1 month | +0 |
| 1d4 weeks | +5 |
| 1 week | +10 |

Contract's Required Duty

| Duty Type | DC Modifier |
|------------------|-------------|
| Labour | +0 |
| Garrison | -3 |
| Guard | -3 |
| Invasion | +0 |
| Patrol | +0 |
| Watch | -3 |
| One extra duty | +5 |
| Two extra duties | +10 |

Other Concerns

| Special Circumstances | DC Modifier |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Contract with a sorcerer | +4 |
| Covert Contract | +8 |
| Contract starts in a specific season | +4 |
| Singular Contract | +8 |



hideous abuses of their hosts, usually intended to weaken their will and make them look forward to the day when the soldiers will finally leave.

Characters in a civilian bivouac do not have to pay for room and board. Nor, for that matter, does their company captain or the local patron unless he later chooses to do so.

FIELD CAMPS

When on the march or just before a big battle mercenaries establish field camps where they can rest for no more than a three days. A field camp rarely amounts to more than tents scattered around cook fires, with a latrine and potentially a second refuse pit dug to keep the stink away from the soldiers.

It takes a mercenary unit or disciplined national military unit about an hour to set up or break down its field camp. During this time 50% of the soldiers engage in camp building activities (e.g. setting up tents, hauling buckets of water and digging) while the other 50% stand watch. After that the force generally retires, with no more than 10% of the active force standing watch at any given time.

Mercenaries and other military forces generally set up their camps on the nearest flat, relatively stable surface. In most of the civilised world this means they wander out onto a farmer's fields and set up camp. A single unit can completely destroy the crops of a single farmstead in a single

night. This tendency does not make the local populations overly friendly towards the soldiers, even in ostensibly friendly countries.

In 'friendly' territory the mercenaries can sleep in their field camp with relative safety. However in unfriendly territory they can expect the commoners and local resistance to kill 2d4 watchers every night. These deaths happen suddenly, usually in the cold hours of the night when the blood stills and movements become sluggish.

If the force inhabits a field camp for an extended period of time (e.g. more than three days) the camp will begin to transform from a relatively flat field into a muddy cesspool filled with disease and insects. The unit officers can avoid this transformation by commanding the unit to establish a siege camp, though many mercenary groups lack the practical skills to establish such an ordered place of residence in the field.

GARRISON BARRACKS

Probably the ideal place for mercenaries to settle down for a long stay, garrison barracks are dedicated facilities within a fortification intended to house troops for extended periods of time. So long as the mercenaries keep up with their chores the facility will remain relatively comfortable for months or even years.

The garrison contains living quarters, a cafeteria area for the preparation of food and practice yard for the soldiers to drill in their martial skills. While in the garrison each soldier receives a practical work duty intended to keep him busy and to maintain the barracks for everyone's benefit. Some of these duties, like cleaning the latrines, have a relatively low status and make excellent ways to haze the new recruits. Others, like preparing the captain's dinner, go to veterans with clearly established loyalties and extensive experience.

When in barracks the mercenaries' primary enemy is boredom. In order to combat this insidious threat the soldiers play games of chance, boast of their past deeds and take up a wide variety of crafts. Some particularly industrious soldiers even produce their own arms and armour during these long, dull periods.

SIEGE CAMPS

When a unit must spend more than a few days in the same place they establish a siege camp. This elaborate camp follows strict rules and regimented structural mandates, ranging from where to put the latrines to how to order the tents. Most siege camps also have a picket or light fence built around the perimeter in order to slow an attacker down.

Life in a siege camp strongly resembles that in a barracks. Each soldier has, in addition to his combat and watch duties, a set of practical chores he must complete each day. These

Services Available from the Camp Followers

| Size | Drugs/Herbals | Goods | Liquor | Sorcery | Whores |
|--------------|---------------|----------|--------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Unit | 1 sp | 10 sp | 1 sp | — | 1 sp per visit |
| 2 to 4 Units | 4 sp | 40 sp | 4 sp | — | 5 sp per visit |
| 5 to 9 Units | 20 sp | 200 sp | 20 sp | — | 1 gl per visit |
| 10+ Units | 100 sp | 1,000 sp | 100 sp | 1 level 3 scholar | 5 gl per visit |
| 20+ Units | 200 sp | 2,000 sp | 200 sp | 1 level 6 scholar | 10 gl per visit |
| 30+ Units | 400 sp | 4,000 sp | 400 sp | 1 level 9 scholar | 20 gl per visit |



chores range from digging out the latrine to packing the earth within the pickets to prevent the formation of muddy patches. Failure to execute these tasks can lead to severe reprimand in even the least disciplined units, as failure can affect the fighting efficacy of the unit as a whole.

When in a siege camp each mercenary must make a Profession (any) skill check (DC 15) each day. If he fails three days in a row he receives a dressing down that inflicts a -1 morale penalty to attack and damage rolls during the next day.

THE TAWDRY SIDE OF LIFE

Mercenaries, more so even than criminals and others of less than savoury reputation, very much enjoy the rude pleasures life offers. They enjoy them so much, in fact, that most large mercenary armies have their own travelling 'road-shows' filled with people who most common civilisations consider at best tacky and at worst criminal.

The number of services available and their cost goes up as the number of units present increases. Past ten units the total number of camp followers outstrips the number of soldiers. Past 30 units the total number of camp followers reaches its high point, achieving a two followers for every one-soldier

ratio. At this point the camp followers look and smell much like a mobile city filled with the worst debauchery the civilised world can come up with.

Officers all over the world regard these travelling circuses with distaste bordering on active hatred. Nothing disrupts discipline like a pack of whores and drug mongers, especially during long sieges or when the army needs to move at speed. They will occasionally order groups of relatively pious troops to 'sweep' the camp followers away, only to see the riffraff return within a handful of days.

Size: The total number of units in the army.

Drugs/Herbals: The maximum cost, per dose, of an alchemical or herbal preparation available in one of the many camp-follower tents.

Goods: The maximum cost of an object available in the camp follower's market. These items will often be slanted towards the military life, with a preponderance of arms, armour and various luxury goods. Slaves are not usually available in a camp-follower market unless the camp follows an invading army.

Liquor: The maximum cost per glass of liquor available in the camp. The character will get what he pays for here: more expensive liquor generally tastes much, much better than the raw stuff they usually serve to soldiers.

Sorcery: Somewhere in a very large camp the mercenaries can sometimes find a skilled witch, often an old woman, who knows many things. The sorcerer's presence in the camp indicates that his services are for hire to those who dare to seek him out.

Whores: The maximum cost per visit of a whore in the camp. Mercenaries paying to visit whores may hire less expensive recreation if they so desire. As with liquor, the character gets as much service as he pays for.

Tools of Warfare

Harness, Arms and Engines

MERCENARIES LIVE AND die by their kit and the wealth they pull from their enemies' steaming corpses. They spend this wealth on everything from cheap whores to gaudy baubles, sparing only those coins they need to invest in their harness. Once they run out of coin they must go forth and find more, usually through the expedient of vying with the carrion crows for a bit of their fodder.

This chapter describes both the process mercenaries use to gather wealth beyond their meagre pay and the things they spend this wealth on.

LOOTING CORPSES, FARMS AND CITIES

Mercenaries receive little in the way of recompense for their efforts. A handful of silver they will blow on whores and some kit to keep the arrows off does not allow a soldier to squirrel away enough silver to eventually buy a farm or otherwise retire from the active mercenary life. Fortunately most professional armies and mercenary companies allow their soldiers to freely loot both the living and the dead, supplementing their income with the hard won goods owned by others.

LOOTING CORPSES

Former battlefields, filled with the rich pickings left for carrion crows and other less savoury creatures, seem like a prime picking ground for choice loot. Everything the fallen soldiers carried into battle with them lies strewn on the ground along with their blood and entrails. However, hunting through a battlefield for choice bits requires the mercenary to face everything from the deads' rightful predators to the uncertainties of decaying bodies and liquid flesh.

The dangers a character faces, as well as what he might find, depend on how quickly he begins his ghoulish work.

Before Sunset the Day of the Battle

The hours immediately after a battle finally comes to a halt, whether because no one can fight any longer or because the sides decide to take a break, the walking wounded and healers move through the battlefield to pick up as

many of their own casualties as they can. During this time an eerie truce settles between the soldiers. Men who, not an hour before, strove to kill one another work side-by-side to retrieve fallen comrades.

Looting corpses during this period, with the corpses' friends and comrades working no more than 20 yards away, requires iron nerves and a great deal of guts. Making the attempt requires the character to make a Sleight of Hand skill check (DC 25). If he succeeds he may remove one item from a fallen foe without alerting the other army. If he fails, then 2d4 enemy soldiers immediately drop their current work and spring to the attack.

Even if the character succeeds on his Sleight of Hand skill check not all 'corpses' have passed into the great beyond. There is a 50% chance that the 'corpse' is really a casualty: one of the walking wounded (1d4 hit points remaining) or injured, but not yet dead (stabilised at 0 to -9 hit points). The walking wounded will fight to retain their possessions; the injured will not, but will die if the character does not take action to help them. Engaging one of the walking wounded causes the character to fail his Hide skill check. Killing an injured man without attracting attention requires a *coup de grace* action as described in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

Looting your allies' corpses, whether intentionally or unintentionally, can cause the looter considerable problems. All of the equipment and goods on allied soldiers' bodies technically belongs to either the army or mercenary company who employed them. The looter is, in effect, stealing from his employer. If he wishes to loot a corpse from his own side he must make a Sleight of Hand skill check, as described above.

The practical consequence of stealing from allied corpses in broad-daylight depends almost entirely on the looter's army or mercenary company. At the very least the patron will subject the looter to punishments appropriate for theft; if he was caught killing the injured for his own profit he may also pay the penalty for murder as well.

Looting on the Field of Victory

When one side drives the others from the field they can loot the bodies of their fallen foes with impunity. However, technically the serviceable equipment held by the fallen enemy soldiers belongs to the company. A would-be looter

on clean-up detail is expected to turn in all useful equipment to the company for later distribution as part of his personal share of the spoils. Stealing from the company (using the rules presented here) requires a deft hand and fast wit.

Wealth Gained and Harvested

Immediately after the battle the pickings remain relatively fresh. A looter who picks up a bit of equipment has a 80% chance of finding one common item from the enemy's kit (chosen randomly) still in serviceable condition.

Cleaning up the Mess

Some armies, notably the Shemite asshuri, always pick up the bodies of their fallen. They will not leave the field, unless routed, without the body and equipment of every fallen asshuri. If all of the armies involved in the slaughter take this kind of care they can clean the field of battle of useable salvage within a single day, thereby terminating the looter's chance to pick up some personal goods.

From Dusk until Dawn

The situation changes once twilight falls on the field of battle. Darkness cloaks the once soldiers and crows dominated landscape. The groans of the dying fade as the carrion stench settles down on the field like a miasma. The very air becomes thick and sweet, a poisonous fume capable of taking the breath of even the hardest man.

The peasants and commoners who went to ground during the fighting emerge to reap their own bloody harvest. Where the soldiers burned their fields, destroyed their homes and raped their daughters, the commoners slip onto the battlefield to take what wealth they can find. Organised groups of peasants, armed with stolen weapons and stealth, strip the bodies of men and animals alike.

This systemic stealing does not limit itself to useable equipment and valuable baubles. Any significant amount of metal, scraps of leather or bit of useful meat finds its way from the field onto the commoner's wagons. They will try to take everything they can, leaving only naked bodies behind. Any injured or walking wounded left on the field will suffer terrible torment at their hands until the mercy of death frees them.

A mercenary looter foolish enough to interfere with this process must rely on stealth, or a good sword arm, to protect himself. The field swarms with groups of 2d10 2nd level thieves. Spotting a group requires a Spot check (DC 17); avoiding detection by them requires both a Hide and Move Silently skill check (DC 18). The looter must make these skill checks each time he tries to acquire an item from the battlefield.

Beyond the dangers presented by these groups the looter must also deal with the packs of ghouls (in Argos or Zingara),

LOOTING AND ROLEPLAYING

In the real world looting is a psychologically traumatising activity leading to the commission of war crimes. The system presented below attempts to present an interesting moral dilemma for the characters without getting too deep into disgusting details.

If either the Games Master or the players are uncomfortable with the reality of looting, feel free to use less graphic rules.

aggressive packs of wild dogs and the ghosts of dead soldiers locked in the pain of their final moments. If a looter avoids the commoners he still has a 30% chance of encountering one or all of these hazards each time he tries to find an item worth the trouble.

Finding an Item in the Dark

The systematic stripping of the dead that marks this time period reduces the likelihood a lone looter will find anything of significant value. Before midnight the looter must make a Search skill check (DC 20, DC 15 if he has the Eyes of the Cat feat) to identify one useful item. Once he spots the item he must avoid or overcome the competing commoner group and overcome any natural or supernatural obstacles to claim it for his own.

Each Search attempt takes roughly 30 minutes.

The Aftermath

When dawn once again bloodies the sky in preparation for another day the once rich charnel house of the fallen holds little of interest to men. However, the animal world sees things a bit differently. The rich smell of rotting bodies attracts and emboldens creatures who would normally leave men alone, sparking a feeding frenzy of predators.

Every time the would-be looter seeks out a useable item on one a field of battle he has a 50% chance of encounter a pack of 2d10 wild dog or a murder of 4d10 ravens. These creatures will gleefully attack the would-be looter, potentially turning him into another meal for their hungry bellies.

Finding an Item in the Aftermath

Finding a single item in the aftermath requires a Search skill check (DC

| Looted Area | Total Value | For the soldiers | For the Army | Remaining | Corruption DC |
|-------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Farmstead | 1,000 sp | 200 sp | 300 sp | 500 sp | 12 |
| Village | 20,000 sp | 4,000 sp | 6,000 sp | 10,000 sp | 15 |
| Town | 100,000 sp | 20,000 sp | 30,000 sp | 50,000 sp | 17 |
| City | 500,000 sp | 100,000 sp | 150,000 sp | 250,000 sp | 19 |
| Metropolis | 1,000,000 sp | 200,000 sp | 300,000 sp | 500,000 sp | 21 |
| Capital | 2,000,000 sp | 400,000 sp | 600,000 sp | 1,000,000 sp | 24 |

30). This skill check takes 30 minutes and always provokes an encounter as described above.

SACKING CITIES AND VILLAGES

Looting has accompanied warfare since man first took up arms against his brothers. By time of the Hyborian kingdoms mankind once again established rules about 'civilised' looting that gloss over most of the horror. These rules will vanish when the kingdoms fall. Their echoes will find voice again thousands of years later among the people who arise in time.

THE RULES OF LOOTING

The Hyborian tribes established rules in their pre-history about acceptable behaviour during when sacking a city or looting a conquered area. Over time these standards became part of the rules of civilised behaviour followed by nearly every nation. Only the Stygians stubbornly refuse to accept them. Of course, this is in part because the Stygians continue to dream of one day re-conquering their lost lands. Those dreams always centrally feature the horrid torments they will inflict on the former slaves.

In game terms, breaking the rules of looting exposes the character to Corruption. It also causes the character to lose Reputation. However, each time the character breaks the rules he gains access to greater personal wealth and pleasure.

The rules of looting are:

- 1) Take no more than two measures of ten for the soldiers and three in ten for the army.
- 2) Bring no fire or blade against the trees, hedges or fields.
- 3) Take no woman who is with child.
- 4) Respect the property of those who swear fealty.
- 5) Take no more than one child in five as a slave.
- 6) Take no more than one craftsman in ten as a slave.

Breaking each rule brings the following consequences and benefits.

Breaking the First Rule

Breaking the first rule involves taking more than your personal share. Soldiers as a group are allowed to loot and sack as they choose, but may only take 20% of the total value of a particular area for themselves. Another 30% of the value goes to the army.

Each time the characters have an opportunity to loot an area consult the chart above.

A single character may take an equal share without risking Corruption. An equal share is defined as the total value available to the soldiers divided by the total number of surviving soldiers.

For example: Hrulf and his four companions loot a farmstead. They may take up to 200 sp total from it, for an equal share of 40 sp, without risking Corruption.

If a character is not satisfied with his share of the loot, he may choose to take more. To do so he must make a skill check (DC 20) on one of the following skills: Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate. If he succeeds he increases his take by a share.

Each skill represents a different approach to looting:



- ❖ **Bluff:** the character convinces the people who once owned the items to give them to him.
- ❖ **Diplomacy:** the character bargains with the people, offering something in return for their goods.
- ❖ **Intimidate:** the character uses threats and violence to force the people to give him what he wants.

Each time the character makes a skill check, whether he succeeds or fails, he runs the risk of gaining one point of Corruption. The DC of the Corruption save is listed in the chart above.

The total value looted by a single character cannot exceed the 'remaining' value listed in the chart above.

A single character may continue increasing his share until his fellow soldier's stop him or he fails on three skill checks. At that time, he has discovered as much as he possibly can.

Breaking the Second Rule

The second rule exists to prevent famine and preserve the value of conquered territories. It comes from the time when the Hyborian tribes pushed into the south. They recognised the importance of preserving the land, even as they depopulated or subjugated it.

When a soldier breaks the second rule he increases the absolute value his army draws from the city by a percentage equal to his Intelligence modifier. This value comes out of the area's infrastructure, harming its ability to recover. In order to do this he must make a skill check with one of the following skills (DC 20): Knowledge (architecture and engineering), Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (nature).

If the character fails he decreases the total value by 1d10% instead of raising it.

Whether he succeeds or fails he must make a Corruption save each time he takes this action. The settlement type, as described above, sets the DC. If he fails the character gains one point of Corruption.

Breaking the Third Rule

The third rule preserves the future generation while allowing soldiers to do as they will. They may not touch women who are visibly with child.

Each time the character violates this rule he must also make a Corruption save (DC 25). If he fails he gains 1d4-1 points of Corruption.

Breaking the Fourth Rule

The fourth rule protects native inhabitants who formally surrender to the invading army. By formally surrendering the person places themselves at the army's mercy. The army,

in return, agrees to respect the rules of looting in regards to the surrendered.

If a character breaks one of the rules with regards to a surrendered enemy he suffers two points of Corruption for each failed saving throw. He also loses one point of Reputation for each violation of the code.

Breaking the Fifth and Sixth Rules

The fifth and sixth rules provide the same protection as the second. A land depopulated of its children and craftsman cannot produce tribute, wasting the effort of conquering it. Just as importantly, people will fight for their children when they would otherwise lay down their weapons. More than one war has spontaneously erupted back into conflict over the death of a child.

Characters who violate either of these rules must make a Diplomacy skill check (DC 20) to avoid inciting a small scale riot. If they succeed on their skill check they may increase their personal take by 10 sp. If they fail they must put down to riot without attracting additional attention.

Violating this rule requires a Corruption check (DC 10 for an artisan, DC 13 for a child). Failure earns the character one additional point of Corruption.

CIMMERIANS, PICTS AND STYGIANS

Of all the races of man only Cimmerians, Picts, and Stygians use rules substantially different than those listed above. These groups obey their own codes, with the following system ramifications:

Cimmerians do not assault women, but they see nothing wrong with burning a place to the ground. They do not suffer Corruption when violating the second rule, but automatically suffer Corruption when breaking the third.

Picts do not believe in any rules of warfare. They will make any act that indulges their pleasures. They suffer Corruption normally, but do not suffer losses to their Reputations.

Stygians revel in the Corruption caused by unchecked violence. They do as they will regardless of the consequences. They gain a bonus to their looting skill checks equal to their current Corruption scores.

LOOTING CITIES USING CARGOES

If the Games Master wishes, he may use the cargo rules presented in *Conan: Pirate Isles* instead of the generic

| Looted Area | Total Value | Sample Cargo |
|-------------|--------------|--|
| Farmstead | 1,000 sp | 1 common cargo |
| Village | 20,000 sp | 10 common cargoes, 1 uncommon cargo |
| Town | 100,000 sp | 10 common cargoes, 4 uncommon cargoes, 1 exotic cargo |
| City | 500,000 sp | 50 common cargoes, 20 uncommon cargoes, 5 exotic cargoes |
| Metropolis | 1,000,000 sp | 100 common cargoes, 40 uncommon cargoes, 10 exotic cargoes |
| Capital | 2,000,000 sp | 200 common cargoes, 80 uncommon cargoes, 20 exotic cargoes |

system presented above. The section below presents the necessary information and changes required to adapt that system to generalised looting.

Loot per City

Every settlement can contain any number of cargoes. The following chart displays the maximum value of all of the contained cargoes.

If the general takes more than ½ the available cargoes he 'loots' the city, destroying it completely.

One unit can loot two cargoes per day from a settlement. A general may assign any number of units, up to the number of units in his army, to perform looting tasks.

Transporting, Selling and Distributing Cargoes

Unlike pirates, generals and soldiers generally have access to legitimate markets and professional factors. The real challenge is not finding buyers, but finding enough transportation to ship the goods back to the general's home country.

Each cargo requires at least three wagons to transport it. The army will need to protect these wagons on their journey, as well as pay the teamsters, pay for the food for the pack animals and pay taxes on the goods when they finally reach their destination.

Once the goods arrive, the general receives 25% of the value for his own coffers. Another 20% goes to his soldiers as part of their rightful spoils. The remainder, roughly 45%, goes to the merchant factors who sold the goods or to the government supporting the army.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT AND KIT

Soldiers enjoy their comforts. They live hard, often pointless lives; taking comfort in crass material goods, cheap women and even cheaper ale often stands between them and sweet oblivion on the end of their own daggers. This section contains information about the material goods mentioned above. The cheap women are

detailed in Rewards of Blood on pg. 54. Cheap ale is cheap ale, wherever and whenever a man buys it.

SIEGE TOOLS

Siege warfare ranks among the most difficult, dangerous and boring forms of warfare imaginable. Unless the siege breaks in the first few weeks this kind of warfare involves long-term entrenchment camping, with occasional bouts of mayhem as one or both sides attempt to test the others resolve.

Folding Brace: This innovative device looks like so many metal struts hooked together. However, in a single round it can be unfolded to become a five-foot tall by four-foot wide archway. This locked archway can support up to 2000 lb. of weight, making it an ideal support for an unsteady tunnel or other sapping operation.

Folding Brace; Wt. 10 lb.; 70 sp

Hand Bore: A hand bore is a large crank with a good-sized drill bit on the forward end. It is used to crack open tough stone surfaces or to create fissures that can be used to weaken a structure. As a full round action someone with Strength 15+ can bore a one inch wide hole in any normal rock surface.

Hand Bore; Wt. 5 lb.; 1 sp

Hand Ram: This short spear shaped object has a flat, blunt blade designed for slipping between the stones or bricks of a fortification wall. Each round as a full round action a character with a hand ram does 1d6 hit points of damage to the section of wall that he works on. No more than three characters may work on the same section of wall at a time.

Siege Tools

| Item | Cost | Weight |
|-----------------------------|--------|---------|
| Builder's kit | 5 sp | 5 lb. |
| Folding brace | 70 sp | 10 lb. |
| Hand bore | 1 sp | 5 lb. |
| Hand ram | 2 sp | 15 lb. |
| Personal banner | 2 sp | ½ lb. |
| Portable shelter | 25 sp | 40 lb. |
| Sapper's kit | 5 sp | 10 lb. |
| Signal banner | 5 sp | 5 lb. |
| Standard | 500 sp | 10 lb. |
| Quicklime (per month usage) | 100 sp | 2 tons. |



Hand Ram; Wt. 15 lb.; 2 sp

Personal Banner: A personal banner is an individualised pennant that the character attaches to some prominent and obvious part of his armour (on a pole, his lance or his shield most typically). It allows anyone who is trying to spot the character a +2 bonus on his Spot checks.

Personal Banner; Wt. ½ lb.; 2 sp

Portable Shelter: A portable shelter has somewhat more substance than a tent, and therefore somewhat more weight. It has reinforced siding that provides one half cover to anyone within it. Like a typical tent it sleeps two.

Portable Shelter; Wt. 40 lb.; 25 sp

Sapper's Kit: A sapper's kit contains a variety of tools for the creation and destruction tunnels. Without a sapper's kit you suffer a -2 penalty to Profession (siege engineer) checks that involve the creation and destruction of tunnels either for offensive or defensive purposes in a siege.

Sapper's Kit; Wt. 5 lb.; 5 sp

Signal Banner: A signal banner is a large, brightly coloured flag that can hopefully be seen across an entire battlefield. When combined with signal horns or drums the flags give the unit commanders a +2 to any skill or attribute checks required to determine what, exactly, it is that the army commander wishes for them to do.

Signal Banner; Wt. 5 lb.; 5 sp

Standard: A standard is a tall banner bearing the colours and symbol of the unit, army, or nation that the soldiers fight for. Its presence on the battlefield has a positive effect on morale. Losing the standard causes the army's morale to falter, giving them a -1 penalty to all attack and damage rolls until the standard is reclaimed.

Standard; Wt. 10 lb.; 500 sp

Quicklime: Quicklime is a by-product of the creation of charcoal. Its primary use is to reduce the smell and potential contamination of latrines. Units that use quicklime have +2 bonus to any Fortitude saves to resist disease during the long months of a siege.

Quicklime can be used to terrible affect when thrown at an oncoming force. Quicklime is heavily alkaline and evaporates moisture from any living thing it comes into contact with dealing 1d6 points of damage each round that a characters is subjected to contact with the substance. Washing quicklime off with water worsens the effects to 3d6 per round. The effects of quicklime can only be countered with some form of acid, of an equal strength to the quicklime itself, such as the juice of the apples of derketa. If a character suffering the effects of quicklime exposure is not tended to within 10 rounds the character must attempt a Fortitude saving throw (DC 25); failure results in permanent blindness. A character not tended to in 20 rounds must make an additional Fortitude saving throw (DC 30), failure result in the permanent loss of 1d4 points of Constitution.

Quicklime (per month); Wt. 2000 lb.; 100 sp

SOLDIER'S COMFORTS

The life of a soldier is not an easy one. The following distractions make their lives slightly less tedious while on long term garrison duty.

Bones: Six sided dice are found in some of the oldest games known to man. The values on the faces change from one game to another but the basic cubic shape remains the same. A set of bones can be used for any number of games of random chance so long as everyone knows the rules.

Bones; Wt. 1/10th lb.; 1 sp

Cards: Cards are a more elaborate form of game of chance, readily available only in cultures that have some form of printing press technology (mundane or magical). Otherwise cards are for officers, gentlemen, and the nobility. Typically made on a thick rag paper cards have a single blank or patterned side and a painted side showing a value and some sort of traditional motif.

Cards; Wt. 1/5th lb.; 10 sp

Figurine: Many soldiers and artists make simple figurines of wood or stone. These keepsakes resemble good friends, comrades lost in battle, or other subjects that the buyer finds dear. Some are of more graphic nature, depicting well-known camp followers, enemies carved up in the heat of battle, and other similar topics.

Figurine; Wt. 1/10th lb.; 1 sp

Folding Stool: This cunning dwarven contraption uses canvas and several hinged metal legs to create a stable backless seat that can be easily folded up and packed. For an army on the move such a device is a luxury – seats are in short supply in a mobile army camp.

Folding Stool; Wt. 2 lb.; 10 sp

Jacks: An evolution of the scatter sticks game jacks are twisted pieces of metal vaguely resembling caltrops. They come in sets of twenty with a single reasonably elastic ball. The goal is to bounce the ball and collect as many jacks as possible and still catch the ball before it hits the ground. Endless hours (and quite a bit of coin) can be spent playing jacks, so much so that some officers regard the game as anathema to army discipline.

Jacks; Wt. 1/2 lb.; 2 sp

Memory Stones: This small pouch contains worn stones, each of which has the name of a separate task on it. When you use these to help you to remember your daily activities you gain a +2 equipment bonus to any Intelligence check to remember to perform tasks or to remember what you were doing at a specific time.

Memory Stones; Wt. ½ lb.; 1 sp

Scatter Sticks: One of the first and earliest games, sticks has remained popular because of its endless entertainment value. A pack of sticks allows a group of men to burn hours in constant play. The winner of a game is determined by a contested Sleight of Hand check, with the highest skill check result getting the most sticks from the pile.

Scatter Sticks; Wt. ½ lb.; 1 sp

Sharpening Stone (personal): The personal sharpening stone is a fine-grained stone you use to hone dents and dings out of a blade. If you take an hour to hone the blade and make a Craft (weaponsmith) skill check (DC 20) you can give a steel slashing weapon a ‘razor’s edge’.

Sharpening Stone (personal); Wt. 2 lb.; 10 sp

Sharpening Stone (wheel): The wheel sharpening stone is a three-foot wheel attached to a foot pedal. It allows a craftsman to quickly sharpen multiple slashing melee weapons. Each sharpened steel slashing weapon takes a five minutes and a Craft skill check (DC 20). On a successful skill roll the weapon acquires a ‘razor’s edge’ and has its threat range increased by one for the first hit in a combat.

Sharpening Stone (wheel); Wt. 150 lb.; 200 sp

Sleeping Draught: This packet of bitter herbs contains within it powerful sleeping drugs. After drinking a mug of something with a full packet in it you must make a Fortitude save (DC 10) or fall into a deep sleep. You may choose to forego this save if you wish to get a full night sleep. Drinking this draught allows the user to rest fully despite any troubles he may otherwise have. In order to wake up before a full eight hours has past you must make a Fortitude save (DC 15).

Sleeping Draught; Wt. 1/10th lb.; 1 sp



Soldier's Comforts

| Item | Cost | Weight |
|-----------------------------|--------|----------|
| Bones | 1 sp | 1/10 lb. |
| Cards | 10 sp | 1/5 lb. |
| Figurine (each) | 1 sp | 1/10 lb. |
| Folding stool | 10 sp | 2 lb. |
| Jacks | 2 sp | ½ lb. |
| Memory stones | 1 sp | ½ lb. |
| Sharpening stone (personal) | 10 sp | 2 lb. |
| Sharpening stone (wheel) | 200 sp | 150 lb. |
| Sleeping draught | 1 sp | 1/10 lb. |
| Spices | 1 sp | 1/5 lb. |
| Umbrella hat | 1 sp | 2 lb. |

Spices: Legends speak of military food so bad it killed the soldiers foolish enough to eat it before they walked onto the field of battle. Although most camp food is not that bad, much of it is less than appetising. Soldiers reacted to this early on by formulating 'blends' of spices designed to make their food more palatable. Each blend of spices is somewhat different; the formulas are passed on from veteran to rookie down through the generations and changed slightly each time. A single packet of spices contains enough spice to flavour 30 meals.

Spices; Wt. 1/5th lb.; 1 sp

Umbrella Hat: This massive slightly conical reed hat reaches just past your shoulders. Although somewhat clumsy they do a fine job of keeping the rain off of your head.

Umbrella Hat; Wt. 2 lb.; 1 sp

COMPANY KITS

Mercenary units generally provide recruits and officers with a basic 'kit' of equipment to smooth out logistics and ensure each fighter has at least a basic set of combat equipment. When a character joins a mercenary unit he receives the appropriate kit. If an item in the kit is damaged during normal actions he can replace it at no cost.

These kits represent the minimum level of equipment available to a mercenary fighter. If he can save sufficient funds from the camp followers and gambling dens nothing stops him from purchasing better harness or weapons. Indeed, many mercenary officers wear armour equalling that of royalty. After all, they have sacked dozens of cities in their careers and a good harness helps a man to remain among the living long enough to enjoy his rewards

The Nemedian Adventurers

Nemedian's king uses the funds from the previous centuries of mercenary service in order to ensure his elite troops receive the best equipment men can buy.

Beginning Kit

Mail hauberk (DR 6, max Dex Bonus +3, Armour Check Penalty -4, Speed 25 ft., +1 Hide)
Great Sword (2d10/19-20, AP 4)
Steel Cap (DR +1)

One-year Service Kit

Mail hauberk (DR 6, max Dex Bonus +3, Armour Check Penalty -4, Speed 25 ft., +1 Hide)
Great Sword (2d10/19-20, x2, AP 4)
Heavy Lance (1d10/x3, AP 3)
Hyborian Warhorse
Steel Cap (DR +1)

Engineering Kit (Ancient Company)

Ancient engineering companies, more properly called cults, generally concentrate their wealth into the hands of the fully initiated members. Apprentices and servants must survive on their masters' scraps until they can seize a position of power for themselves.

Apprentice kit

Dagger (1d4, 19-20/x2, AP 1, Range: 10 ft.)
Robe

Initiate Kit

Alchemical Supplies: The initiate has access to sufficient alchemical supplies to create 2d4 alchemical devices each month

Dagger (1d4, 19-20/x2, AP 1, Range: 10 ft.)

Luxury stipend: The initiate may spend up to 500 sp on luxury goods and services

Robe

Engineering Kit (Modern Company)

A modern engineering company, often more properly called a school, rarely possesses significant wealth. What wealth they do have goes to maintain their extensive collection of crafted siege engine parts and to research new alchemical and scientific methods of warfare.

Brigandine coat (DR 6, max Dex Bonus +2, Armour Check Penalty -5, Speed 25 ft.)

Crafter's tools: Allows the character to use his Craft skills without a penalty. A member receives a complete set of crafter's tools, granting him a +2 circumstance bonus to Craft (siege craft) skill checks.

Short sword (1d8/19-20, x2, AP 1)

Free Company Kit

The Free Companies, in addition to being undisciplined and difficult to control, have rightfully earned a reputation as skinflints when it comes to the equipment they give to their soldiers. Although



mercenaries who serve with them constantly complain about it the captains have a very pragmatic reason for continuing the tradition: less than half of the soldiers they start a season with will live to see winter's frost.

- Buckler (+2 Shield bonus, Armour Check Penalty -1, 1d6/x2, AP 1)
- Leather jerkin (DR 4, max Dex Bonus +6, Armour Check Penalty -1)
- Short sword (1d8/19-20, x2, AP 1)
- Steel cap (+1 DR)

Additionally, soldiers trained in archery or cavalry tactics receive the following equipment:

- Archer:** Hunting Bow (1d8/x2, AP 1, Range: 50 ft.) and 80 arrows
- Cavalry:** Access to a warhorse (usually Hyborian)

Kushite Spearmen

A man serving with the Kushite spearmen comes north with his own shield and spear. If he loses them in battle his captain must replace them, though he may do so at his own leisure. Many Kushite spearmen, recognising this, master the art of making their kit out of locally available materials.

If a unit contains a shield painter the Kushite's shield may have properties in addition to those listed below. See the Painter feats in Chapter four: Secrets of War, for additional details on these effects.

- Hunting Spear (1d8/x2, AP 1)
- Large Shield (+4 shield bonus, Armour Check Penalty -4, 1d4/x2, AP 0)

Shemite Asshuri

The Shemite asshuri, as the acknowledge elite of the mercenary world, take great pride in providing their soldiers with affordable, effective protection and the best horses money can buy.

Recruit

- Leather jerkin (DR 4, max Dex Bonus +6, Armour Check Penalty -1)
- Light lance (1d10/x3, AP 3)
- Scimitar (1d8/18-20, x2, AP 2)
- Steel cap (+1 DR)

Member

- Light lance (1d10/x3, AP 3)
- Scale hauberk (DR 5, max Dex Bonus +3, Armour Check Penalty -4)
- Shemite Bow (80 arrows)
- Steel cap (+1 DR)
- Scimitar (1d8/18-20, x2, AP 2)
- Turanian Warhorse

HYBORIAN AGE WAR MACHINES

War machines are part of most organised warfare in the Hyborian Age. Some of these weapons appear in other, fallen times, but only after civilisation recovers much of its former glory. The following information and war machines are designed for use with the Open Mass Combat System for Conan, available as a free download from the Mongoose Publishing website.

Ballista

A ballista is, in effect, a large crossbow capable of lofting a heavy dart. Although ballista can be fired at individual targets, or into a crowd, there are most effective at delivering concentrated fire into target siege engines. Each ballista requires one person to work it. It fires most effectively, however, when attended by three separate engineers. An average unit of engineers will operate 10 ballista at once. When they do so, they gain the following role action:

Bridge

- Structure Dice:** 4d6 (14 sp)
- Hardness:** 5
- Size:** Colossal
- DV:** 5 (-8 colossal, -4 stationary)
- Attacks:** None
- Damage:** None
- Range Increment:** 20 ft. long.
- Rate of Fire:** 0

Crew: 10

Special Qualities: None

Cost: 2,000 sp

Since the beginning of time people have used streams, rivers and ditches to fend one another off. Over the centuries bright men have dreamed up a simply amazing number of ways to close the gap. The most popular have always been various forms of mobile bridges.

These bridges are usually broken into two, 10-foot sections. Each section can be moved by four men. The first section is placed, and its supports driven down, then the second moved over and secured. This allows the bridge to cover a 18-foot gap, effectively bridging most small creeks and desert rivers.

An average unit of engineers can deploy five bridges at once.

Cauldron

Structure Dice: 1d6 (3 sp)

Hardness: 5

Size: Large

DV: 5 (-1 large, -4 stationary)

Attacks: 1 load

Damage: Load 2d8 (fire) or 3d8 (fire) or 5d8 (fire)

Range Increment: 20 ft. down

Rate of Fire: 1/.5/.25

Crew: 3

Special Qualities: None

Cost: 200 sp

Many fortifications have 'murder holes', places where the defender can pour something, usually something hot, down into an enclosed area. Even those that do not have these marvellous inventions will often station cauldrons on their walls, as a way of making the attackers' lives even more miserable.

A cauldron consists of a large, heavy iron pot attached to a support and heated by some kind of fire source. Each cauldron can be loaded with one of the following:

Water: Does 2d8 fire damage to anyone within a 10-foot radius of the target point. Can unload once per round.

Oil: Does 3d8 fire damage to anyone within a 10-foot radius of the target point. Can unload once every other round.

Lead: Does 5d8 fire damage to anyone within a 10-foot radius of the target point. Can unload once ever four rounds.

Water is effectively free. A load of oil costs 20 sp. A load of lead costs 50 sp and weighs upwards of 200 lb. An engineering company can run 12 cauldrons.

Heavy Catapult

A heavy catapult uses rope tension to create an elastic effect. Traditionally called a mangonel, it can loft fairly sizeable



boulders high into the air. It can also be used to unleash loose masses of stones, packets of refuse or the severed heads of enemy soldiers. A competent engineering company can run up to five catapults at any one time.

Hyrkanian Mountain

A 'Mountain in the Hyrkanian Style' does not have any siege weapon attributes. A engineering company cannot carry one around, and a king cannot simply command that one be made and expect it to appear tomorrow.

These 'mountains' are in fact ramps of packed earth reinforced with bricks and mortared stone. Workers toil under a heavy canopy, made of local materials, which keeps the arrow attacks off.

It requires 100 workers and 50 engineers to begin the building process. Each day, the engineers must maintain the canopy and monitor the work. The workers, meanwhile, are subjected to 1d4 ranged attacks per day per person. This will typically result in a fairly high causality rate among raw recruits and annoyance from elite troops.

The lead engineer must make a Profession (siege engineer) skill check with a minimum DC of 20. If the enemy army has an engineer he may choose to contest. If he does so and rolls under a 20, the DC remains 20. If the lead engineer fails then the works do not receive sufficient shelter to protect them during the working day, so it is wasted. On a success the mountain rises five feet into the air, providing a ramp or a filling in ditches as appropriate.

Ladder

Structure Dice: 1d6 (3 sp)

Hardness: 5

Size: Large

DV: 9 (-1 large)

Attacks: None

Damage: None

Range Increment: 20 ft.

Rate of Fire: None

Crew: 3

Special Qualities: None
Cost: 50 sp

A siege ladder looks much like its less aggressive counterpart. However, the top will usually have hooks or grapples attached to it, in order to prevent the enemy from simply pushing it off.

A siege team may choose to deploy ladders rather than using war machines. If they do so, they grant characters in their army a +2 circumstance bonus to skill checks required to breach a cliff or wall.

Light Catapult

A light catapult is a smaller, less powerful version of the described briefly above. It can sling a single stone under 100 lb. or a relatively large number of smaller stones at the opponent. These lighter-weight catapults are often used to fling things other than stone (e.g. animal waste, hot sand and corpses) back at the enemy. A competent engineering company can run up to five catapults at any one time.

Ram

Structure Dice: 1d6 (10 sp)
Hardness: 5
Size: Large
DV: 9 (-1 large)
Attacks: 1 strike
Damage: Strike -/2d6
Range Increment: 0 ft.
Breach Range: 19-20
Rate of Fire: 1
Crew: 6
Special Qualities: None
Cost: 50 sp

Rams range from simple logs to massive trees slung by ropes from a frame. The device described above has more in common with the later than the former, and represents a balanced point between the two. These rams have a frame to hang the striking device and some kind of cover, but are not large enough to require horses or ape-men to move. A unit of engineers can manage up to five rams at once.

Siege Tower

Structure Dice: 3d6 (3 sp)
Hardness: 5
Size: Gargantuan
DV: 6 (-4 gargantuan)
Attacks: None
Damage: None
Range Increment: None
Breach Range: None
Rate of Fire: 0
Crew: 20



Special Qualities: None
Cost: 550 sp

A siege tower is a massive, wooden tower on wheels. Within, it contains a ladder and some number of soldiers. These soldiers wait while their fellows push this contraption across the field of battle until the tower comes into contact with the opponent's wall. They then open the top of the tower and try to issue forth.

Siege towers are too clumsy to move to a battlefield. Instead, they are usually custom built at the site of the conflict. A group of siege engineers can run up to three siege towers at a time.

Trebuchet

A trebuchet is a massive catapult that uses a counter weight system rather than the complex and weaker rope tension system. Although it is possible to make a very, very small trebuchet, siege engineers generally try to build them so they can throw at least 500 lb. of rock in a single volley. A trebuchet can do incredible damage if it hits, but can be hard for non-professionals to aim.

An engineering company can run up to eight trebuchets at a time.

Shadows & Darkness

The Magic of Warfare

THE HYBORIAN AGE represents the triumph of steel over sorcery. The Hyborians proved that men of will, men armed with mortal steel and the determination to use it, could overcome even the ancient evil embodied in the magically supported forces of the Stygian Empire. They overthrew the old overlords with fire and steel, driving the darkness back into its most guarded fortresses. In their triumph they imagined that magic would never again raise itself to the field of battle.

Then, in the course of time gold and easy living corrupted the once pure men of the wilds. As their strength failed and the lights of the cities dimmed their eyes the shadows slowly crept back in. As the Hyborian Age draws its last gasps ancient evils once again walk the streets and the former men of will embrace their cunning words with eager hearts.

In this environment of shadows and darkness the following powers of sorcery and alchemy grow in strength and presence on the fields once dominated by fighting men.

SPELLS OF THE SELL-SWORDS

Since the ascendance of the Hyborian people courage and steel have dominated the field of battle. However, ancient echoes of a more decadent time speak of great spells capable of affecting the outcome of a war. If such spells exist they must demand tremendous sacrifice on the part of the sorcerer or his victims.

COUNTERSPELLS

The art of warding can make the difference between life and death on a battlefield filled with sorcerers. These warding spells, developed over and over again by magicians seeking to protect their mundane cats-paws, allow the sorcerer to negate the powers of other sorcerers in a blanket fashion, rather than having to protect each individual soldier.

Hand of the Witch

PP Cost: 5 points per activation

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per scholar level)

Subject: One creature per activation

Duration: Concentration

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 12 ranks, *greater warding*, *warding*

Magic Attack Roll: Opposes opponent's magic attack roll

The sorcerer begins a chant that hurt mortal ears. As he intones these guttural syllables, mangling the pronunciation of words never meant to pass human lips, his magical might lashes around him, cutting apart spells entering the area. This allows him to protect himself, or others, from the efforts of other arcanists.

Each round the sorcerer maintains concentration he can, as a free action, make a magic attack roll. Each time an allied character within range becomes the target of a spell or magical effect he can spend 5 PP to substitute his magic attack roll for their saving throw.

Incantation of Fog and Shadow

PP Cost: 2 points per round

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Area: 25 ft. + 5 ft. per scholar level radius emanating from caster

Duration: Concentration

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, *warding*

Magic Attack Roll: Sets opponent's magic attack roll

Many of the dark arts concern themselves with learning secrets. A sorcerer can use these skills to good effect on the field of battle by divining the opponent's plans, his troop dispositions and other bits of trivial intelligence that is the difference between life and death for the common fighting man. However, a skilled scholar can, to some extent, shield his allies' plans from outside investigation by using an incantation passed down from the dawn of time.

When the sorcerer begins this ancient incantation he makes a magic attack roll and spends 2 PP. Each round after the first he may continue the incantation by spending an additional 2 PP. He may continue to recite this incantation and spend PP until he runs out of power or desires to stop.

| Sorcery Style | Spells | Prerequisites | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Counterspells | Hand of the Witch | Knowledge (arcana) 12 ranks, <i>greater warding</i> , <i>warding</i> | |
| | Incantation of Fog and Shadow | Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, <i>warding</i> | |
| | | | |
| Curses | Foxing | Magic attack bonus +2, <i>lesser ill-fortune</i> | |
| | Hypnotism | Dreams of Ecstasy | Magic attack bonus +4, Ritual Sacrifice, <i>entrance</i> |
| | | Dreams of Horror | Magic attack bonus +4, Ritual Sacrifice, <i>entrance</i> |
| Nature Magic | Dreams of Victory | Magic attack bonus +5, <i>dreams of ecstasy</i> , <i>dreams of horror</i> , <i>entrance</i> | |
| | Blood of Beasts | Knowledge (nature) 7 ranks, <i>summon beast</i> | |
| | Rage from Before Time | Knowledge (nature) 14 ranks, <i>greater summon beast</i> , <i>summon beast</i> | |
| Necromancy | Corrupted Touch | Magic attack bonus +6, <i>death touch</i> , <i>raise corpse</i> | |
| | Plague of Flies | Magic attack bonus +3, <i>raise corpse</i> | |
| | Memory of the Dead | Magic attack bonus +7, <i>raise corpse</i> | |
| | Scent of Rot and Fear | Magic attack bonus +3, <i>raise corpse</i> | |
| Oriental Magic | Mirror of the Tactical Mind | Scholar level 4, <i>calm of the adept</i> | |
| | Mirror of the Strategic Mind | Scholar level 4, <i>astrological prediction</i> , <i>calm of the adept</i> | |
| Prestidigitation | Loft to the Sky | Scholar level 4, Sleight of Hand 6 ranks, Bluff 6 ranks, <i>conjuring</i> , <i>greater telekinesis</i> | |

When another sorcerer uses a divination spell to gain information about a conversation or event that occurred within the incantation's area of effect he must make a magic attack roll in addition to any other checks or rolls called for by the spell. If his magic attack roll fails to beat the incantation's caster he senses the incantation's presence, but cannot determine what, if anything, it hides.

CURSES

Despite the legends very few sorcerers, living or dead, can cast a curse on an entire army. Instead, they cast normal curses on the officers and generals. By targeting high profile individuals the sorcerers hope to break the army's spirit before they engage in combat. However, there is one curse many sorcerers will not admit to knowing that can have a considerable effect on the outcome of a battle when properly deployed: foxing.

Foxing

PP Cost: 1 point per day

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Evil Eye

Target: One creature

Duration: One day

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +2, *lesser ill-fortune*

Magic Attack Roll: Set's target's Will save

Most sorcerers like to claim access to supernatural powers capable of stripping a man's flesh from his bones. They want their lackeys to fear their power and to make strong men quake in their boots. Yet sometimes a simple bit of witchery can change the course of fate more surely than the greatest conjuration. Foxing, a

curse capable of altering the process of decay, represents one such simple charm.

When the sorcerer invokes this curse he wraps a little bit of ill fortune into the subject's aura. This bad luck does not affect the target's combat prowess or ability to effectively carry out his appointed tasks. Instead it slips into any drink or food-stuff he comes into contact with, turning it from whatever dubious state it originally claimed to purely spoiled. Beer turns foul, grains rot and salted meats develop large colonies of worms seemingly overnight. In effect, any food the character touches becomes inedible.

This curse has two practical effects. First, the character cannot eat anything for as long as the sorcerer maintains the curse by spending 1 PP per day. Second, he cannot prepare food for anyone, as everything he touches turns foul.

Material Component: A bit of thread dipped in honey

HYPNOTISM

Of all the styles of sorcery hypnotism has the greatest effect on the field of battle. It does this by directly influencing that ethereal factor called variously fighting spirit, morale and the will to victory. A talented sorcerer can break an army before his forces ever come into contact with the enemy or whip his own followers into a killing frenzy resembling that of sharks.

Dreams of Ecstasy

PP Cost: 3 points per target

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 hour

Area: 1 mile per scholar level radius emanating from the sorcerer

Targets: One male character per 3 PP expended

Duration: One day

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +4, Ritual Sacrifice, *entrance*
Magic Attack Roll: Sets targets' Will save

Every man knows his dreams can lead him into temptation. In dreams a man can do and say things he would never dare in the waking world, experience forbidden pleasures and unleash the bounds of behaviour separating him from the beasts. A sorcerer can use this spell to link these dreams to events about to occur in the waking world. When he does so he strengthens those who willingly give in to the evil they carry in their own hearts.



When the sorcerer casts this spell he must torture, then kill, a virgin female in an hour-long ritual. At the end of the ritual he may name any number of male human targets within the area of effect. Each target requires the sorcerer to spend 3 PP. Those targets may, if they wish, make a Will save to resist the vision of debauchery sent to them. If they decide not to, or fail the Will save, they gain the following ability for one day:

Vision of Ecstasy (Su): Each time you activate this ability you gain one point of Corruption. For a number of rounds equal to your Constitution modifier you may ignore any conditions applied to you and, temporarily, the effects of damage. When the character comes out of this vision they are immediately dealt all damage taken during this vision from their current total hit points. Reduction of hit points to 0 or lower is handled in the usual way as described in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. You may activate this ability as a free action and may use it to respond to a conditions application.

Material Component: One adult human female virgin for sacrifice.

Dreams of Horror

PP Cost: 3 points per target

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: 1 mile per scholar level radius emanating from the sorcerer

Targets: One male character per 3 PP expended

Duration: One day

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +4, Ritual Sacrifice, *entrance*

Magic Attack Roll: Set's targets' Will save

Just as dreams can lead a man into temptation they can also show him the depths of human suffering and terror. In

dreams a man can survive horrible things, things capable of breaking his body and spirit. Occasionally someone will naturally suffer such a horrific dream without being able to wake up from it. When one man experiences such a dream it seems like a natural phenomenon. When a dozen, or a hundred, find themselves trapped in the same dream, hearing one another's screams, then they know it for the work of a sorcerer.

When the sorcerer casts this spell he must torture, then kill, a virgin male in an hour long ritual. At the end of the hour he may name any number of male human targets within the area of effect. Each target requires the sorcerer to spend 3 PP. They targets

may make a Will save to resist the spell. Each target that succeeds has a troubled night's sleep, but can shake off the dream as nothing more than an evil omen. Those that fail this saving throw suffer from a -4 penalty to attack rolls and skill checks for a 24-hour period.

The horrific dream lasts for two hours. A target that fails his saving throw will not awake unless he suffers physical damage.

Material Component: One adult human male virgin for sacrifice.

Dreams of Victory

PP Cost: 4 points per target

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: 1 mile per scholar level radius emanating from the sorcerer

Targets: One male character per 4 PP expended

Duration: One day per scholar level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +5, *dreams of ecstasy*, *dreams of horror*, *entrance*

Magic Attack Roll: Set's targets' Will save

Dreams of ecstasy and horror are simple to craft, especially for those whose depraved desires far exceed the bounds of sane mortal minds. Creating a vision of victory tailored for each recipient, a dream in which the dreamer lives out his personal fantasies of prosperity and the good life, takes a bit more care and craft. However, such a vision can inspire a man to greatness where others simply call forth a man's basest elements.

When the sorcerer casts this spell he must ritually torture, then kill, two virgins: one male, one female. At the end of an hour-long ritual he may target any number of male characters within range. Each target requires the sorcerer to spend 4 PP. The target may make a Will save to resist the enchantment.

Those that fail, or who do not wish to make the save, spend an eight hour period dreaming of how the sorcerer's dominion will further their personal goals. In the privacy of their dreams they see how, by betraying their comrades and swearing to the sorcerer's side, they can achieve their deepest desires. By the end of the eight-hour period the target becomes a conditioned ally of the sorcerers, automatically moving to a helpful disposition.

Material Component: Two adult human virgins (one male, one female) for sacrifice.

NATURE MAGIC

Hyborian Age warfare relies extensively on animals for power: mules to draw the carts, oxen to drag siege engines and warhorses to bear armoured knights into battle. These animals, as well as the soldiers who fight the battles, rely on plants for sustenance and the vast majority of the materials they use in battle. Nature magic, with its power to command both animals and plants, can exert devastating influence in military affairs.

Blood of Beasts

PP Cost: 1 points per animal affected

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per scholar level)

Targets: One animal/scholar level

Duration: One hour/scholar level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Knowledge (nature) 7 ranks, *summon beast*

Magic Attack Roll: Set's targets' Will save DC

The state of war, though natural to humans, does not suit the animals they enslave to their service. Men alone find the pursuit of hot blood and the screams of the dying pleasurable; other creatures would rather kill on the hunt than stand toe to toe with their opponents trading blood and insults. A sorcerer who knows the right charms can take advantage of this predisposition, turning formerly stable animals against their handlers.

When a sorcerer casts this spell he may select a number of creatures within range equal to his scholar level.

Each creature may make a Will save to negate the effect. If the creature required a Handle

Animal or Ride skill check in the last round, or was struck by an attack, it becomes panicked. The

handler or rider must make an appropriate skill check (DC 30) to maintain his control over the animal. If this skill check fails the animal bolts, running at top speed for the duration of the spell. At high levels this spell can cause a creature to run itself to death.

Rage from Before Time

PP Cost: 12 points

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One animal

Duration: One round per scholar level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Knowledge (nature) 14 ranks, *greater summon beast*, *summon beast*

Magic Attack Roll: Set's target's Will save DC

The Hyborian Age is an age of men, of steel and stone and wheels that harness the flood. Its animals slave under similar shackles, bound to men's will by harness and whip. However, in an age not long past great beasts stalked the land. A sorcerer who knows the right charms can awaken the whispers of those great beasts' blood held in the lesser animals inhabiting the land.

By whispering the right incantations and placing his hand on the shoulder of any animal the sorcerer can grant that animal a measure of its ancestor's power. The animal doubles in Hit Dice and increases its size by one category. It also becomes berserk, attacking any human near it other than the sorcerer who awoke it.

NECROMANCY

Of all the styles of sorcery, none sparks as much dread in the superstitious soldiers of the Hyborian Age as necromancy. Soldiers crouched around dying campfires whisper tales of armies dragged from their graves by dark magic, of plagues born on the wind that transform men into monsters and of cold shadows that suck the breath from mortal men. These tales take their inspiration from the spells wielded by sorcerers skilled in necromancy, though they grow greater and greater with each telling.

Corrupted Touch

PP Cost: 4 points + (see below)

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One creature, contagious

Duration: One day/scholar level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +6, *death touch*, *raise corpse*

Magic Attack Roll: Sets targets' Fortitude save DC

Raising an army of the undead requires quite a bit of time, effort and energy. However, raising an army of the mostly undead, of men who should have died, but did not due to the sorcerer's timely intervention, mostly requires a bit of patience and a fairly large battle.

A sorcerer who knows this spell can weave a charm about his hand. When he touches a target the charm passes to him, nestling down into his heart if the target fails his Fortitude saving throw. For the next 2d4 days every creature the target comes into contact with must make a Fortitude save or pick up a bit of the residual taint. This taint lasts until the initial charm fades at the end of the spell's duration.

If a creature affected by the taint goes below 0 hit points it automatically stabilises at -9 hit points. It does not respond to healing or to magical healing if that healing is available. The near-corpse does not rot or suffer from the effects of hunger or thirst.

Once enough bodies accumulate the sorcerer may invoke the second part of this charm. He must spend 1 PP for each near-corpse he wishes to affect. All affected corpses must be within a one-mile radius of his position. The corpses rise within 1d4 rounds as risen dead. Once risen the corpses remain under the necromancers control until they are destroyed.

The scholar does not regain the PP invested in the raising the corpses until something destroys them.

Memories of the Dead

PP Cost: 40 points + 3 points per ghost raised

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 hour

Area: 100 ft. per scholar level radius emanating from the sorcerer

Duration: One hour/scholar level

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +7, *raise corpse*

Those who fall in battle sleep restlessly as long as the ravens consume their flesh and the worms gnaw at their bones. An unscrupulous sorcerer might use this brief time between the flesh's failing and the spirit's passing on to raise for himself an unconquerable army of the dead with which to inflict his will on the world.

The sorcerer must find a place where one or more individuals have died within the last day. He can then speak words so fell even the darkest demons would not dare to utter them save in the most extreme of situations. By doing so he binds the spirits of the dead to his service, creating an army of ghosts. Unlike natural ghosts these creatures remain active for one hour per level of the scholar who cast the spell. They will act and fight as the sorcerer demands, though they will not bring harm to those they held dear in life.

Plague of Flies

PP Cost: 10 points

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: 1 mile per scholar level

Area: 100 ft. radius per scholar level

Duration: One hour per scholar level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +3, *raise corpse*

Magic Attack Roll: Sets Fortitude save DC in area of effect

Soldiers must, perforce, become nearly immune to the horrors encountered on a field of battle after the warring ceases. They must deal with the hideous visages of corpses mangled by war, the buzzing of flies and the stench only slaughterhouses and battlefields can produce. However, a talented sorcerer can weave a simple charm capable of amplifying these terrors to the point where even a hardened man of war might blanch.

This charm only works on battlefields less than a day old. By weaving it, the sorcerer speeds the natural rate of reproduction in those creatures (flies and maggots especially) who feed off of the carrion left by battle. Within an hour the battlefield swarms with thick clouds of biting flies, flies willing to feast on living as well as dying flesh.

Any creature entering into the area of effect must make a Fortitude saving throw each round. If he fails then he takes one point of damage. Animals will immediately attempt to leave the area of effect, while humans may exercise their own will to remain in place until the maggots and flies strip their flesh from their bones if they wish.

Material Component: A handful of maggots.

Scent of Rot and Fear

PP Cost: 1 point

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Area: 100 ft. + 10 ft. per scholar level radius emanating from the sorcerer

Duration: One round per scholar level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +3, *raise corpse*

Magic Attack Roll: Sets the Will save DC of animals in the area of effect

Few things spook animals quite like the sharp coppery-sweet smell of blood, entrails and offal wafting up from a disembowelled body. A sorcerer skilled in the arts of necromancy can easily cause this scent to permeate an area, causing domesticated and wild animals to flee in panic.

When the sorcerer invokes this spell the area begins to stink like a charnel house. All animals within the area of effect must make a Will save or become difficult to handle. Any human wishing to them to engage in work will have to make a Handle Animal or Ride skill check (for tricks or riding the mount respectively) in order to force the animal to cooperate. If he fails then the animal's fear prevents it from responding in accordance with its training.

Any creature capable of using its sense of smell can detect the presence of a sorcerer using this spell without making a Wisdom check. Tracking the sorcerer by smell still requires the Scent ability.

ORIENTAL MAGIC

So-called 'oriental magic' allows the sorcerer to use disciplines learned from inhuman creatures to alter both his mind and body in ways not natural to the human condition. Each time the magician inflicts these powers upon himself he becomes subtly less human, but also subtly more powerful than a mortal might hope. Although the physical disciplines of oriental magic are the most well known to those outside of the orders of adepts, the mental disciplines exert a greater influence on the field of battle.

Mirror of the Tactical Mind

PP Cost: 4 points

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Personal

Target: Self

Duration: One hour per scholar level

Prerequisites: Scholar level 4, *calm of the adept*

Magic Attack Roll: Sets the result of the stored tactical roll

The disciplines required of a master sorcerer can make him a deadly tactician if he wishes to bend his skills in that direction. By using specific chants and mental exercises a sorcerer can heighten his tactical awareness to supernatural levels, granting him an edge even a highly trained soldier might not have the cunning to overcome.

When the sorcerer casts this spell he makes a magical attack roll, adding his base attack bonus to the result. This result becomes a stored Knowledge (warfare) check result he may use in place of any battle related skill check he must make during the spell's duration.

An adept may cast this spell on himself as many times as he wishes. Each time he does so he must make a new magic attack roll. He may draw the stored checks in any order.

Mirror of the Strategic Mind

PP Cost: 4 points

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Personal

Target: Self

Duration: Instantaneous

Prerequisites: Scholar level 4, *astrological prediction*, *calm of the adept*

Magic Attack Roll: Determines the total bonus to tactical checks available to the sorcerer

The disciplines of a master sorcerer allow him to stand head and shoulders above the common lot, deducing patterns and intuiting motivations unfathomable to lesser minds. This perspective gives him insight into his opponents' strategic goals and reserves; an invaluable tool on the field of battle. When the sorcerer casts this spell he automatically wins any opposed Knowledge (warfare) check.

PRESTIDIGITATION

Most sorcerers learn a bit of prestidigitation so they can impress the yokels around them. The sophisticated arts they usually practice may change the world in more profound ways, but the average barbarian appreciates watching a bottle of wine float through the air more. Occasionally, though, prestidigitation also grants the sorcerer access to a bit of useful raw power he can use to circumvent the mechanical limitations of the human body.



Loft to the Sky

PP Cost: 3 points

Components: S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft. per scholar level)

Target: One touched object

Effect: Move to 20 lb. per scholar level

Duration: Instant

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Scholar level 4, Sleight of Hand 6 ranks, Bluff 6 ranks, *conjuring*, *greater telekinesis*

Magic Attack Roll: Against target's Dodge Defence

As sorcerers developed larger and ever more dangerous forms of alchemical weapons they also developed the means to hurl them at their foes. This spell represents one such magic; others certainly exist for the purpose of moving extremely large objects even further distances.

In order to activate this spell the sorcerer must place his hand on a single inanimate object and utter a single profane word. If that object weighs less than 20 lb. per scholar level the sorcerer touching it instantly flings the object in the direction he wills, out to the maximum spell range.

If the sorcerer targets a living creature with this object he must make a ranged attack against the target's Dodge Defence. The target takes 1d4 damage for each 20 lb. of the object's weight in addition to any effect the object may invoke of its own accord.

ALCHEMICAL ITEMS

Sorcerers do not generally bother with the rage of war. They have more important things to do. However, occasionally they need to use spearmen to defeat their foes, or as mass sacrifices for particularly gruesome rituals. When such needs arise sorcerers with sufficient alchemical talent turn to the following items to help cause the war to end as they wish.

Alchemical items marked with an asterisk (*) can be used in conjunction with the *greater telekinesis* spell.

Acheronian Black Globe*

This glossy black globe looks, at first glance, somewhat like a globe of demon fire. However, close examination reveals the surface is slightly porous. Even closer examination (Search check DC 20) reveals that each pore contains a single spider's egg.

The globe remains inert until struck sharply against a solid object. Once struck, the outer surface of the globe becomes moist. 1d4 rounds later thousands of small spiders scurry

out of it. Although they only inflict one point of damage to everyone within a 20-foot radius of the orb as they leave, their primary purpose is not direct assault.

Instead, the spiders begin to devour real spiders within a one-mile radius. Within two days the flies and other vermin, unchecked by their natural predators, will begin to swarm. Within seven days the area becomes almost unbearable, inflicting a -2 morale penalty on all dice rolls and skill checks from everyone in the area who does not make a Will save (DC 15).

Acheronian sorcerers used black globes to 'soften' a siege target before unleashing their terrible magic. The distraction and depression generated by the swarms of vermin make the targets more susceptible to terror, hypnotism and suggestion.

Acheronian Grave Dust

This substance looks like a dull grey, extremely light powder. Alchemists store it in soft, translucent orbs that dissolve in water. Each orb is approximately one inch in diameter.

When released into water, each orb contains enough poison to affect up to 10 people with a low-level fever. When first ingested the drinker must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) or take 1d6 Wisdom damage. One minute later he must make the same saving throw or take 1d6 Intelligence damage. This poison can only affect a single character once per day.

Acheronian sorcerers loaded grave dust into catapults and lobbed the orbs over city walls. Each orb that found its way into the city water supply severely weakened the target's defences. Those modern sorcerers that know the formula use it in much less grand schemes.

Acheronian Guardian Orb

This variation of the Acheronian Black Globe contains a single large spider in a glossy black sphere the size of a walnut. Careful inspection of the sphere reveals its surface contains neither flaw nor opening. Extremely careful scrutiny (Search check DC 25) allows the searcher to detect something about the size of a large wolf spider sitting, extremely still, in the heart of the sphere.

The alchemist must create the guardian orb for a specific person. While that person holds the orb he takes one hit point of damage each night. This damage heals normally.

If anyone else holds the orb for more than three rounds, or the orb is separated from its owner for more than five rounds, the glossy black coat breaks apart in

Alchemical Item Creation

| Item | Craft (alchemy)DC |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Acheronian Black Globe* | 25 |
| Acheronian Grave Dust | 30 |
| Acheronian Guardian Orb | 25 |
| Atlantean Water | 20 |
| Dancer's Wine | 15 |
| Stygian Wind Venom | 25 |
| Vendhya Chew | 15 |

large flakes as the spider within begins to expand. Within one round the creature becomes a giant spider. The spider awakens possessed by a ravenous hunger: it will attempt to kill and eat every living creature within its immediate area. Once sated it builds a nest and continues to feed until finally destroyed.

When the orb's bearer dies the orb breaks five rounds after his death. So long as the spider does not come under attack it will first consume its former owner's body, then retreat to a safe location from which to begin more systematic hunting.

Atlantean Water

Though called Atlantean Water no one really knows the origin of this slightly viscous, clear liquid. What they do know, though, is that it can dissolve stone as if it were sea-foam. When used in sufficient quantities this acid can bring down a city wall or even, some claim, etch faces into mountains.

Each application of Atlantean Water inflicts 1d10 damage per round, ignoring hardness, on a five-foot square of stone. It continues to dissolve the stone for 2d4 rounds. Once applied the acid cannot be removed or stopped. It does no damage to any other substance, including living creatures.

An application of the water weights approximately 1/8th lb. It is usually packaged in a small, glass container that can be easily thrown with a 10-foot range increment. A sufficient quantity of Atlantean Water can remove a wall or cut a passage through solid rock.

Stygian Wind Venom

In addition to using various devastating necromantic spells, the Stygians also unleash a number of particularly vicious alchemical preparations on their enemies.

Wind venom is one such preparation. In its unused form it looks like a fine, yellow powder. It weighs next to nothing. However, when exposed to flame it causes the flames to turn sooty and sickly green. The flames give off an incredible amount of smoke, so much so that everyone within a 20-foot radius of the fire is blinded for 1d4 rounds.

This blindness is entirely incidental to the wind venom's true purpose. Everyone within 100 feet of the fire must make a Fortitude save (DC 15). If they fail they suffer a -2 penalty to any saving throw required to resist a Hypnotism or Necromancy spell cast on them in the next 24 hours. Furthermore, they suffer a -1 penalty to any saving throws required to resist Terror or Corruption.

Targets suffering the effects of wind venom can hear quiet voices muttering just on the edge of their hearing. These delusions last until the venom finally flushes from the victims' systems.

Dancer's Wine

Many soldiers and mercenaries are skilled in, or at least aware of, the herbalist's craft. In a world where it can be difficult to find a skilled surgeon, the knowledge of herbs can make the difference between life and death.

This harsh liquor is little better than the rotgut brewed in most mercenary camps. However, unlike those other, cleaner, beverages this substance also contains considerable quantities of psychotropic drugs. One gallon will serve 50 men.

The following herbal preparation show up in many mercenary camps. They are less common in regular military camps.

Each man partaking of dancer's wine must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or feel a very pleasant sensation, not unlike sleeping in the arms of a dancing girl. This sensation blocks out pain, but also makes the drinker somewhat clumsy. He suffers a -1 penalty to his DV and a +1 bonus to his Constitution. This effect lasts for 1d4 hours.

ALCHEMICAL AND EXOTIC SIEGE AMMUNITION

When siege engineers combine their extensive scientific skills with the occult lore of alchemists and herbalists they can create a wide variety of devastating, exotic and grotesque siege ammunition. This ammunition, usually shot into cities or lobbed ahead of an advancing army, can cause effects similar to traditional alchemical preparations, only on a grand scale.

As civilisation begins to give way to barbarism, as science and will fall to the elder arts, these exotic forms of ammunition become steadily more prevalent on the field of battle. Whether they too will fall before the rising tide of ignorance remains to be seen. If they do, then the world will plunge back into its natural state of chaos and the Hyborian Age will fade completely from mortal memory.

Acid

These bundles of acid are similar to acid flasks in their damage and potency. A siege load of acid is a net full of thin glass spheres, each designed to shatter when they hit the ground. A sling load is a single fragile glass sphere. Anyone caught in a 10-foot radius around the centre of the impact of a siege load takes 1d6 acid damage. Additionally acid covers the area with glass shards. These shards have an effect similar to caltrops. Acid loads are extremely fragile: Hardness: 0, Hit points 1.

Blinding

This large alchemically treated stone looks like nothing more sinister than a typical catapult stone until it strikes something. When it strikes it explodes in a flash of light, doing no damage. However everyone within a 20-foot radius emanating from the point of impact must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or be blinded for 1d4 rounds.

Buzzing Insects

These large, honeycombed siege stones hum quietly to themselves until they sharply strike an object. 1d4 rounds after impact the primitive white and red wasps contained within the stone burst forth in a large cloud. This roiling swarm of angry insects covers a 30-foot radius around the point of impact. Every creature within the area of effect must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 20) or take 2d4 nonlethal damage each round. If a creature passes out due to nonlethal damage it begins to take 2d4 lethal damage each round as the wasps sting it to death. The swarm moves five feet in a random direction each round and remains coherent enough to cause damage for 10 rounds.

Deafening

Deafening catapult loads deliver massive thunderstones directly to the enemy. Everyone within a 30-foot radius of the centre of the attack must make Fortitude saves (DC 15) or be deafened for 2d4 rounds. Deaf creatures, in addition to the obvious effects, suffer a -4 penalty to Initiative and a 20% chance to miscast and lose any spell with a verbal (V) component that they try to cast.

Demon Fire

Demon fire, that strange substance at the heart of both Acheronian and Kothic demon-fire, makes a deadly siege weapon when deployed in mass quantities. These large loads of burning liquid cover a 30-foot radius and burn for 2 rounds, doing 4d6 fire damage each round to everyone caught within the area of effect. A Reflex save (DC 15) allows the target to escape having only taken 2d6 damage.

Disease-bearing

A disease-bearing load is a massive load of diseased offal carefully tied together using string. It does no damage when it hits, but it creates a ripe breeding group for disease.

Everyone caught within a 20-foot radius around the centre of impact must make Fortitude saves (DC 15) or contract one a variety of diseases (Games Master's choice).

Dream Smoke

This siege load looks much like a bundled mass of heavy, wet peat moss held together with black straps. Just before the load takes flight the siege operator must touch it with a torch to stir it into smouldering life. When the bundle strikes the target it breaks open, scattering smoking fragments over a 20-foot radius. These fragments inflict 1 point of fire damage on each creature within the area of effect that does not make a Reflex save (DC 15).

The next round the fragments emit a thin, odourless smoke. All creatures within a 60-foot radius emanating from the point of impact must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) when they breath this smoke or suffer its effects. Those that succeed feel faintly queasy. Those that fail must make a Concentration skill check (DC 20) each round to focus on the real world. If they fail this skill check they spend the round in a dreamy, dazed state similar to an opium trance. While in this trance they cannot respond to events taking place in the outside world. If they succeed they may act in the real world, but must make the Concentration check again next round.

The cloud remains potent for 2d4 rounds. Affected creatures must succeed at three Concentration checks to throw off the effects. Once the creature fails his Concentration check he remains in the trance for 4d4 rounds.

Hot Oil

One of the less pleasant attacks available to defenders, pouring boiling oil on someone does 3d6 fire damage the first round, 2d6 damage the second round, and 1d6 damage the third and final round. Everyone caught within the 10-foot splash radius takes 2d6 damage the first round and 1d6 damage the second round. Everyone within the area of effect except for the initial target makes Reflex saves (DC 15) for half damage. The initial target suffers a touch attack.

Defenders typically use hot oil; they boil it in large vats and pour it down onto attacking units.

Hot Sand

Heated sand flies a considerable distance, but does very little damage. It does, however, impair the actions, vision and mobility of anyone caught with in. Everyone within a 15-foot radius of the area of impact makes Fortitude saves (DC 15). Those that fail have a -2 penalty to all of their actions for the next 2d8 rounds as they try to get the hot sand out of their eyes, cloths and other sensitive spots. Hot sand takes one hour to heat.

Alchemical and Exotic Ammunition

| Type | Cost (1 Siege) | Craft (alchemy) DC | Weight (Siege) |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Acid | 150 gl | 25 | 50 lb. |
| Blinding | 100 gl | 20 | 40 lb. |
| Deafening | 450 gl | 20 | 60 lb. |
| Buzzing Insects | 300 gl | 30 | 80 lb. |
| Demon Fire | 500 gl | 25 | 50 lb. |
| Dream Smoke | 400 gl | 30 | 80 lb. |
| Disease-bearing | 50 gl | — | 45 lb. |
| Hot Oil | 50 gl | — | 100 lb. |
| Hot Sand | 50 gl | — | 45 lb. |
| Shrapnel | 200 gl | — | 50 lb. |
| Smoke | 150 gl | 15 | 50 lb. |
| Spider Mine | 400 gl | 35 | 90 lb. |
| Stone Eating | 1000 gl | 40 | 70 lb. |
| Stygian Rot | 300 gl | 30 | 50 lb. |

Shrapnel

A shrapnel load is a large pot filled with shards that explodes on impact. It does little damage to a fortification, but does 3d6 damage to everyone within a 30-foot radius of the point of impact (Reflex save DC 15 for half damage).

Smoke

A smoke load is a tied up mass of smouldering material doused liberally with an alchemical formula that makes it roiling smoke clouds come from it as it burns. When it hits its target the load falls apart and begins to smoke, filling a 60-foot radius in a thick cloud that lasts for 2d4 rounds (1d6 in windy conditions). The cloud completely blocks normal vision. When the alchemist prepares the smoke load he may choose the colour of the smoke.

Spider Mine

This siege load resembles an extremely large Acheronian black globe, perhaps three feet in diameter. Close inspection reveals its glossy surface is covered with hairs and long, multi-jointed moving fibres. By making a Knowledge (nature) skill check the observer can deduce that the 'fibres' are, in fact, the legs of living spiders. Closer inspection (Search skill check DC 15) reveals the orb contains eddies and flows, hinting at a somewhat liquid construction.

When the load strikes a solid surface with reasonable velocity the substance binding and sustaining the spiders breaks loose. Within one round the venomous spiders swarm over a 40-foot radius, biting and stinging anything within the area of effect. Living creatures in the area of effect must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) or take 1d4 points of Constitution damage.

The spider swarm remains in place until dispersed by fire, smoke or water. Creatures within the affected area must make a Fortitude

save each round. A creature who leaves the area of effect must make one saving throw after escaping the area before the spiders drop off and scurry back to their appointed swarm.

Stone Eating

In the dim mists of time, before their empire fell, the Stygian priests discovered a thick paste capable of eating though metal and stone. Although they first used it as a torture device, they quickly realised its military and practical applications. Now this paste is as much a legend as that first Stygian empire, though the priests still clearly recall both.

A stone eating load contains a heavy vat of this paste combined with a small demon fire charge, all bound together in a heavy clay pot. When the pot strikes a hard surface it causes the demon fire within to explode. This explosion fires the paste across a 30-foot radius. Living creatures within the area of effect must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or take 1d8 damage from the flying pottery shards.

All objects within the area of effect become covered with a gritty black paste. Items made of metal or stone take 1 point of damage each round, ignoring hardness, until they reach 0 hit points. A character can remove this paste with vinegar or wine by taking a full round action to either clean one item or clear a five-foot section of stone.

Stygian Rot

Dimly remembered stories from the Hyborian conquest whisper warning about a substance wielded by the Stygian priests capable of rotting a man's flesh from his bones as quickly as a knife cuts butter. Such a death, the stories say, once claimed a great Hyborian chieftain during his moment of crowing glory.

These almost forgotten tales refer to a very real substance the Stygians still know how to make: a thin, sticky liquid with the property of speeding up the natural rate of decay in any organic creature or object. They derive it from the stems and leaves of a leprous looking fern found in the oases of the deeper deserts of Stygia. Despite centuries of effort they have not yet managed to cultivate it; should they ever learn that secret it would shift the balance of power back in their favour.

They package this liquid in thin glass spheres, then lash the spheres together in a net made of linen strands. When launched as a siege weapon this load sprays stygian rot over everything within a 30-foot radius around the point of impact. Any organic object within the area of effect takes one point of damage directly to its hit points, ignoring hardness, until rubbed down with vinegar. Living creatures may make a Reflex saving throw (DC 15) to avoid the splash or at least interpose objects in their hands between the splash and any exposed bits of flesh. Those that fail take 1d4 hit points of damage per round until they treat the affected area with wine or vinegar.

Fields Awash with Blood

Narrative Battles in Hyboria

AWASH WITH BLOOD

AN IMPORTANT PART of any Conan campaign will be sieges and pitched battles between huge armies. After all, it is the function of the soldiers and mercenaries to destroy, and to do so involves the sweeping away of defenders.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to provide a full d20 battle system but the following should allow you to involve Player Characters on the battlefield, or as part of a siege, without making your games hopelessly complicated. The following system is designed as an alternative to the Open Mass Combat System available as a free download from the Mongoose Publishing website. Games Masters should feel free to use whichever system they feel best suits their needs.

This battle system is intended to allow for fast resolution of large-scale battles, not for them to be played out with the players as commanders. The real aim is to allow for Player Characters, operating on the battlefield, to be part of and influence the outcome of the battle through roleplaying, using the battlefield as a setting much as you would an ancient ruin or the shady streets of Shadizar. At the same time, it does not make them seem to be the only important factor on the battlefield, which makes little sense when they are at lower levels or when the battle involves thousands of troops. There is a fine line to be walked here as on the one hand, no Games Master wants his players to feel their characters are so insignificant that they could just be swept away by chance and happenstance. On the other, the battle is reduced to something petty if the Player Characters wade through a few enemy soldiers and the whole army collapse. A happy medium needs to be struck here.

The assumption is that the Player Characters are a cut above the rank and file on the battlefield and that their heroic actions will encourage those around them to greater efforts, reinforcing their side's morale and military cohesion, whilst weakening the enemy's.

THE FORCES OF HYBORIA COLLIDE

For the purposes of this chapter and the concept of a battle fought out in the context of a campaign, each of the units used by the armies of Hyboria listed in Traditions of Force on pg. 17 has been given a Military Cohesion (MC) score. This reflects their ability to continue to operate effectively



on the battlefield in the face of enemy missile fire, spells and melee combat. Once their cohesion is gone (reduced to zero or below), the unit is no longer effective and they break and flee the field. Prior to that, as their MC falls towards zero, they fight with less and less capability, reflecting casualties, dropping morale and willingness to follow orders. Although this score reflects casualties, it makes no attempt to measure them. The aim of the system is to give a fast impression of the action, not to detail the losses of each unit.

Patriotic soldiers are unlikely to be the only forces in a Hyborian army, of course, though they are the most important. The listings in Traditions of Force are far from comprehensive or exhaustive and Games Masters should feel free to create new ones to fit their campaigns. Where other military forces of the same race or allegiance are present, their MC can be thought of as being between one and four points lower than those of their trained, battle-hardened brethren. So, for example, the veteran soldiers of Parthenia may have a base MC of 11. It is probably fair



to assume that a unit of freshly trained Parthenian warriors would have an MC of 9, while a unit of Parthenian yeomanry lacking any real leaders could be as low as 6. When assigning a base MC to an army or part of an army, the Games Master needs to take into account the discipline and fighting ability of its warriors. Troops who follow a civilised code of honour are usually better drilled than those who follow a barbaric honour system, for example, though if the barbaric savages have an innate warrior sensibility, this need not be the case.

Various items can modify the base MC of a unit. A good commanding officer could add a bonus, especially when he has the Battle Tactics feat (see pg. 50) whilst holy symbols and banners can have their own effects, while a unit might suffer penalties through being weary or on unfamiliar terrain. Even during the course of the battle, there can be temporary bonuses and penalties reflecting the ruses and stratagems of the commanders, weather and magical effects. The Games Master will determine the MC of armies and units when a battle is set up, based on information from the campaign.

THE PLAYER CHARACTERS AS COMMANDERS

If the Player Characters command units on the battlefield, it may be that both they and the Games Master will wish to take the game away from roleplay and into tabletop battle. Unless one or all somehow commands the whole army, there is still a case for using the information in this chapter as a fast-resolution system to work out what happens on those parts of the battlefield the Player Characters do not command.

Damage Ratio Table

| Damage Dealt to Hit Points Lost | Subordinate Losses |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Greater than 3:1 | None |
| Between 2:1 and 3:1 | 10% |
| From even to 2:1 | 20% |
| Less than even to 1:2 | 33% |
| Between 1:2 and 1:3 | 50% |
| Worse than 1:3 | 75% |

If the number of warriors placed under the Player Characters is not too large, they can still work out their actions on the battlefield through normal roleplaying. The Player Character Actions section shows how to handle their personal outcomes. In order to determine what happens to the warriors they command, keep a tally of the hit point losses the Player Characters suffer compared to those they deal to enemy units and characters and use the Damage Ratio Table to determine how many of their subordinates are disabled or killed. This can either be calculated over the battle as a whole, or for

each individual and separate phase (see the Damage Ratio Table).

THE BATTLEFIELD

The first thing to do is determine the size of the battle and the Player Characters relative place within it. For this purpose, battles have been broken up into three sizes: small, medium and large.

Small Battles

A small battle is any in which the actions Player Characters undertake that can be seen by most or all of the participants. Obviously many factors can affect this, such as terrain or weather but on an open battlefield, a small battle can be thought of as any in which the two sides number a thousand or less in number. Broadly speaking, each army is drawn up in to a more-or-less single mass, with the commanding generals being able to see the whole of their force.

In a battle like this, if the Player Characters do something out of the ordinary, it will be visible to almost all combatants and their successes or failures can have a profound effect upon the outcome of the whole battle. Just as importantly, the Player Characters can see everything going on around them, judging the flow of the battle, and be able to react to its ups and downs. This allows the players to react to events around their characters and through roleplaying try to influence them.

A single MC rating covers each of the opposing armies. If the unit types are mixed, an average rating should be worked out for the entire force.

Medium Battles

A medium battle is one in which, because of the size of the armies (perhaps 3,000 to 5,000 a side on an open battlefield), the terrain, weather or tactical necessity, the armies are divided into two or three formations or 'wings'. It is most likely that the Player Characters are serving with and will influence the behaviour of just one of these formations.

Such armies will operate on a simple model, having a marching order of vanguard, main and rearguard formations. The vanguard and rearguard usually contain the majority of the faster-moving troops, either light infantry or cavalry, placed to defend the flanks of the main force.

The Player Characters can still see and influence the outcome of their immediate battlefield environment, as in small battles, but the effect of their actions and their ability to know what is going on around them becomes restricted to the formation of which they are part. Put simply, theirs becomes a battle within a battle. The Games Master will determine and describe in detail what is going on around them, but will then determine secretly what is happening elsewhere and only let

A MEDIUM BATTLE



AWASH WITH BLOOD

the players know when the tide of battle on another part of the field critically affects them one way or the other.

In a medium battle, therefore, each formation of an army has its own MC calculated as an average of the formation's constituent units and these MCs will be checked separately as the battle goes on.

Large Battles

Scaling up even further, the Games Master may need to cater for outcomes of battles involving tens or even hundreds of thousands of troops. The level of detail he develops about the battle need not get much larger than for a medium battle, however. The Player Characters are directly involved in a small battle as before, wrapped up in combat between two formations, each part of a greater struggle between massive armies.

What the Games Master needs to know in order to paint the picture of how things are progressing for the players, is the general sweep of the battle, not its every detail. So, treat the area of the field where the Player Characters are fighting as a Medium battle and work out the MC and outcomes for that part of the greater battlefield, give each formation its own MC and leave it at that.

THE BATTLE

In the days before the coming battle, the Games Master should build up the tension about events to come, spreading false rumours about the strength of the enemy, having priests move around the camps collecting wills and last letters home and other similar events. As much as possible, players should be left with the edgy feeling almost anything might happen and that the random fluctuations of the fight could so easily lay them low. Let them discuss plans and make all the preparations they can.

Once it starts, the battle will quickly lose any real coherence for the men on the ground and this should be as true for the



A MEDIUM BATTLE

(Pictured Above)

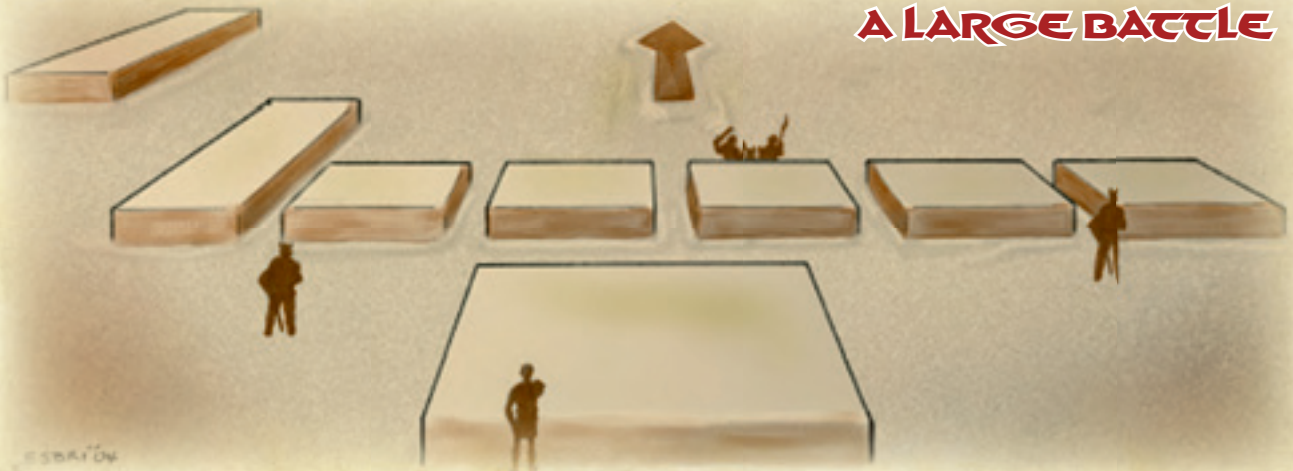
MCs are calculated for each 'formation', though the commander's MC only affects them all if he can command all three. The Player Characters are in the front rank of the right hand formation or wing.

Player Characters as for any common warrior. As the adage has it, no plan survives contact with the enemy. The key to translating this confusion to the players is to remember two things. Restrict what information is revealed to them and remember that a game based on action round combat in a dungeon is not always the easiest thing to use to detail a battle. In short, be prepared to wing it!

PLAYER CHARACTER ACTIONS

At the start of the battle, unless it is an ambush or the Games Master has some specific reason to dive straight into the action, he should develop the scene for his players, describing the terrain, weather and look of the enemy forces across the field. Most battles commence with a period of manoeuvre and missile bombardment, and this is time in which

A LARGE BATTLE



the Games Master can get across some of the feel of the approaching conflict to players.

Also, this is a good time to develop some specific opportunities for the Player Characters, in terms of more human-scale actions they may wish to undertake. The Games Master may talk about the small farmhouse ahead of their lines that looks like a good defensive position, or the mill on the rising ground on the enemy's left which will need to be cleared. Games Masters should describe enemy movements or the rumours circulating around the body of warriors to whom the Player Characters are attached and listen out for their planned actions so he can personalise the coming combat.

There is unlikely to be a great deal of magic flying across a Hyborian battlefield. Even though death can be very arbitrary in combat of this scale, be wary of creating any circumstance in which Player Characters can be incapacitated by a random spell or missile fire in this opening exchange. An incoming bowl of Kothic demon fire might require a few saving throws, but the brunt of its force should fall among others. Likewise, make a few combat rolls for enemy arrow fire, but do not pepper the Player Characters with too much as the enemy's fire should really just goad them into action. This is just a function of heroic roleplaying – random arrows fired by a faceless foe in the opposing ranks do not kill Player Characters.

When the time comes and the Player Characters are ready to act in response to some stimulus provided by the Games Master, keep the combat relatively personalised. The press of fighting men on either side effectively makes the combat area around the Player Characters a small and defined space, unless there is a break in the action while the two opposing units manoeuvre for position, take a breath or there is a sudden break into more fluid action, perhaps as the opposing force moves back rapidly. During the fighting, allow for the Player Characters to step back from being in the front rank

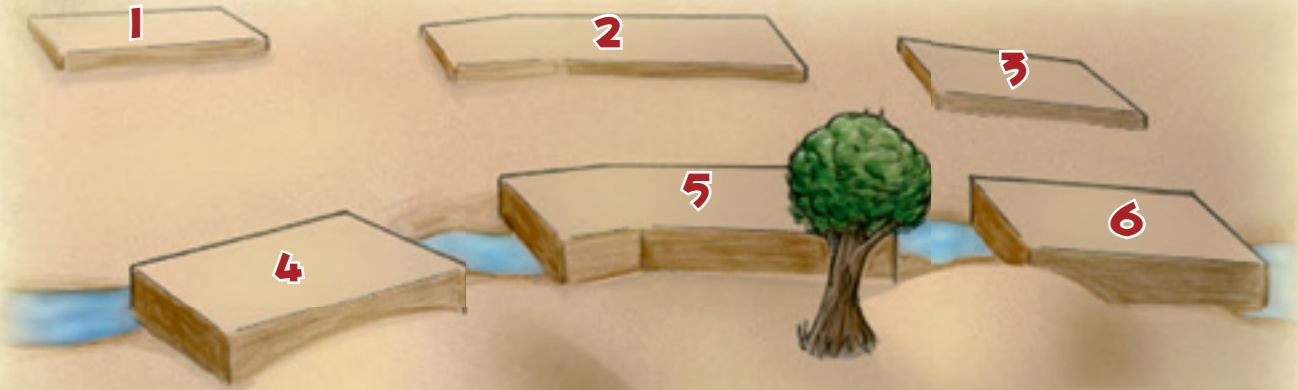
A LARGE BATTLE

(Pictured Above)

The commander at the rear may only be able to affect the MC of the formation directly to his front. More likely, MCs will be calculated the right 'wing', the three centre formations (where the Player Characters are) and for the two left 'wings'. The formation advancing to the far left, as it is acting separately to the rest of the army also has its own MC.

for healing and rest. Bursts of intense energy and danger interspersed with moments of calm are quite acceptable and realistic. Priests and healers will operate behind the main line, tending to wounded characters as best they are able, for as long as they have the safety of their army nearby.

Because they are extremely likely to seek battlefield glory, Player Characters will find themselves away from the lines more often than most, usually trying to perform some specific task which they believe will turn the tide of combat. Unless they can manoeuvre unseen and under cover, their actions are likely to attract hostile attention and for the sake of realism the Games Master should have the enemy react to their movement, either bombarding them with spells or missiles, or counter-attacking with a small body of soldiers. This does not have to be excessive as the enemy will not waste time and precious resources chasing six into no-man's land. The response will be proportionate. After all, the enemy are not to know these are bold Player Characters.



MILITARY COHESION AND AMBUSHES

If, on the other hand, the Player Characters are accompanied by a number of other retainers, mercenaries or soldiers, the Games Master can afford to be more aggressive in how the enemy attacks. The response will still be broadly proportionate with the enemy not wishing to throw too many resources at something that may only be a diversion, but the greater numbers involved mean this response will be more powerful. In reality, a hail of arrows directed at a body of men that happens to include the Player Characters might just catch one of them. However, a really serious wound might be a little hard for a character to take, so the secret is to treat Non-Player Characters accompanying the party more or less as 'human shields' who take the brunt of all damage. They are the ones hit five or six times by arrows and the ones at the centre of a blast of Kothic demon fire. The Player Characters have to take some losses but these should be proportionately small.

BATTLE OUTCOMES

At various stages of the battle, the Games Master should perform opposed MC checks of formations in combat. Just as in an opposed skill check, whichever force gets the higher result wins that phase of the contest. Games Masters should only need to test when a unit or army with an assigned MC is in combat, under fire from missiles or magic, and they should not test more than every 30-60 minutes game time.

AMBUSHES (Pictured Above)

A force comprising units 1, 2 and 3 ambushes three units of an opposing army (units 4, 5 and 6) as they march along a road. The MCs for each unit are modified as follows:

Unit 1 (skirmishers): Base MC: 16, ambush +2, outnumbered -2. Total MC: 16

Unit 2 (main body): Base MC: 18, ambush +2. Total MC: 20

Unit 3 (diversion): Base MC: 16, ambush +2, outnumbered -2. Total MC: 16

Unit 4 (vanguard): Base MC: 18, flanked -1. Total MC: 17

Unit 5 (main body): Base MC: 16, flanked -1, outnumbered -2. Total MC: 13

Unit 6 (rearguard): Base MC: 16, flanked -1. Total MC: 15

The outcome of the opposed MC check determines the ongoing ability of both units to continue fighting. Use the Military Cohesion Checks Table to determine this. The MC check column shows the difference between two units' opposed MC checks with each side applying the appropriate outcome and modifying their MC score as a result.

For example, a formation with a modified MC of 12 attacks an enemy with MC 11. They are evenly matched and so the Games Master determines that an hour passes before any advantage to either side becomes possible. Rolling 1d20 for each side, he gets a result of 5 for the attacking MC 12 formation for a total of 17, and 9 for the defending MC 11 formation for a total of 20. Consulting the table, the attacking formation is under pressure, suffering a -3 penalty to its MC. The defenders have a hard fought advantage and suffer a -2 penalty to their MC.

Military Cohesion Checks

| MC Check | Outcome |
|-------------|---|
| +21 or more | Major success; unit pushes forward in pursuit of defeated enemy; MC+2 |
| +16-20 | Important success; unit rallies and prepares to advance; MC+1 |
| +11-15 | Success; unit gains a breathing space |
| +6-10 | Tactical advantage; unit with upper hand; MC-1 |
| +1-5 | Hard-fought advantage; unit tiring, but pressing on; MC-2 |
| 0 | Lines locked in fierce combat with no clearly superior force |
| -1-5 | Under pressure; unit tiring; MC-3 |
| -6-10 | Front ranks crumbling; morale falling; MC-4 |
| -11-15 | Unit retreats; MC-6 |
| -16-20 | Unit pushed back; heavy losses and collapse of command; MC-8 |
| -21 or less | Unit routed; MC-10 |

Various events can also modify a unit's MC during the battle. The loss of a commander; the capture of a nation's colours or battle-standard; the unit becoming detached from the main army or becoming flanked; taking damage from spells or missiles against which the unit has no defence. A few of these and their effects are summarised on the Military Cohesion Modifiers table. The Games Master will have to decide if one of these events has occurred, based on what he knows of the opposing forces. Keeping a small diagram of the battlefield will show the Games Master what threats any formation faces.

Military Cohesion Modifiers

| Event | MC Modifier |
|--|-------------|
| Unit is defending behind walls | +4 |
| Unit is defending behind a river, fence or obstacle | +2 |
| Unit is outnumbered by 2:1 or greater | -2 |
| Unit is surprised | -2 |
| Unit takes incoming missile fire it cannot reply to | -1 |
| Unit is attacked by cavalry or elite troops | -2 |
| In a previous phase, flanking friendly units gave ground | -1 |
| Enemy forces operating in the unit's flank | -1 |
| Enemy forces operating to the unit's rear | -2 |

KNOWLEDGE (WARFARE) AND MILITARY COHESION

A character who has studied the art of war through the ages is often intimately knowledgeable of war's intricacies and nuances. Any character who has five or more ranks in the Knowledge



(warfare) skill may apply any ranks over five as a competence bonus to the unit they are assigned to. A character with eight ranks in Knowledge (warfare) would therefore be able to add a +3 bonus to his unit's MC score. While it is not impossible to have two or more characters within a unit who have such a level of knowledge, only one character per unit may use their knowledge in this way, otherwise the unit will fall foul of contradictory orders. In this case the larger bonus now serves as a penalty to the smaller bonus reducing the unit's overall cohesiveness.

For example, Barabus has eight ranks in Knowledge (warfare) and is making a good job of commanding his unit (adding +3 to the unit's MC of 12, for a total of 15). However, Herudides decides to assist his friend, in theory adding his seven of his 12 ranks (12 - 5 = 7) of Knowledge (warfare) as a bonus to the unit's MC. However, as the two men's orders filter through the unit it becomes increasingly confused and separated it is clear that this has had the opposite effect and Herudides' +7 bonus has become a -7 penalty the unit's modified MC of 15, reducing it to a mere 8. The unit is now no more effective than an angry mob of Ophirean farmers.

Exception: If Herudides possesses the Aide de Camp feat his input does not act as a penalty, but the amount of support he can lend to Barabus is limited to +2, regardless of how many

Random Events

| 1d20 | Event | MC Modifier |
|-------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1-2 | Commander killed | Loss of any MC bonus; additional -2 MC |
| 3-4 | Unit struck by debilitating magic | -2 MC |
| 5-6 | Standard lost | Loss of any MC bonus; additional -2 MC |
| 7-8 | Loss of key position | -1 MC |
| 9-10 | Unit expends missile weapons | -1 MC |
| 11-12 | Disorientated | -1 MC (and unit retreats) |
| 13-14 | Rash order | -1 MC (and unit manoeuvres into dangerous position) |
| 15-16 | Defences crumble/ attack falters | -2 MC |
| 17-18 | False rumour | -2 MC |
| 19-20 | 'Run for your lives!' | -4 MC (and unit routs) |

ranks of Knowledge (warfare) he has. A unit can only ever have one Aide de Camp at any one time.

THE FOG OF WAR

A Games Master may also determine if a formation has been struck by particularly bad luck during battle, representing the fog of war and the dissolution of any plan in the face of the enemy. If any formation rolls a natural 1 for its opposed MC check, consult the Random Events Table.

THE EFFECT OF PLAYER CHARACTERS

As heroes, Player Characters are going to do more to influence the outcome of the battle than ordinary warriors, though this is always in proportion to their character level. If they command troops, this effect is magnified. The Games Master should either penalise the enemy's MC one or two points, or allow the Player Character's unit to recover a point of MC, whenever they do something suitably dramatic and heroic. This can be in addition to any MC gains or losses connected to their action (the Player Characters get their extra award for being 'flashy'). If, for example, the Player Characters cut their way through the enemy's ranks and capture a battle standard, the enemy would lose whatever bonus the standard brought them, but may perhaps add another +2 MC for the suitably heroic way in which the Player Characters achieve this.

WHAT COUNTS AS A DRAMATIC ACTION?

If the Games Master points out a small building bristling with Bossonian archers which is taking a heavy toll of the

men in the front rank of the Player Characters army and they agree something needs to be done about it, this becomes the equivalent of an adventure goal, the same kind of scenario as when they defeat an evil scholar in his tower or rescue a kidnapped princess in a regular game. Just because the adventure is set on a battlefield, it does not mean it is not possible to roleplay in exactly the same way as normal. Just keep the atmosphere extremely unfriendly. Every time the Player Characters step forward from the ranks, with or without support, they become the target of missiles and spells, counterattacks and indirect force, as outlined earlier.

The Player Characters can have repeated MC effects as the battle continues and each can take place in a very compressed amount of time. While most checks for unit combat are made only every 30-60 minutes of the battle's duration, Player Characters might achieve a breakthrough success in just a dozen combat rounds. This is the role of heroes in battle.

EXAMPLE BATTLE

Here is an example of how a Games Master can use the guidelines within this chapter to run a battle scenario within a crusade campaign.

The Player Characters are Aquilonian knights at the head of a crusading army sent to annex large portions of Cimmeria. The Games Master has determined that, on the march through the hills of Cimmeria, the army is ambushed by a warband of Cimmerian warriors alert to their incursion. The Aquilonian knights are the vanguard of the army, but the main attack falls instead on the main formation, which is flanking the baggage train. The numerous barbarians are clearly more interested in a fast, distracting attack and some loot than a major battle with fully armoured knights.

The Cimmerian barbarians have a base MC of 15 though they will be fighting a weakened enemy as they have launched an ambush. The Aquilonian knights have an MC of 16 and the rest of the Aquilonian army have an MC of 14, though whilst they are surprised at the ambush, this is modified to MC 13 and 11 respectively (-2 for being surprised, -1 for having enemy at their flank) for the first Military Cohesion check. In the context of this particular campaign, the Games Master has also decided that the barbarians are led by a tenacious and skilled leader giving their main body an MC bonus of +2, for a total of MC 17 for the Cimmerian barbarians, MC 13 for the Aquilonian knights and MC 11 for the rest of the Aquilonian column during the initial stage of this battle.

The first the Player Characters know of the ambush is a sudden clamour to the rear. The Games Master describes a terrible cry from further back down



the trail and a brief flurry of arrows from the trees to the south of the road, as barbarian skirmishers attempt to disrupt the Aquilonian force. The Player Characters, who have command of two dozen knights and their retainers within the 800-strong vanguard formation, decide they will charge the tree line to clear away the skirmishers while the rest of the column turns to face the enemy. As they discuss their plans, the Games Master makes initial MC checks for the various combatants.

The barbarians attacking the vanguard are outnumbered and so will suffer a -2 penalty to their MC. They check results in a roll of 31 ($13 +$ a 1d20 roll of 18), while the Aquilonian knights roll a total of 24 ($13 +$ a 1d20 roll of 11). This is an outcome of -7 to the knights, who therefore suffer a total MC loss of -4 . The barbarians, at $+7$, only suffer a -1 penalty to their MC. The Games Master will not describe the action in such terms, however.

As the Player Characters charge, the Games Master tells how a hail of arrows cuts down troops around the charging knights. It is up to the players to determine how brave they are feeling and whether they continue their charge.

If they press on, the action becomes a more recognisable melee, with the Player Characters closing on the barbarians. Assuming the Player Characters do a good job and drop 20 or 30 of their opponents,

their heroism will be such that the barbarians suffer an additional -2 MC penalty in the next check.

After several rounds of combat, the Games Master determines that this is a good time to take stock of the situation again and so fresh opposed Military Cohesion checks are made. The barbarians facing the vanguard formation have now lost many of their advantages as the Aquilonian knights have recovered from the surprise of the ambush. They have lost -2 MC for being cowed by the Player Characters' heroism and so now have just MC 14 (MC 15, $+2$ for their warlord, -1 for the last combat outcome, -2 for the Player Characters' actions). The knights are no longer outflanked and are now on MC 14. The fresh opposed checks the Games Master makes give results of 23 ($14 +$ 1d20 roll of 9) for the barbarians and 25 ($14 +$ 1d20 roll of 11) for the knights. It is not a decisive turn in the pace of events but the pressure on the vanguard formation has eased.

The Games Master describes how the knights are forming up to follow the Player Characters into the trees while also sending detachments back to reinforce the centre formation.

The Player Characters will undoubtedly ask what is happening in the rest of the battle at this point. The Games Master makes rolls for the centre and rearguard formation for the first phase of the action. In that initial ambush, the main barbarian formation in the centre, led by their commander, achieved a $+2$ outcome result over the Aquilonian centre – not enough to cause any real concerns. He tells the players that from what little they can see, there is ongoing heavy fighting back there. He then checks for this second phase, when the initial barbarian rush has been spent. This time the net result is $+4$ in the Aquilonians' favour.

The Player Characters, having caught their breath, advance once more along the side of the road, coming gradually closer to the action in the centre. The Games Master describes events there in greater detail, telling the players that the barbarians are trying to make off with supplies stripped from the wagons. The players try to stop this and several more rounds of standard combat take place as they drive the Cimmerians back from two of the supply wagons. Nothing spectacular happens in this action and the Games Master decides no additional MC advantage accrues to the Aquilonians as a result.

The attack on the rearguard formation, after a similarly narrow success in the first phase, fades away after the second. The Games Master determines the barbarians will retire, licking their wounds. The ambush has been greatly disruptive but not fatal to the Aquilonian incursion force. The fighting was heaviest with the main formation but losses are not problematic. Rather more worrying are the dead and dying among the elite vanguard formation.

Mercenaries of Note

Sell-Swords and Braggarts

THE HYBORIAN AGE is a time of violence and carnage unmatched in human history. In this bloody time men of common wit and uncommon luck (or common morality and uncommon skill) can rise high on the strength of their sword arms and their willingness to slaughter anyone who stands in their way. If they can keep their honour while doing so, then they can at least sleep at night. If not, there is always another paid wench to soothe their sorrows or a slug of lotus wine to ease them into fitful dreams.

AMALRIC THE AQUILONIAN

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian borderer 3/soldier 9)

Hit Dice: 10d10+4+10 (69 hp)

Initiative: +15 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, +2 Lightning Reflexes, +6 Reflex save)

Speed: 25 ft.* (mail hauberk)

DV (Dodge): 18 (+5 level, +3 Dex)

DV (Parry): 22 (+7 level, +4 Str, +1 Parry)

DR: 7 (+6 mail hauberk, +1 steel cap)

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +12/+16

Attack: Broadsword +16 melee

Full Attack: Broadsword +16/+11/+6 melee

Damage: Broadsword 1d10+4

Special Attacks: Combat style (archery), Formation Combat (*heavy infantry, skirmisher*)

Special Qualities: Adaptability (*Spot, Listen*), Background Skills (*Spot, Listen, Diplomacy, Bluff*), favoured terrain (plains) +1

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +9 (+12 vs. Corruption)

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 11

Skills: Bluff +7, Climb +6, Craft (herbalism) +5, Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (geography) +14, Listen +12, Move Silently +7, Ride +12, Search +15, Sense Motive +4, Spot +15, Survival +8

Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Dabber (counterspells), Endurance ^{bonus}, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Negotiator, Parry, Persuasive, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Rapid Shot ^{virtual}, Track ^{bonus}

Reputation: 14 (Brave)

Leadership: –

Code of Honour: Civilised

Alliances: Aquilonia, Unit Commander, Conan

Possessions: Aquilonian broadsword, Kothic mail hauberk, Shemite helmet (steel cap)

Amalric was swamped by wild men who leaped from their horses and swarmed around him. Sinewy, naked arms pinioned him; fierce brown, hawk-like faces snarled at him. Lissa screamed. Then the attackers were thrust right and left as the man on the great horse reined through the crowd. He bent from his saddle and glared closely at Amalric.

'The devill' he roared. 'Amalric the Aquilonian!'

Robert E. Howard, *Drums of Tombalku*

Amalric the Aquilonian has locks of rebellious yellow hair and grey eyes. He was born in the western hills of Aquilonia and was raised on woodcraft. He later served as a mercenary during the reign of King Vilerus. He served as a mercenary alongside Conan the Cimmerian for the kingdom of Koth during a Kothian-Argossean invasion of Stygia. He and Conan followed Prince Zapayo de Kova, a Zingaran, as they pillaged Stygia. Koth, however, came to a peace with Stygia, stranding the mercenary army. The Stygian army slaughtered the mercenary force, leaving only Amalric and Conan alive to flee. Amalric soon after fell in with Ghanata thieves and spent a month thieving with them. He battled a Horror in Gazal and at one time in his past he knew a black witchman who taught him a powerful incantation to use against demons.

Amalric is intelligent and empathetic. He sees what is going on around him without seeming to notice. His experience as a mercenary has made him excellent at making bluffs and at blending into any given society of personalities. Given to appreciate brawls, blood-letting and adventure, his encounter with Lissa during the events of *Drums of Tombalku* has given him a different outlook on life, making him more protective of others. The story was unfinished by Robert E. Howard, so Amalric may have married Lissa or he may still be taking mercenary work in some far-flung kingdom.

LORD AMALRIC THE NEMEDIAN, MERCENARY GENERAL OF KHORAJA

Medium Humanoid (Nemedian noble 7/soldier 5)

Hit Dice: 7d8+3d10+6 (54 hp)

Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Reflex save)

Speed: 25 ft.* (mail and breastplate)

DV (Dodge): 16 (+5 level, +1 Dex) (an additional +4 large shield vs. ranged attacks)

DV (Parry): 27 (+8 level, +4 Str, +1 Parry, +4 large shield)

DR: 9 (+8 mail and breastplate, +1 steel cap)

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +10/+14

Attack: Broadsword +17 melee

Full Attack: Broadsword +17/+12 melee

Damage: Broadsword 1d10+5

Special Attacks: +2 attack bonus with broadsword, hunting bow, heavy lance and war spear, Formation Combat (*heavy infantry, heavy cavalry*)

Special Qualities: Adaptability (*Gather Information, Knowledge (local)*), Background Skills (*Bluff, Diplomacy, Knowledge (local), Sense Motive*), title, rank hath its privileges, wealth, special regional feature +2, social ability (*ally*), lead by example +2, enhanced leadership

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +12 (+15 vs. Corruption)

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 18

Skills: Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +14, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (nobility) +13, Knowledge (local) +12, Ride +16, Search +10, Sense Motive +7

Feats: Combat Expertise, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Investigator, Leadership ^{bonus}, Mounted Combat, Parry, Power Attack, Steely Gaze, Weapon Focus (broadsword), Weapon Specialisation (broadsword)

Reputation: 24 (Brave)

Leadership: 18 (9th level cohort; 100 1st, four 2nd, two 3rd, one 4th)

Code of Honour: Civilised

Allegiances: Queen-regent Yasmela of Khoraja, Conan, his Free Companions

Possessions: Nemedian broadsword, Kothic mail and breastplate, Shemite helmet (steel cap)

Amalric the Nemedian is a minor noble serving in Khoraja as a general of mercenaries. Conan thought him trustworthy and intelligent. Lord Amalric is a large, bearded man with a lion-like mane of yellow hair. Robert E. Howard often describes him as lion-like in manners and movements.

He is a mercenary experienced by

Amalric swore beneath his breath, then grinned. True soldier of fortune. no shift of fortune. however outrageous. surprised him much.

'I'll serve under him. A short life and a merry one. say I - and with Conan the Throat-slitter in command. life is likely to be both merry and short. Mitra!

Robert E. Howard, *Black Colossus*

long years in foreign campaigns. He accepts change quickly, knowing adaptability is key to survival in the world of the mercenary soldier. He does not waste time cursing his luck or praising his good fortune. He accepts and finds a way to succeed regardless of the whims of fate. As most Nemedians do, Lord Amalric swears by Mitra and he swears like a pirate when wounded or hurt. Prior to Conan's promotion by Yasmela, Lord Amalric had made Conan a captain of his mercenary spearmen. Lord Amalric knows his men and is quite capable of predicting their actions. He is also quick to find his bearings, able to gather information and uncover local knowledge easily, further ensuring his survival in far-flung nations. Still, he remains a noble, intent upon being in command if possible and ingratiating himself with local nobility in order to rise quickly in rank and fame. Highly charismatic, he is well liked by his mercenaries and is known to always be willing to lend a hand, always fighting alongside his soldiers as one of them. He is quick to grin and quick to lead his men to the fight. A spear wounded him through his mailed thigh in the Battle of the Pass of Shamlā, where he led his lancers at Conan's command against the hordes of Natohk. He was a hero of that battle and was rewarded handsomely by Yasmela and the Khorajan nobles. He resides in Khoraja still, commanding its mercenary armies. He makes trips occasional outside of Khoraja to recruit skilled or specialised companies and occasionally returns home to Nemedia during nostalgic moments.

Note: Amalric is an extremely common name during the Hyborian Age (Robert E. Howard used the name repeatedly for various characters) so it is unlikely Lord Amalric of Khoraja (*Black Colossus*) is the same person as Baron Amalric of Tor (*The Hour of the Dragon*), although both are Nemedians. He is definitely not the same person as Amalric the Aquilonian (*Drums of Tombalku*).

He strode down the nighted street as one who has no need or desire to walk softly. An unconscious swagger was in his stride, and his footfalls resounded on the pave. As he passed near a cresset she saw him plainly - a tall man, in the chain-mail hauberk of a mercenary. He stood facing her, his hand on the long hilt that jutted forward from beneath the scarlet cloak which flowed carelessly from his mailed shoulders. The torchlight glinted dully on the polished blue steel of his greaves and basinet. A more baleful fire glittered bluely in his eyes. At first glance she knew he was no Hyborian. He was clad like a captain of mercenaries, and in that desperate command there were men of many lands, barbarians as well as civilized foreigners.

Robert E. Howard, *Black Colossus*



CONAN THE THROAT-SLITTER

Medium Humanoid (Cimmerian barbarian 7/pirate 1/soldier 2/thief 1)

Hit Dice: 9d10+2d8+44 (108 hp)

Initiative: +14 (+5 Dex, +9 Reflex)

Speed: 25 ft. (mail hauberk)

DV (Dodge): 21 (+6 level, +5 Dex)

DV (Parry): 18 (+3 level, +5 Str)

DR: 7 (+6 mail hauberk, +1 steel cap)

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +9/+14

Attack: Broadsword +14 melee

Full Attack: Broadsword +14/+9 melee

Damage: Broadsword 1d10+5

Special Attacks: Greater Crimson Mist, Sneak attack +1d6/+1d8, Sneak Attack Style (broadsword), Versatility, Ferocious Attack

Special Qualities: Barbaric Code of Honour, Mobility, Fearless, Trap Sense +2, Trap Disarming, Uncanny Dodge, Seamanship +1

Space/Reach: 5ft./5ft.

Saves: Fort +14, Ref +14, Will +6 (+9 vs. Corruption, +10 vs. fear or Terror)

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 20, Con 19, Int 18, Wis 17, Cha 19

Skills: Balance +11, Bluff +11, Climb +12, Decipher Script +7, Gather Information +11, Hide +11, Intimidate +15, Jump +10, Knowledge (arcane) +8, Knowledge (geography) +10, Listen +8, Move Silently +14, Ride +7, Search +9, Spot +8, Survival +8, Swim +8

Feats: Brawl, Combat Expertise, Diehard ^{bonus}, Endurance ^{bonus}, Fighting-Madness, Improved Sunder, Navigation, Power Attack, Sleep Mastery, Striking Cobra, Track ^{bonus}

Reputation: 16 (Brave)

Leadership: –

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Allegiances: Queen-regent Yasmela of Khoraja, Lord Amalric, his Free Companions

Possessions: Corinthian broadsword, Kothic mail, Kothic helmet (steel cap), scarlet Ophirean cloak

Just prior to the events of *Black Colossus*, Conan the Cimmerian was serving as a captain of mercenary spearmen in Khoraja. Princess Yasmela, the queen-regent of Khoraja, obeying the edicts of one of Mitra's oracles, promoted Conan to the status of general, giving him command of all the armies of Khoraja. Conan was called 'Conan the Throat-slitter' by Lord Amalric, Khoraja's Nemedian general of mercenaries, a grim name for a grim warrior.

At this point in his life, Conan has sailed as Amra (*Queen of the Black Coast*) and has battled his way north through the Black Kingdoms. He has been to Zamora, Corinthia, Nemedias, Argos and the Black Kingdoms. L. Sprague de Camp asserts he served as

a mercenary in Turan prior to his stint in Khoraja, although there is no real evidence for this in Howard's works.

Conan the Throat-slitter is a capable, seasoned warrior at this stage in his life. Regimented military life is difficult for him, making him one of the most dangerous rogues in Amalric's mercenary armies. After the events of *Black Colossus*, Conan travels to Khauran, becoming first a captain of the guard, then a Zuagir chieftain (*A Witch Shall Be Born*).

CAPTAIN CONAN OF TURAN

Medium Humanoid (Cimmerian barbarian 7/soldier 1/thief 1)

Hit Dice: 8d10+1d8+36 (90 hp)

Initiative: +11 (+4 Dex, +7 Reflex)

Speed: 25 ft. (mail hauberk)

DV (Dodge): 19 (+5 level, +4 Dex)

DV (Parry): 17 (+2 level, +5 Str)

DR: 7 (+6 mail hauberk, +1 steel cap)

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +8/+13

Attack: Scimitar +13 melee or Hyrkanian Bow +12

Full Attack: Scimitar +13/+8 melee or Hyrkanian Bow +12/+7

Damage: Scimitar 1d8+5 or Hyrkanian Bow 1d10+5

Special Attacks: Greater Crimson Mist, Sneak attack +1d6/+1d8, Sneak Attack Style (broadsword), Versatility

Special Qualities: Barbaric Code of Honour, Mobility, Fearless, Trap Sense +2, Trap Disarming, Uncanny Dodge

Space/Reach: 5ft./5ft.

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +11, Will +6 (+9 vs. Corruption, +10 vs. fear or Terror)

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 19, Con 18, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 18

Skills: Balance +9, Bluff +11, Climb +11, Decipher Script +7, Gather Information +10, Hide +11, Intimidate +13, Jump +9, Knowledge (arcane) +7, Knowledge (geography) +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +13, Search +7, Spot +7, Survival +8, Swim +8

Feats: Brawl, Combat Expertise, Diehard ^{bonus}, Endurance ^{bonus}, Fighting-Madness, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Sleep Mastery, Striking Cobra, Track ^{bonus}

Reputation: 15 (Brave)

Leadership: –

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Allegiances: Turan, fellow Free Companions, Juma

Possessions: Turanian scimitar, Turanian mail, Turanian helmet (steel cap), Hyrkanian Bow (+5), 20 arrows

Before the mighty Conan sailed the seas of blood with the love of his life, Bêlit, he served in a variety of military organisations. His earliest experience is, naturally, as part of a barbarian horde sweeping out of Cimmeria to deal with an

unwanted Aquilonian aggression. After this first bloodbath, and his stint as a thief in the southern kingdoms, he turns east to fight as a sell-sword among the armies of Turan. There he learned something of the value of disciplined fighting, and much of professional skills of archer and horsemanship so beloved by the nomads.

During this time he also has his first taste of true command. As a captain in the armies of Turan he leads both cavalry and infantry troops to victory after victory. It is only after he tires of eastern intrigue that he turns his attention back to the lands of his youth and the wars plaguing Nordheim. Among the northerners he shed much of his civilised training and the responsibility that came with it.

It will be years before Conan once again rises to the lofty heights he reaches in King Yildiz's court. By the time he first encounters Lord Amalric, then becomes his commander through a twist of luck, his time among the king's generals has faded as much as Amalric's own sordid past. However, the lessons he learned during that time allow him to array his newly acquired forces in good order, then to spend them with a wisdom not hinted at in his wild and reckless behaviour as a freelance and Free Companion.



IMBALYO OF DARFAR

Medium Humanoid (Darfari barbarian 10)

Hit Dice: 8d10+1d8+36 (90 hp)

Initiative: +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflex)

Speed: 25 ft. (scale corselet), 40 ft. (unarmoured)

DV (Dodge): 20 (+7 level, +3 Dex)

DV (Parry): 16 (+3 level, +3 Str)

DR: 5 (+5 scale corselet)

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +10/+15

Attack: Scimitar +15 melee

Full Attack: Scimitar +15/+10 melee

Damage: Scimitar 1d8+5 (18-20/x2)

Special Attacks: Crimson Mist, Versatility

Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Damage Reduction 1/–, Improved Mobility, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Fearless, Trap Sense +3, Uncanny Dodge

Space/Reach: 5ft./5ft.

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +4

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 9

Skills: Bluff +6, Intimidate +8, Jump +12, Perform (dance) +8, Profession (sailor) +9, Ride +10, Spot +8, Survival +10

Feats: Cleave, Diehard, Endurance, Fighting-Madness, Fleet-footed, Improved Overrun, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Striking Cobra, Track

Possessions: Scimitar and scale corselet.

As captain of a troop of Kushite mercenaries in the service of the king of Asgalunim the giant Darfari mercenary captain Imbalyo serves two masters: his employer the king and the witch who guides the king's thoughts. One he serves from a lust for gold and the other from superstitious fear of the devilry she might unleash if crossed. Of the two the latter proves a stronger force, playing on the visions of terror drummed into his head by a youth spent among the uncivilised barbarians of the southern lands.

Though he does not look it, Imbalyo is, in truth, a visionary and an innovator in the world of southern mercenaries. Where his compatriots content themselves with hauling southerners north and allowing them to die, he forces his men to wear armour and wield swords of steel. Where others force their men to walk, he trains them in cavalry tactics and the use of the bow. When others keep their soldiers separate from the people they serve, he sends them out to gather rumours and prove their superiority in bar brawls and wrestling matches.

However, he does not do these things out of any sense of his own importance or from an original vision. Instead, he is simply emulating the hero of the southern people, Amra

The giant Imbalyo, in flaming silk and polished steel, roared among his men, beating them into order with a heavy leaded whip. They mounted and swung into line behind him. In a canter they swept off down the street, gory human heads bobbing on their lances as an object lesson to the maddened Asgalunim who crouched in their coverts, panting with hate.

R. E. Howard and L. Sprague de Camp,
Hawks over Shem

the Lion, in his adaptation of foreign tactics. When Amra used northern pirate tactics and Shemite bows to enhance his tactical power, Imbalyo realised he could do the same in the mercenary arena. The result is a lightly disciplined but heavily armed troop of barbarians he can barely control. Fortunately he does not need much discipline from them: his whip and the whips of his sergeants provide enough of that for the tasks he faces.

Like most undisciplined southerners Imbalyo enjoys his northern concubines but lacks much understanding of the complex political landscape he finds himself in. This innocence almost invariably leads to remarkable complexity, in which a more sophisticated ruler manipulates the southerners into a position of 'favour', seemingly elevating them while in reality using them to control the other forces in court. Imbalyo himself runs into this experience during his time in Shem as he tries to play politics with both Mazdak and Othbaal. Though it seems he comes out the better in the situation, in truth Imbalyo dances on the strings of those both wiser and more dangerous than he.

In personal combat Imbalyo almost rivals Conan's deftness and skill. He long ago forsook the spears of his homelands for a sharp and weighty scimitar capable of cleaving a man's head in two. His barbaric strength and snake-like speed allow him to carve his way through civilised opponents. Indeed, it is not until he comes blade-to-blade with Conan, whom he recognises as Amra, that this giant of a man meets with a superior opponent.

IVANOS THE CORINTHIAN

Medium Humanoid (Corinthian soldier 7/ pirate 3)

Hit Dice: 8d10+2d8+40 (98 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+3 Dex, +5 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge): 18 (+5 level, +3 Dex)

DV (Parry): 20 (+6 level, +4 Str)

DR: –

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +9/+13

Attack: Scimitar +13 melee; or Hyrkanian bow +13 ranged

Full Attack: Scimitar +13/+8 melee; or Hyrkanian bow +13/+8 ranged

Damage: Scimitar 1d8+4, or Hyrkanian bow 1d10+4

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack, To Sail A Road Of Blood And Slaughter, Sneak Attack +1d6, Sneak Subdual, Formation Combat (*light cavalry, skirmisher*)

Special Qualities: Hyborian qualities, Adaptability (*gather information, intimidate*), Background Skills (*survival, intimidate, knowledge (geography), Spot*), Seamanship +1, Pirate Code

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +4

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +3, Climb +9, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +14, Jump +9, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (local) +3, Profession (sailor) +4, Ride +6, Search +5, Spot +3, Survival +4, Swim +6, Tumble +8, Use Rope +6

Feats: Acrobatic, Athletic, Brawl, Carouser, Improved Overrun, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Power Attack

Reputation: 12 (Villain)

Leadership: –

Code of Honour: None

Allegiances: The Red Brotherhood, Captain Sergius, Crew

Possessions: Turanian scimitar, Hyrkanian bow.

Ivanos the Corinthian was a lieutenant of Captain Sergius of Khrosha. He served for many years as a Corinthian mercenary in foreign lands before finding himself an outlaw in Turan. After escaping Turanian captivity, Ivanos made his way to the Vilayet. His skill at arms soon found him a respected member of a pirate crew and his willingness to work hard found him favour with command. Captain Sergius rewarded Ivanos handsomely for defending his captain and ship during a particularly heated battle with Turan's marines, making Ivanos a lieutenant. He hated his counterpart, Aratus.

Later, he supported Conan's bid for the captaincy of Sergius' ships and crews. He trains pirate crews to fight in a more orderly fashion to better deal with Turanian marines. In ship-board combat, he often bull rushes opponents over the rail into the ocean. Ivanos is a lean man, given to blood-shedding

'Conan's gaze sought out the blood-stained figure of the Corinthian. 'How, Ivanos!' he challenged. 'You took up my part, once. Will you uphold my claims again?'

'Aye, by Mitra!' The pirate, sensing the trend of feeling, was eager to ingratiate himself with the Cimmerian. 'He's right, lads: he is our lawful captain!'

Robert E. Howard, *Iron Shadows on the Moon*

and looting. Further details of both Sergius and Aratus can be found in *Conan: Pirate Isles*.

GENERAL OTHBAAL THE ANAKI

Medium Humanoid (Meadow Shemite noble 2/soldier 10)

Hit Dice: 2d8+8d10+6+0 (59 hp)

Initiative: +18 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex save, -1 racial penalty to Ref, +4 Improved Initiative, +2 Lightning Reflexes)

Speed: 25 ft.* (mail hauberk and breastplate)

DV (Dodge): 17 (+5 level, +2 Dex)

DV (Parry): 27 (+8 level, +4 Str, +1 Parry, +4 large shield) (may parry if flat-footed)

DR: 10 (+8 mail hauberk and breastplate, +2 great helm)

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +11/+15

Attack: Scimitar +15 melee; or Shemite bow +15 ranged

Full Attack: Scimitar +15/+10 melee; or Shemite bow +13/+8/+13 ranged

Damage: Scimitar 1d8+4, or Shemite bow 1d10+4

Special Attacks: Shemite Regional Feature (+1 bonus to attack rolls with Shemite longbow and scimitar), +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with any bow, combat formation (*heavy cavalry, heavy infantry*)

Special Qualities: Meadow Shemite racial features, Title, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Wealth, Shemite Regional Feature +1

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +5

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 16

Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +10, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +15, Ride +17, Search +3, Spot +2, Sense Motive +5

Feats: Carouser, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Leadership, Lightning

Reflexes, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Parry, Persuasive, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Ranged Finesse, Rapid Shot, Reflexive Parry

Reputation: 62 (villain) (He may add a +7 bonus to his Bluff, Intimidate and Gather Information checks)

Leadership: 15 (7th level cohort; 60 1st level, two 2nd level, one 3rd level)

Code of Honour: None

Alliances: Anakia (Shemite city), King Akhîrom of Asgalun, Anakian mercenary force

Possessions: Shemite scimitar, Anakim mail hauberk and breastplate, Shemite bow, large shield.

Othbaal, the cousin to King Akhîrom, is the general of King Akhîrom's Anakian troops. Stationed in Asgalun, the Anaki leader managed to earn Conan's enmity when Othbaal, who was spearheading the revolt against the king of Anakia, requested assistance of the Akkhari, then betrayed them and caused their slaughter. Othbaal was slain by Conan during the events of *Hawks over Shem*. Othbaal won an Ophirean slave-woman named Rufia from Mazdak, another mercenary general in Akhîrom's employ, in a game of chance. Othbaal had a weakness for his favoured women and could be manipulated by them. Othbaal resided in the pleasure palace of King Uriaz, a former Asgalun king. Othbaal also acquired that house from Mazdak. Othbaal is a large man with a beard and moustache, wearing his long blue-black hair in a ponytail. Conan tracked down and slew General Othbaal in Asgalun. Although he was not wearing armour when Conan found him, he usually wears armour and uses a shield on the battlefield.

ZARALLO OF THE FREE COMPANIONS

Medium Humanoid (Zingaran noble 3/pirate 7/soldier 5)

Hit Dice: 8d10+2d8+40 (98 hp)

Initiative: +14 (+3 Dex, +9 Reflex save)

Speed: 25 ft.* (mail hauberk and superior scale corselet)

DV (Dodge): 20 (+1 level, +3 Dex)

DV (Parry): 17 (+1 level, +1 Str, +1 regional)

DR: 9 (+8 mail hauberk and superior scale corselet, +1 steel cap)

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +2/+3

Attack: Broadsword +13 melee; or Shemite bow +13 ranged

Full Attack: Broadsword +13/+8 melee; or Shemite bow +13/+8 ranged

Damage: Broadsword 1d10+1, or Shemite bow 1d10+4

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack, To Sail A Road Of Blood And Slaughter, Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8, Sneak Attack Style (broadsword), +1 attack with broadsword and arming sword

Special Qualities: Zingaran qualities, title, rank hath its privileges, wealth, special regional feature +1

"The Zingarans sank my last ship off the Shemite shore - that's why I joined Zarallo's Free Companions. But I saw I'd been stung when we marched to the Darfar border."

Robert E. Howard, *Red Nails*

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 20

Skills: Balance +2, Profession (sailor) +2, Use Rope +2

Feats: Weapon Focus (broadsword), Weapon Specialisation (broadsword)

Reputation: 60

Leadership: 9 (4th level cohort; 12 1st level)

Code of Honour: None

Alliances: Zarallo's Free Companions, Whomever Pays His Fees

Possessions: Zingaran broadsword, Shemite bow (+1)

Zarallo is the leader of a powerful Free Company out of Shem. Zarallo was a minor Zingaran nobleman who trained as a knight. His family was displaced due to intrigue and treachery, sending him into exile when a rival knight burned his fief. Taking to the sea as a buccaneer, Zarallo soon was commanding his own ships, disrupting Argossean and Barachan shipping with alarming alacrity. When his own ships were finally sunk, he took his remaining crew ashore and found work as a mercenary captain. Although he intended to return to the sea, he found he made a good captain. He also found he loved the lifestyle. His original force grew and he quickly became known in Shem and Koth as a skilled mercenary captain with his own Free Company for hire. At one point, both Valeria and Conan served with Zarallo's rogues in Sukhmet. Zarallo knows much of Stygia and has many contacts there, able to protect his Free Companions from the many depredations Stygia's priesthood often inflict on foreign mercenaries.

FAMOUS UNITS

In the Hyborian Age's war-torn lands a warrior can make a decent living as a mercenary. There are a number of mercenary organisations willing to hire any man or woman who can draw a blade. The Open Mass Combat System details for units hired from these mercenary companies are presented below.

NEMEDIAN ADVENTURERS

Race: Hyborian
Class: Soldier
Level: 3
Unit Size: 20
Creatures Per Counter: 20
Counter Hit Points: 67
Unit Type: Infantry
Initiative: +5 (+1 Reflex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Attacks: Greatsword +6
Damage: Greatsword 2d10+4
DV (Parry vs. Melee): 15 (+2 level, +2 Str, +1 parry)
DV (Dodge vs. Melee): 2 (+1 level, +1 Dex, -10 close formation)
DV (Dodge vs. ranged): 13 (+1 level, +1 Dex, +1 close formation)
Ability Scores: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 11
Saves: Fort +3; Ref: +2; Will +0
Feats: Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Parry, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Heavy Infantry Formation

The Nemedian Adventurers, a company composed of disgraced Nemedian nobles and commoners trying to make a better life, hire themselves out as elite mounted heavy infantry. They possess enough discipline to take garrison work, but consider such contracts beneath them.

Once hired, a unit of Adventurers retains its own command structure. Their soldiers do not answer to the regular army officers, nor do they accept command from them. The unit's commanders retain the right to argue with or even refuse orders given to them by their employers.

A unit of Nemedian Adventurers acting as a heavy cavalry unit gains the heavy cavalry expertise and has 141 hit points.

ENGINEERS

Race: Hyborian
Class: Scholar
Level: 3
Unit Size: 4

Creatures Per Counter: 12
Counter Hit Points: 37
Unit Type: Skirmishers
Initiative: +6 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Attacks: Short sword +3
Damage: Short sword 1d8
DV (Parry vs. Melee): 11 (+1 level, +0 Str)
DV (Dodge vs. Melee): 12 (+1 level, +1 Dex)
DV (Dodge vs. ranged): 12 (+1 level, +1 Dex)
Ability Scores: Str 10, Dex 13, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 8
Saves: Fort +0; Ref: +2; Will +3
Feats: Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Craft (alchemy)), Skill Focus (Profession (siege engineer)), Weapon Focus (short sword)
Special: Engineers have Craft (alchemy) and Profession (siege engineer) bonuses of +10.

Although it seems counter-intuitive the kingdoms of the Hyborian Age, with the exception of Khitai, do not maintain centres of learning or organised groups of siege engineers. The Hyborian methods of warfare have not evolved much beyond their original raiding tactics, modified only by their access to plate armour. The other nations, driven by the need to protect themselves from the Hyborians, have followed suit.

However armies still need to break walls and build bridges. In order to meet this need, many armies looked out outside help. They found a small host of engineering companies ready and willing to serve. Assuming, that is, they were willing to part with enough gold.

An engineering company usually contains no more than one unit and its associated war machines. Each engineer is a scholar, although perhaps not a gentleman. They do not engage in hand-to-hand combat and will flee the field if directly attacked.

Most Hyborian kingdoms hire three to five engineering companies before going on a major invasion. The kingdoms of the south rarely bother with such frivolities: either their sorcerers break the enemy's fortifications or they have none to begin with.

FREE COMPANIES: ARCHERS

Race: Hyborian
Class: Soldier
Level: 3
Unit Size: 10
Creatures Per Counter: 10
Counter Hit Points: 40
Unit Type: Archers
Initiative: +6 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Attacks: Bossonian longbow + 4 or Battleaxe +3
Damage: Bossonian longbow 1d12, Battleaxe 1d10
DV (Parry vs. Melee): 12 (+2 level, +0 Str)
DV (Dodge vs. Melee): 12 (+1 level, +1 Dex)
DV (Dodge vs. ranged): 12 (+1 level, +1 Dex)
Ability Scores: Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 8
Saves: Fort +4, Ref: +2; Will +1
Feats: Improved Initiative, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Bossonian Longbow), Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (Bossonian Longbow)

Free Companies archery units typically train right alongside their infantry counterparts. However, unlike the infantrymen the archers practice for hours every day with their longbows. They know that, regardless of what their infantry may think, that steady arrow-fire is the key to winning engagements. More importantly, it is the key to keeping other infantry units away from their lines.

Most of these companies adopted the use of the Bossonian longbow. The extra training required to use this weapon reduces their ability to train in more advanced archery. However the longbow's range and stopping power allow them to compete with Aquilonian units and to devastate crossbowmen.

Archer units are often associated with infantry or cavalry units in a mercenary company. There are a handful of mercenary companies that specialise in archery.

Each archer wears a mail hauberk and steel cap. They carry Bossonian longbows, a quiver of 30 arrows and battleaxes at their hips.

FREE COMPANIES: INFANTRY

Race: Hyborian
Class: Soldier
Level: 3
Unit Size: 10
Creatures Per Counter: 10
Counter Hit Points: 40
Unit Type: Infantry
Initiative: +4 (+1 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)
Attacks: Hunting spear +5 or Broadsword +4
Damage: Hunting spear 1d8+2 or Broadsword 1d10+2
DV (Parry vs. Melee): 18 (+2 level, +1 Str, +1 parry, +4 large shield)
DV (Dodge vs. Melee): 6 (+1 level, -10 Close formation, +1 dodge, +4 large shield)
DV (Dodge vs. ranged): 17 (+1 level, +1 Close formation, +1 dodge, +4 large shield)
Ability Scores: Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 8

Saves: Fort +4; Ref: +1; Will +1
Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Parry, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (hunting spear)

Free companies infantry trains to fight with spear/shield and broadsword/shield depending on their opponents. They use spear/shield against cavalry, and broadsword/shield when faced with another infantry unit. Each mercenary carries both with him at all times, in addition to his usual kit of a mail hauberk, steel cap and any personal items.

These infantry units have difficulty maintaining discipline when out of battle. They encourage their men to drink, engage in wanton activities and generally make a public nuisance of themselves. If it were not for the lords' need for troops, these ruffians would be banished without a second thought. Unfortunately, in addition to being a menace they are also extremely effective and dedicated fighters.

Most lords hire Free Company infantry only when they wish to engage in open conflict. Wealthier lords sometimes hire them for garrison duty, but their lack of discipline means they cannot be trusted to guard a city without indulging more than a bit.

FREE COMPANIES: CAVALRY

Race: Hyborian
Class: Soldier
Level: 3
Unit Size: 5
Creatures Per Counter: 10
Counter Hit Points: 74
Unit Type: Cavalry
Initiative: +4 (+4 Improved Initiative)
Attacks: Heavy lance +5 or Broad sword+5
Damage: Heavy lance 1d10+2 or Broadsword 1d10+2
DV (Parry vs. Melee): 17 (+2 level, +1 Str, +4 large shield)
DV (Dodge vs. Melee): 5 (+1 level, +4 large shield, -10 close formation)
DV (Dodge vs. ranged): 16 (+1 level, +4 large shield, +1 close formation)
Ability Scores: Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 10
Saves: Fort +4; Ref: +0; Will +0
Feats: Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Weapon Focus (broadsword), Weapon Focus (heavy lance)

The Free Companies cavalry units are composed of men who could not fit into their regimented Hyborian society. They are good horsemen, fair warriors and only indifferent soldiers. Their commanders must constantly struggle with their wild

tendencies while they are on boring duties like garrison or guard contracts.

However, they sober up fast when faced with a real battle. Whatever their personal problems, no one can claim Free Companies men lack courage or the will to fight. In fact, they are sometimes almost too eager. More than one general has watched a well laid plan fall to ruin as Free Company cavalry leave their appointed positions early. They seem particularly interested in engaging Hyborian knights, though none can tell if this is just a perception or a truth.

Each man in a Free Companies cavalry unit wears a mail hauberk and steel cap. He carries a heavy lance, a broadsword and a large shield into battle.

KOZAKS

Race: Various
Class: Barbarian
Level: 3
Unit Size: 4
Creatures Per Counter: 20
Counter Hit Points: 139
Unit Type: Cavalry
Initiative: +4 (+4 Improved Initiative)
Attacks: Hunting bow +3 or Scimitar +4
Damage: Hunting bow 1d8 or Scimitar 1d8+1
DV (Parry vs. Melee): 12 (+1 level, +1 Str)
DV (Dodge vs. Melee): 12 (+2 level)
DV (Dodge vs. ranged): 12 (+2 level)
Ability Scores: Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 8
Saves: Fort +4; Ref: +3; Will +1
Feats: Endurance, Live in the Saddle, Mounted Combat, Improved Initiative

The kozaks are not, strictly speaking, a mercenary force. However, they do occasionally hire on to 'guard' merchant caravans or band together to raid Turan, Vendhya or Kosala. The units presented above represent an 'average' kozak unit: some units in the raiding party may be of higher or lower level.

Each kozak wears a leather jerkin. He carries a scimitar and a hunting bow into battle. Most carry roughly 60 arrows on their horses and another 10 in a small quiver at their hips.

KUSHITE SPEARMEN

Race: Kushite
Class: Barbarian
Level: 1
Unit Size: 20
Creatures Per Counter: 20
Counter Hit Points: 25
Unit Type: Infantry

Initiative: +2 (+2 Reflex)
Attacks: Hunting spear +3
Damage: Hunting spear 1d8+2
DV (Parry vs. Melee): 16 (+2 Str, +4 large shield)
DV (Dodge vs. Melee): 14 (+4 large shield)
DV (Dodge vs. ranged): 14 (+4 large shield)
Ability Scores: Str 15, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8
Saves: Fort +4; Ref: +2; Will +0
Feats: Fighting-Madness, Toughness

Kushite spearmen or indeed spearmen from any of the Northern kingdoms, take employment throughout the Hyborian world. Many serve in Stygia, but units may be found as far north as Aquilonia. These wild barbarians lack the discipline for guard or garrison work, but make good fodder.

SHEMITE

MERCENARIES: ASSHURI

Race: Meadow Shemite
Class: Soldier
Level: 2
Unit Size: 20
Creatures Per Counter: 10
Counter Hit Points: 65
Unit Type: Cavalry
Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)
Attacks: Shemite bow+6 or light lance +3 or scimitar +3
Damage: Shemite bow 1d10+2 or light lance 1d10+1 or scimitar 1d8+1
DV (Parry vs. Melee): 12 (+1 level, +1 Strength)
DV (Dodge vs. Melee): 13 (+1 level, +2 Dex)
DV (Dodge vs. ranged): 13 (+1 level, +2 Dex)
Ability Scores: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9
Saves: Fort +3; Ref: +1; Will -2
Feats: Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Mounted Archery, Weapon Focus (Shemite bow)

The asshuri are part of a trained civic army that is hired out for mercenary duty by the civic leaders. Unlike the less disciplined Free Companies mercenaries, the asshuri can be generally counted on to follow orders and not loot their employer's lands.

Foreign countries generally hire the asshuri as either mounted archers or as guards for critical caravan routes. Their cavalry skill makes them unsuited for garrison work.

Battle's Bright Flame

Mercenary Adventures

INTEGRATING MILITARY ADVENTURES, whether the characters serve as mercenary soldiers or in a national army, can prove extremely difficult. The oft-repeated adages about players being unwilling to follow chains of command or accept the threat of potential extinction at the hands of faceless masses definitely apply to games taking place in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. How, then, does a Games Master or player use this book as more than just interesting filler for a character's background?

The following adventure seeds and extended adventure ideas show how elements of *Conan: The Free Companies* might play out as part of a set of stories told in serial format similar to the way Howard published some of the original Conan tales. Each of these adventure seeds and developed plots feature new functions, personalities and rules suggested in the previous chapters of this book.

MERCENARY ROLES

As mentioned throughout this book, characters acting as mercenaries take on one of three primary roles: captain, freelancer and soldier. Each of these roles takes a different approach to the opportunities inherent in the roving mercenary lifestyle. Most characters start out as soldiers, move on to freelancing for their own interest and eventually assume the heady heights of captain if they so desire.

In the Hyborian Age the three roles, and their opportunities, can be summarised in the following fashion:

CAPTAINS

Captains secure contracts for their soldiers and order them into battle. If they possess the political and tactical acumen to choose good contracts and keep their soldiers alive then they can become as wealthy as a merchant or noble. However, the mercenary life always exposes the mercenary to considerable risk. A single mistake, a bad recruiting year or a contract that refuses to pay can devastate even a well-run company.

Captains, unlike soldiers or freelancers, hold responsibility for the lives and hopes of others. Where a soldier cedes his moral authority to his officers, an officer must always question his own actions as they affect those under his command. His choices will affect how they live and die; if he has any

morality at all he can find himself weighed down under the burden of command.

FREELANCERS

Freelancers fight when and where they choose. Like a soldier, a freelancer has few concerns beyond meeting his duty and enjoying life. Unlike a soldier, a freelancer manages his own contracts and finances. Where a soldier has everything provided for him by his company a freelancer must pinch every bit of silver to ensure he can eat tomorrow. When times seem good the freelancer can live an extravagant lifestyle only dreamed of by his soldiering companions but when they become more difficult he must tighten his belt and go hungry.

Freelancers have the final say in what contracts they take and what they will or will not do on and off the field of battle. Although they have to follow orders like any other soldier they always have the option to walk away if things violate their own moral code. Most former soldiers miss this opportunity completely; they just continue to be and do what they always have been and done, contributing to the slow fall of Hyborian society. Others, especially those who have a code of honour, take the opportunity by the horns. These individuals will, eventually, develop enough of a reputation to become something more than an independent freelancer.

SOLDIERS

Soldiers fight when and where their captains order. Their lives consist entirely of fulfilling their duties and taking what pleasure they can from their environment. Even the most undisciplined unit requires soldiers to follow orders without question; even a moment of hesitation can spell the difference between life and death for hundreds of other men. A soldier rarely exhibits much concern about either his fellows or what might happen tomorrow.

In many ways a soldier, even a disciplined one, serves chaos and destruction without realising it. He cedes responsibility for his own morality and honour to his commander. In so doing, he loses the ability to act as a free man as well as the restraints keeping his actions in check. His commander and the situation dictate morality;



whatever they allow, implicitly or explicitly, becomes the norm.

Soldiers have little knowledge of and even less influence over the process of securing contracts for the coming years. They just have to hope their captain knows his business.

MIXED MERCENARY GROUPS

Characters, especially those starting out on their adventuring careers, may come from several different mercenary groups. It is not uncommon for several mercenary companies to work together on a contract; indeed a large invasion might involve as many as a dozen different mercenary companies. Though these groups do not always socialise well with one another in general individual soldiers may well spend time together in bars, out on the practice field or in trenches waiting for the enemy charge.

Even if the characters serve with different groups these early episodes in the characters' careers pose little problem for the Games Master. The characters all play the same role, soldier, regardless of their class or personalities. They share the same concerns, have

much the same lifestyle and can complain about military life together. Common complaints form a bond stronger than shared experience, though surviving a few battles together can also do wonders for group unity.

As the characters progress in their careers their roles begin to diverge. One character may want to stay as a soldier, amusing himself with the camp followers for the rest of his life. Another, chaffing at the restrictions of being a soldier, may strike out with other like-minded soldiers to become a small association of freelancers, each out for his own gain. The most charismatic and driven characters might eventually become a captain.

As characters' roles diverge this can cause stress in the group. Soldiers remain that way for a reason; just as freelancers and captains move on to achieve their own goals. One character might find himself in command of another, or even the entire group, even if he is not the groups real 'leader'.

Rather than allowing these role conflicts to cause problems in the group the Games Master can take the opportunity to use the contract and duty structure proposed in Rewards of Blood on pg. 54 to both generate stories and to 'link' the group together with logical chains of action. Each mercenary role comes at the duty from a different perspective, allowing the characters to more fully explore both the setting and their own interactions with it handled properly.

The expanded and developed adventure seeds below show how this kind of link works in practice.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The three roles described above each take a very different tack on the basic opportunities available for mercenary service in the Hyborian Age. Rather than causing conflict, these differences actually radically expand the opportunities for mercenary adventures, especially in a mixed group.

GENERIC

The following adventure seeds could be used for any character engaged in mercenary service. They require freedom of personal action not usually found on the field of battle, but often available to mercenaries in the long times between active combat.

1. One of the characters' unit members vanishes in the camp follower 'tent town'. This person, usually an NPC who has interacted with the characters at least a few times, fails to report for duty at the appointed time. For soldiers this causes considerable trouble as duty rosters change; for freelancers and captains it poses even more difficulties.

2. The character is assigned to a season of border watch on the Aquilonia/Nemedica border.
3. The character arrives with his unit for what is supposed to be a garrison contract. They are immediately put to work clearing land and hauling stone in preparation for building the garrison they are supposed to protect.
4. A group from the characters' unit does not show up for their regular duty rotation in a garrison contract. A few days later they come in, riding hard, with an angry 'patrol' consisting of four armed units at their back.
5. The company is caught, cut off from its supply lines and reinforcements during a routine patrol into an invasion area.

CAPTAIN

The following adventure seeds work well for captains, but not as well for either freelancers or common soldiers. These problems become considerably more complex as the captain struggles not only with his own choices but with his action's impacts on the people below him in the chain of command.

6. The captain receives a sealed letter from the leader of the opposing side. The letter offers five times his standard seasonal fee to betray his current employer along with a five-year contract in the foe's army.
7. The company's only engineer contacts the captain, informing him that he must sever his contract within ten days.
8. The captain receives reliable information that the most popular courtesan in the camp follower town has passed information to the enemy.
9. Two soldiers nearly kill each other in a scuffle over a silver brooch looted from one of the enemy officers.
10. A lucrative two-year contract opens up several months travel away. In order to take advantage of it the captain must break his current contract, potentially angering a powerful noble.

FREELANCE

The following adventure seeds work well for freelancers, men who manage their own contracts but still fight as part of a mercenary or military unit. Other soldiers may never fully trust a freelance, but most have skills even the most suspicious soldier will admit can affect the flow of battle.

11. Rumour reaches the character of a captain of the guard position opening up with one of the greater Aquilonian nobles. The noble will host a tournament to choose between the applicants, with the winner receiving a minor title, lands and appropriate slaves.
12. Two patrons compete for the freelancer's services. One offers a more interesting contract at lower pay while the other offers steady pay for very dull work.

13. A relatively famous mercenary unit offers the freelancer the opportunity to act as their captain for a season while they search for a more suitable replacement.
14. A sorcerer offers the freelancer the opportunity to plan his campaign against a local noble. The only catch: the freelancer will have to lead an army of zombies and ghosts into battle.
15. A village hires the freelance to protect it from outlaws.

SOLDIER

The following adventure seeds work well for soldiers, since they cannot simply desert their duties. Many of these activities are, frankly, things most freewheeling adventurers would flee from given the first opportunity.

16. The character's unit works for the next few months hauling rocks out of a broken down fortification.
17. The character's unit receives a duty posting as customs searchers. While doing a search the mercenaries discover a fleeing fugitive.
18. The character's unit goes on contract enforcing public order in a recently conquered city.
19. The prison the character's unit guards comes under attack during a revolution.
20. After the enemy forces the character's unit out of its garrison they receive orders to scorch the earth.

EXPANDED SEEDS

The 20 adventure seeds listed above provide the barest ideas of what could grow into an adventure. They are, in fact, so generic they could appear in any world. The process of developing these seeds into fully fledged adventures requires that we begin to apply world specific details to the seeds in order for them to develop into something we could use for a Conan campaign.

The following expanded seeds provide examples of this process in action. Those seeds with great potential will move on to the most complex, and most complete, third stage of development.

Seed 2: The characters' unit receives a contract to patrol the ever-volatile Aquilonia/Nemedica border. While stationed there one of their patrols discovers an elite company of Nemedian Adventurers holed up in a small valley not far away. At their best the characters' unit could slow the Adventurers down, but not stop them in a serious fight. As soon as the captain passes word about the Adventurers' presence the elite unit heads for the characters' unit's position.

Seed 4: The characters' unit's captain sends one of the groups out on patrol over the border. They encounter quite a bit more than they bargained for: a rebellious noble working diligently on building an army large enough to challenge the king. The noble dispatched riders and military units to cut down the patrol and seek out and destroy its home unit.

Seed 5: The character's unit (preferably a heavy infantry or other low-mobility unit) goes out on a patrol in force. During the mission they encounter a mass of the defending forces. Against all odds and common sense the captain orders the unit to drop stakes and defend the ground they currently 'hold'. What does the captain know, and why does he choose to sacrifice his men in this fashion?

Seed 7: During a particularly complex siege the company's only engineer comes to the captain to inform him he will be taking his leave. This forces the captain to either try to make the engineer stay or to find someone else capable of building a siege engine from among the ranks. If he can find one, the question becomes: does he promote the soldier over his peers or does he let him slip back down into the ranks when the crisis passes?

Seed 9: Two soldiers nearly kill one another a few weeks after the unit has a major victory, in a scuffle over a beautiful silver brooch. When the officer in charge brings the two to the captain he immediately recognises it as a rank insignia from an officer in the defeated army. Not only does he have to deal with the discipline infraction, the captain must also deal with both individuals as potential thieves and unsanctioned looters.

Seed 10: One of the captain's contacts in a far-away royal court sends him a message about a lucrative border patrol contract about to come up in the next two months. However, if the captain wants to get the contract he will have to break his current contract, cross hundreds of miles of potentially hostile territory and fend off the various other challengers for the position.

Seed 11: One of the Aquilonian dukes' captain of the guard died stopping an assassination attempt. Although the captain's second-in-command could ably command the guard, the duke wants to hold a tournament to find a successor. However, the second has a considerable advantage: he controls the competitor list, the grounds and all access to the tournament. He also uses the duke's guard as his personal police force, jailing and sometimes executing competitors for minor infractions.

Seed 14: A powerful and rich patron sends a dinner invitation to the freelancer just as he comes off a fairly standard contract. Over the course of dinner he regales

the character with a variety of tales about his youth then challenges him to a game of chess. By the time the character finishes the game the patron offers him a job leading a 'newly created army filled with veteran troops'. The army turns out to be composed of risen dead; the target is the kingdom the freelancer just completed a contract with.

Seed 15: Representatives of an out of the way village come to the 'big city' to find a mercenary willing to protect them. They offer the freelancer good food and shining silver if he will come to engage a small bandit group recently come down from the mountains. They try to gather a handful of down-on-their-luck soldiers before returning home. Upon arrival the characters find a village without a presentable fence with the population battered and exhausted from a season of raids.

Seed 16: The characters' unit (usually a raw recruit unit attached to a larger veteran company) is assigned the exciting task of moving large, heavy rocks from a ruined fortress to the new construction site. As twilight falls they uncover the ancient foundation of green stones underlying the old building. That night a vision of an ancient battle sweeps over them, showing them splendours and terrors forgotten in the present age.

Seed 18: Count Trocero recently captured a small Zingaran town just over the border from one of his strongholds. He moves the characters' unit into place in order to allow more veteran units to continue the campaign. Unfortunately the local population has only a very limited interest in submitting to their oppressors. Every patrol comes under attack from partisan supporters while supplies slowly dwindle and fell curses flit on the wind.

Seed 19: In Nemedra the characters' unit takes over responsibility for administering the local prison. As prisoners start to trickle in, some of them claim to have done no wrong save voice their support for the king. Within a month the prison becomes heavily overcrowded even though the gallows work day and night to decorate the trees with rotting meat. Then whispers begin to circulate about a force of grey-clad soldiers with greatswords strapped to their backs filtering into town.

DEVELOPED SEEDS

The following full adventures were developed from those in the Expanded Seeds section. These developed seeds contain assumptions about characters, cultural situations and historical events that may make them unsuitable for immediate integration in an existing campaign.

THE PRICE OF PRECISION

Based on: Seed 2

Initial Set-up: The characters' company moves into a mostly abandoned Aquilonian border fort. There they spend the next month or two running routine border patrols and rebuilding the fortification using readily available resources. This involves more than just a bit of backbreaking labour: all soldiers in the unit must make Fortitude saves as described in the Construction Labour duty (pg. 57) for a period of 2d4 weeks. Meanwhile more experienced units engage in border patrol activities and occasionally penetrate the Nemedian border to identify opposed troop movements.

Complication One: The captain sends an inexperienced group (the characters) out on a 'routine mounted border patrol'. He gives them explicit orders to check out a valley about a day's ride from the fortification. The characters' group heads out under the command of a new, relatively inexperienced leader. About an hour's ride from the camp they encounter a pair of elite Nemedian Adventurers (8th level soldiers) out on-foot patrol. The Adventurers will attack to kill; the characters can try to get away or fight as they choose. The 'leader' panics, giving a stream of contradictory orders.

If they proceed to the valley they will find an encampment of Nemedian Adventurers, consisting of some 400 troops and roughly double that number of support staff. The Adventurers are on high alert and will deal harshly with anyone who disturbs them.

Complication Two: When the characters arrive back at the fortress their commander asks them for a report. Within hours of the report another patrol encounters an armed Adventurer file heads towards the fortress. The captain orders the unit to stand firm, even though everyone knows the Adventurers will cut their force to ribbons. In fact, the captain and his cohorts are working with the Nemedian king to deal with one of his pesky border barons; after a show of force the Adventurers will attack the third party, leaving the mercenary units intact. Unless, of course, a character does something stupid to provoke them...

ZINGARAN POLITICS, AQUILONIAN STYLE

Based on: Seed 4

Initial Set-up: The characters company takes a garrison contract from the Aquilonian king. He sends them to an old, but still relatively sound, fortification deep in Aquilonian territory. The region, normally well known for its quiet nobles and rich harvests, does not welcome the mercenaries, but acquiesces to the king's command. Each of the four regional barons offers the captain and his crew additional winter rations and access to their small villages as a gesture of hospitality. Everything seems peaceful for 1d4 months,

barring the occasional excesses of bored mercenaries in a relatively peaceful location.

Complication One: During a late night patrol one of the character's spots a bright crimson cloak tangled in a hedge. Behind that hedge a Kothian soldier makes sport of a farmer's daughter. As soon as he sees the characters he flees. If they run him down, he offers to tell them an important secret in return for his life. If he gets away and they track him, they will find 10 units of assorted Free Companies mercenaries sitting in one of the quiet valleys near their garrison posts.

Complication Two: The four barons have decided to rebel against the barbarian lout on the throne. As soon as the mercenaries discover their troops they seal the area, bottling the characters' unit up in its fortress. The captain and his soldiers must find a way out, and a way to warn the king, before they lose the fortress and their lives. The 'gifts' of winter rations turn out to be heavily laced with poisons fit to kill even the strongest man.

COPPERS FOR GOLD

Based on: Seed 5

Initial Set-up: The characters' are assigned to a Kothian infantry unit then sent on a reconnaissance-in-force on the Khorajan border. The soldiers do as their officers command though some of the older mercenaries grumble about the foolishness of sending an infantry unit to smoke out information. The infantry's plodding pace, especially given they do not have an adequate supply train, makes the experience even more miserable. To top it all off it begins to rain as soon as the characters set out and continues to either mist or pour during the entire trip.

Complication One: About five days into their trip the infantry unit encounters three units of knights and two of infantry allied with Khoraja engaged in a one-sided battle with some hillmen. Two units of knights detach from the battle to deal with the newcomers while the rest mop up the remaining barbarians. Rather than retreat before a faster foe, the infantry captain orders the infantry to lock shields.

Complication Two: The 'hillmen' are in fact an elite unit of Zamorian Harriers sent at the request of Koth's king to deal with the rebellion of Khoraja. They had identified a highly undermanned fortification on the border and sent word to their employer requesting additional troops when the Khorajan units spotted them. The Harriers will melt into the background as soon as the pressure comes off, leaving the character's unit to their unenviable fate. The captain knows who they are and has orders to sacrifice his unit if necessary to prevent them from falling into enemy hands.

QUESTIONS OF HONOUR

Based on: Seed 7

Initial Set-up: The captain successfully negotiates a plum assignment: relieving a siege force after three seasons of blockade. The defenders have exhausted their offensive resources; while the invading army's units are so tired they will have trouble keeping up with the looting. All the captain has to do is wait out the plagues undoubtedly ravaging the defenders and he will have a rich prize just waiting for the taking.

Arrival at the campsite goes smoothly. The attackers have long since ranged out the defender's weapons, not that the defenders have anything other than offal to throw.

Complication One: Things seem to go well for the first few months. Then, just as the company's rotation for running the siege engines comes up, the company engineer drops by to let the captain know he will leave the unit in the morning. He had a dream that his wife needed him; nothing will sway him from making the journey back to his home on the Zingaran coast. Unfortunately, none of the other soldiers have even the faintest idea how to run a siege engine, let alone repair one if something goes wrong.

Complication Two: When the captain's company takes over the siege engines the enemy begins to lob great black spheres at the besieger's camp. These stones break open into swarm of small spiders. Unless the captain can come up with a way to silence the defender's engines he will not only lose the contract but also 2d4 points of Reputation as well.

QUESTIONS OF ORDER AND DUTY

Based on: Seed 9

Initial Set-up: The captain's unit has just finished a successful season on a contract involving the invasion and destruction of a Brythunian border baron's lands. The baron's troops, reinforced by six units of the Turanian horde, put up a strong fight but eventually fell before Nemedi's might. Now the troops slowly trickle home after

taking their leisure in the great tent city that sprang up near the central staging point during the campaign's short duration.

With the pressure off, some of the captain's officers have allowed discipline to relax. Soldiers who should stand guard are now wandering the tent city, while others take their ease at watch stations.

Complication One: During one of these unauthorised expeditions two mercenaries get into a drunken brawl over a silver brooch. A passing officer in the patron's service immediately recognises the brooch as a rank insignia from the baron's personal troops. He drags the brawlers before the captain, demanding not only that he hang the soldiers as thieves, but that he also investigate the possibility that more unauthorised looting occurred during or immediately after the battle.

Complication Two: In fact, a large amount of contraband is available in the tent city. Investigation leads the captain back to his own unit, where a group of soldiers under the leadership of one of the sergeants has established a booming business in contraband and military supplies. The company's stores are completely exhausted, as are the captain's personal funds and the advance given to him by the patron for reasonable expenses.



TERMS AND

SPECIFICATIONS

Based on: Seed 10

Initial Set-up: The captain has just completed the negotiation of a contract that commits him for the next two seasons to a garrison on the Aquilonian border with the Pictish Wilderness. The negotiations ensure his company will have employment, although perhaps not at the best rates or in the safest locations. After all, the Picts are a dangerous and unpredictable lot, just barely able to hold intelligent conversations with civilised men.

As the king's man rides away a courier arrives. One of the captain's far-flung contacts reveals in a letter that Zamora's king needs a few good companies to engage in a 'special assignment' potentially involving extremely confidential matters. The contract covers at least six seasons at twice the

company's usual rate, but the captain must have his troops ready for inspection at the Zamorian border in one month.

Complication One: Beyond the problems of breaking a contract with the Aquilonian king, the captain must also deal with three other Free Companies that received exactly the same introduction. These three companies (roughly the same size as the captain's own) will not sit idly by while others get the contract they feel rightfully belongs to them. Espionage, trickery and, if need be, open battle are the order of the day from wherever the captain's company camped until they reach the Zamorian border itself.

Complication Two: Once they reach the Zamorian border men begin to die from poison and disease at an incredible rate. Shortly thereafter the reason becomes clear: a necromancer faked the messages to entice a large number of disposable troops. As soldier's die he raises them as the risen dead, turning them against their fellows. When he has enough corpses on hand he will invade Koth, looting as he goes.

THE TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

Based on: Seed 11

Initial Set-up: Word goes out through the freelance community concerning the death of the captain of one of the Aquilonian dukes' guard, apparently in the process of foiling an assassination attempt. A few days later the duke announces a grand tournament, to take place over the winter season, the winner of which will become his new captain. Since the position comes with not only a generous stipend, but also an assortment of noble privileges every half-skilled sword swinger in Hyboria is likely to attend.

Complication One: The former second-in-command has no intention of losing his position to a bunch of feckless mercenaries and sell-swords. He has stationed his men throughout the city and incited the local criminal elements to even greater excesses than normal. Any characters arriving to take up the tournament's challenge will quickly find themselves enmeshed in a web of lies, danger and deceit designed to discredit them or at least cripple them long enough to make them sit the tournament out.

Complication Two: The tournament itself, a lavish spectacle worthy of one of the most powerful men in Aquilonia, masks a much more sinister truth. The duke and his men have planned an assassination. The target: Aquilonia's king. The former guard captain died when he discovered the plot; his death gave them the perfect opportunity to lure the 'dullard' monarch from the capital. At the height of the festivities they will kill the king, seize his crown and simultaneously break the back of the mercenary population that might rise up to help him.

TO GO DOWN INTO HISTORY

Based on: Seed 14

Initial Set-up: A freelance (or several freelances) goes out on the town for a night of debauchery after the successful completion of a lucrative, if dull, watch contract. As the gold flows like water an elegantly dressed man-servant approaches the soldier with an invitation to come visit one of the local noble estates. The owner of the estate, a young noblewoman of noted tastes, includes a pouch of golden coins with the offer, and promises of more if the soldier renders proper service.

Complication One: When the soldier arrives he finds the estate cold and deserted save for a single room containing a thin man dressed in a red robe and a massive banquet. The man invites the soldier in, offers him food and tells him stories about the great battles of his youth. After dinner, he offers to play a game of chess with the soldier. During the play, the thin man offers the soldier the position of captain in an army he is about to raise up against the king.

If the soldier agrees he finds himself captain of an undead army. If he says no, the necromancer calls on his undead servants to 'deal with this fool'.

Complication Two: In either case, the necromancer needs the soldier's blood to fuel the ceremony. The sorcerer intends to raise ghosts from a battlefield near the city, slaughter the population, then use the power from their deaths to raise himself to godhood.

GRAIN AND GOLD

Based on: Seed 15

Initial Set-up: One of the characters encounters a peasant in the streets, begging anyone carrying a sword to slow down and listen to his tale of woe. If he pauses to listen the tale seems compelling enough: good silver offered to a warrior who will come to the village. According to the teller, the bandits plaguing his home will stay away from a soldier of any repute, as they want easy meat, not a hot hard fight followed by the crows' feast. Despite these reassurances the peasant refuses to move on until he gathers a small host of fighting men, most of them over their prime or in some way otherwise impaired.

Complication One: The first night in the village (which has no fortifications to speak of) goes quite well. Then, in the darkness just before the dawn, a host of bandits, equally five times the number of defenders, attacks. They burn about half the huts and claim the lives of a handful of farmers before retreating with screaming women thrown over their

shoulders. The 'small group of bandits' is, in fact, a Free Company unit engaged in their usual sports.

Complication Two: Should the characters survive the initial assault the village's dirty secret quickly becomes apparent as commoners turn on the soldiers with high quality weapons drawn from smouldering huts. The peasants are not above a bit of banditry themselves and at this point the characters' gold may help them more than their swords.

FIVE GREEN STONES

Based on: Seed 16

Initial Set-up: The characters, having just left their farms and lush city lifestyles for the glamour of mercenary service, find themselves engaged in that most exciting of activities: clearing rubble from a broken-down fortification so their betters can loll around in the camp drinking beer and waiting for the work to conclude. Backbreaking labour and disastrous accidents take their toll on the recruit unit. Then, one day the characters work group pulls aside rubble obscuring a solid green foundation. As the workers stare in awe the rubble shifts, crushing about half of the work group under heavy rocks. Their blood, still hot and driven by their flailing hearts, burns alien lines onto the green stone below.

Complication One: As the night nears its nadir the air fills with quiet moans and horrible screams just on the edge of hearing. When the darkest hours of night falls the air shimmers and the men find themselves in a city of green stone at the moment of its fall. Soldiers of an unknown race battle sword against sword, cutting down each other and everyone caught in their path. Almost the entire veteran unit dies in the first minute of combat, caught away from their weapons. The recruits, being less of a threat, have a few more moments to escape in the general confusion.

Complication Two: As the characters flee they encounter an old man who urges them to hide in an old cellar. There, they find beautiful, almost alien women engaged in unspeakable blood rituals. If they survive, and can hold the cellar until dawn, they emerge at the site where their companions died shifting the rubble just the day before. Their unit has vanished, save for a few madmen sitting amidst the tattered tent cloth clawing out their eyes in an attempt to blot out the horrors they have seen.

FORGOTTEN PRICES

Based on: Seed 18

Initial Set-up: Last year Count Trocero took over the small Zingaran town of Aliton. Aquilonia's king, however, requires his knights and other trained troops to deal with an internal matter along the Pictish border. He hires the characters' company to hold

the town, although in truth he expects little in the way of trouble. In fact, the first few months of garrison duty prove relatively dull despite growing mutters of discontent from the local population.

Complication One: Things go well, that is, until the mercenary company finds four of its soldiers hung naked from a local bridge, their swords thrust through their bowels so as to emerge from their backs. The captain orders an immediate search for the perpetrators, despite knowing the true criminals will never come to justice. If the characters fail to find someone within a week he will randomly hang 20 townsmen of military age.

Complication Two: The deaths, the subsequent retribution, spark off an ever-escalating spiral of violence that occupies the garrison forces. Just as it looks like the city is about to explode, a troop of Zingaran knights and assorted support troops appears on the horizon. These soldiers move to besiege the town as the partisans within begin a push to finally bring down the garrison.

THINGS BEST LEFT UNSAID

Based on: Seed 19

Initial Set-up: The company commander takes a contract to garrison a prison deep in Nemediia. He sends a single unit of footmen to an old, worn stone dungeon with instructions to 'keep your heads down and come back in a year laden with gold'. The prison is about half full, with the population thinned occasionally by mass hangings.

Complication One: Approximately three months after the characters unit arrives the steady influx of prisoners becomes a flood. Soldiers loyal to the surrounding nobles begin to bring in pairs, then dozens, then entire villages full of 'criminals'. The prison quickly fills, forcing the garrison to step up the hangings in order to keep from stacking people like cordwood. Even a casual inspection of these individuals reveals most have never engaged in criminal activity: in fact, most are honest craftsmen and farmers simply caught up in some incomprehensible game.

Complication Two: When the characters take their leisure in the local village they encounter a man wearing a grey mail hauberk and a grey cloak. If they confront him he will try to leave; if they push the confrontation he retreats to his horse then draws his greatsword and lays about him. This gentleman, a 10th level soldier and Nemedian Adventurer, has come to investigate rumours that the king's supporters are being jailed and hung on spurious and trumped up charges.

Outside the Rank & File

Multiclassing Mercenaries

THE SOLDIER CLASS is a versatile concept in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* as well as one of the most customisable classes. They gain ample bonus feats chosen from a wide selection of available feats. The skill rules in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* further permit customisation by allowing any skill points realised from high Intelligence scores to be spent on any skill as though it were a class skill. Still further, soldiers can take levels in other classes to compliment their own combat mastery or further expand their skills and special qualities. This chapter presents possible ways to combine the soldier class with others presented in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, advising on feat choices and other options available when the character gains new abilities from new levels in alternative classes.

This book assumes that the mercenary's main focus is the soldier class, taking levels in other classes to alter this class' concept slightly. Other character classes taking levels in soldier to compliment their primary focus will be covered in future *Conan the Roleplaying Game* supplements. The advancement rates offered herein are not to be taken as the final word on the subject, merely as guidelines to meet a particular character concept.

Note that all of these combinations work exceptionally well for Hyborians, who treat all class combinations as favoured classes.

VARIANT RULES

Each of the multiclass descriptions given below have a section marked as *variant rules*. This deals with optional, specialised rules that represent how a character following multiple paths can develop abilities pertinent to both, but that are not normally represented. Some of these variant rules are simply a crossing of class skills, enabling soldiers to choose from a wider range of skills. Others grant entirely new abilities that develop as the two classes combine. However, there are a number of limitations that must be obeyed:

- ☒ All are subject to the Games Master's approval before being chosen.
- ☒ Each variant rule starts with the line 'Upon gaining X soldier level'. Every variant rule is selected instead of the soldier bonus feat that would have been gained by the soldier at that level. A soldier may take this variant after

the given level, but only at a soldier level where he would normally gain a soldier bonus feat.

- ☒ In addition, the character must have at least one level in the alternate (non-soldier) class. Occasionally more levels are needed in the alternate class; this will be specified in the text.

Once a variant rule has been taken, it cannot be reversed later on. The bonus feat that was sacrificed to gain the variant rule is lost forever.

BERSERKER (SOLDIER/ BARBARIAN)

There are many types of soldier/barbarian archetypes available to choose from, such as a soldier stationed in the wilds of Hyboria who has 'gone native'. However, the berserker is a fascinating hybrid of soldier/barbarian who has managed to meld the undisciplined approach of savage warfare with the precise and practiced techniques of a professional soldier. Many tribes of barbarians maintain individuals who are dedicated to warfare and defence. Picts, for example, have secret societies where the members train in warfare techniques different than the standard tactics used by the rest of the savage tribe. The fury of the berserker's attacks are channelled into trained combat skills. Berserkers are often the point of formations and are used to decimate enemy charges and formations, for they attack without fear, weakening the resolve of the enemy and creating an opening for the soldiers following the berserker to use.

STRENGTHS

A Berserker gains a number of benefits from adding barbarian levels to his soldier class.

- ☒ **Versatility:** The barbarian ability to use whatever is at hand is useful for mercenaries, who may be issued nearly anything or may have to grab the nearest weapon from a dead foe to deal with a living opponent.
- ☒ **Continued Advancement:** The barbarian and the soldier share the

same base attack bonus so the berserker's combat capacity does not diminish.

- ❖ **Virtual Feats:** Track, Endurance, Uncanny Dodge, Mobility and Die Hard are all useful feats for the mercenary, especially without the need to spend precious feat slots for them.
- ❖ **Reflex Save:** Berserkers have an improved Reflex save, improving the mercenary's Initiative.
- ❖ **Fortitude Save:** Berserkers are tough and have a better Fortitude save than a single-class soldier. This better increases his chances against massive damage and other endurance tests.
- ❖ **Skills:** The barbarian has twice the skill points of a soldier; this allows the berserker to learn more skills than the average soldier. Their class skills are similar, thus a berserker will not have to divide his attention too much from the needs of a character concept he had in mind. The character also has access to the valuable Survival skill.

WEAKNESSES

A berserker has a few drawbacks when adding barbarian levels to his soldier class.

- ❖ **Dodge and Parry:** Slower initial Dodge and Parry bonuses; overall dodge will be slightly higher for the berserker, but parry will be considerably lower. The berserker is less capable of defending himself than a single-class soldier or barbarian.
- ❖ **Formation Combat:** The barbarian nature of the berserker slows down the character's ability to learn formation combat compared to a single-class soldier.
- ❖ **Feats:** The barbarian gains a few free feats, but they are fixed, which limit the character's options, certainly in relation to his particular fighting style.

RECOMMENDED OPTIONS

As the berserker combines soldier and barbarian levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ❖ At 1st level, the character should take Fighting-Madness as his character feat to set up the character concept from the start. This requires the character to begin with at least a 13 in Constitution.
 - ❖ Iron Will is a good option for a character feat. Both the soldier and the barbarian have poor Will saves, so bolstering this weakness will save the party from future frustrations by making sure their

unstoppable war machine does not fail Terror checks or Will saves against magical attacks, especially *Domination* or similar Hypnosis spells. Further, succeeding on a Will save vs. Terror triggers the barbaric Crimson Rage ability, so bolstering the Will save makes this ability much more reliable.

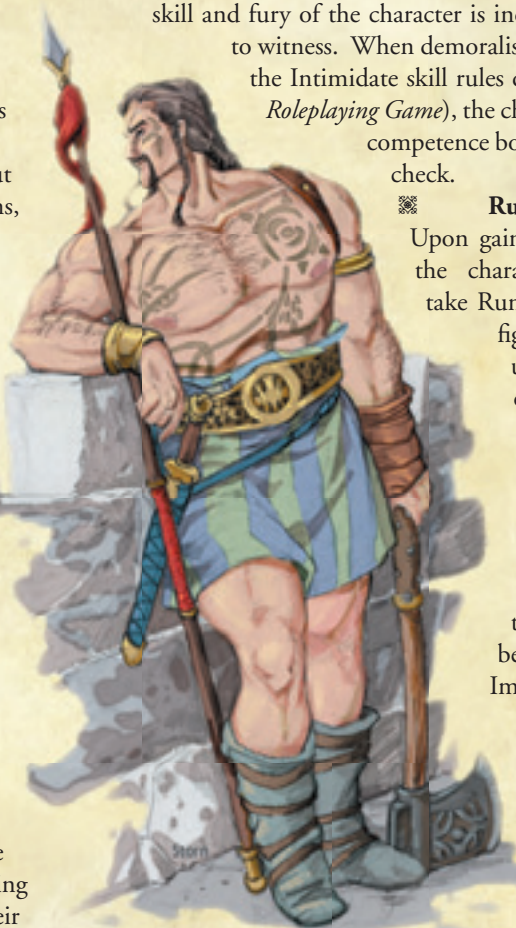
- ❖ Lightning Reflexes and Improved Initiative are also strong options for character feats, permitting the character to improve his chances of being the first into combat and to be the first to splatter the life's blood of his opponents before his own is spilled.
- ❖ Power Attack, Cleave and Great Cleave are also good choices for bonus feats, improving his ability to drop opponent's quickly. Power Attack makes the Fighting-Madness much more devastating. By taking up to a -2 penalty on the attack roll, he adds +4 to the damage (+2 from the Power Attack and +2 for the Strength increase). If the character uses a two-handed weapon (or a one-handed weapon with two hands), he adds +7 to the damage (+4 from the Power Attack and +3 for the Strength increase). Cleave and Great Cleave, of course, permit further attacks and further opportunities to wreck the enemy's lines.

VARIANT RULES

- ❖ **Terrifying Expertise:** Upon gaining 4th soldier level, the character may elect to take Terrifying Expertise. The skill and fury of the character is incredibly intimidating to witness. When demoralising an opponent (see the Intimidate skill rules detailed in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*), the character may add a +4 competence bonus to his Intimidate check.

❖ Run Them Down:

Upon gaining 8th soldier level, the character may elect to take Run Them Down. The fighter has learned to use the brute strength of his Crimson Mist to his own tactical advantage, running down his enemies. Whilst in the midst of Fighting-Madness, the character benefits from both the Improved Bull Rush and Improved Overrun feats, whether or not he has these feats or their prerequisites.



The Berserker (Soldier/Barbarian)

| Level | Class | Base Attack Bonus | Base Dodge Bonus | Base Parry Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|--|
| 1 st | Soldier 1 | +1 | +0 | +0 | +2 | +0 | +0 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat) |
| 2 nd | Barbarian 1 | +2 | +0 | +0 | +4 | +2 | +0 | Track, Fearless, Versatility (-2 penalty) |
| 3 rd | Soldier 2 | +3 | +1 | +1 | +5 | +2 | +0 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat) |
| 4 th | Soldier 3 | +4 | +1 | +2 | +5 | +3 | +1 | Formation Combat, (Single ability increase) |
| 5 th | Barbarian 2 | +5 | +2 | +2 | +6 | +4 | +1 | Bite Sword, Crimson Mist |
| 6 th | Barbarian 3 | +6/+1 | +3 | +2 | +6 | +4 | +2 | Trap Sense +1, Endurance, (Character feat, all ability increase) |
| 7 th | Soldier 4 | +7/+2 | +4 | +3 | +7 | +4 | +2 | Bonus Feat |
| 8 th | Barbarian 4 | +8/+3 | +5 | +3 | +8 | +5 | +2 | Uncanny Dodge, (Single ability increase) |
| 9 th | Soldier 5 | +9/+4 | +5 | +3 | +8 | +5 | +2 | (Character feat) |
| 10 th | Barbarian 5 | +10/+5 | +5 | +3 | +8 | +5 | +2 | Mobility, (All ability increase) |
| 11 th | Soldier 6 | +11/+6/+1 | +6 | +4 | +9 | +6 | +3 | Bonus Feat |
| 12 th | Barbarian 6 | +12/+7/+2 | +7 | +5 | +10 | +7 | +4 | Trap Sense +2, Diehard, (Character feat, single ability increase) |
| 13 th | Barbarian 7 | +13/+8/+3 | +8 | +5 | +10 | +7 | +4 | Versatility (no penalty) |
| 14 th | Barbarian 8 | +14/+9/+4 | +9 | +6 | +11 | +8 | +4 | Improved Uncanny Dodge, (All ability increase) |
| 15 th | Soldier 7 | +15/+10/+5 | +9 | +7 | +11 | +8 | +4 | Formation Combat, (Character feat) |
| 16 th | Barbarian 9 | +16/+11/+6/+1 | +9 | +7 | +11 | +8 | +5 | Trap Sense +3, (Single ability increase) |
| 17 th | Soldier 8 | +17/+12/+7/+2 | +10 | +8 | +12 | +8 | +5 | Bonus Feat |
| 18 th | Soldier 9 | +18/+13/+8/+3 | +10 | +8 | +12 | +9 | +6 | (Character feat, all ability increase) |
| 19 th | Soldier 10 | +19/+14/+9/+4 | +11 | +9 | +13 | +9 | +6 | Bonus Feat |
| 20 th | Barbarian 10 | +20/+15/+10/+5 | +12 | +9 | +14 | +10 | +6 | Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 1/-, (Single ability increase) |

❖ **Focussed Rage:** Upon gaining 10th soldier level, the character may elect to take Focussed Rage. The discipline of the soldier has rubbed off on the barbaric side of his nature. He may now use Combat Expertise when under the effects of the Crimson Mist (as long as he has this feat).

Special: The character must have at least four levels of the barbarian class before selecting this variant.

SCOUT (SOLDIER/BORDERER)

Every army relies on intelligence to make war. Scouts provide that intelligence and the best scouts are those with a borderer's experience. The scout is a soldier who has taken levels in borderer. This class combination is one of the few that does not dilute the combat ability of the soldier class by decreasing the base attack bonus progression or Hit Dice. Nearly every mercenary group has characters who function as scouts. The best military scouts are those who are good at surviving in the wild, comfortable sleeping under the sky, finding routes and enemy locations, yet are also trained in military life.

The scout must understand the importance of the chain of command, military strategies and the military mindset. The scout also understands the importance of awareness, improvisation and the will to live. The scout also makes for a superior sniper or assassin. His military prowess is equal to a single-class soldier, although he has fewer bonus feats. This class combination also works well to create a bounty-hunter character with a few changes to skill and feat choices.

STRENGTHS

A Scout gains a number of benefits from adding borderer levels to his soldier class.

- ❖ **Fortitude and Reflex Saves:** The scout has a much-improved rate of Fortitude and Reflex saves. The scout is well equipped to survive the rigours of wilderness travel, compared to the single-class soldier.
- ❖ **Skills:** The borderer has a better skill selection than the soldier and offers a few more skill points per level. The skill selection is aimed at wilderness survival.

The Scout (Soldier/Borderer)

| Level | Class | Base Attack Bonus | Base Dodge Bonus | Base Parry Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special |
|------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|---|
| 1 st | Soldier 1 | +1 | +0 | +0 | +2 | +0 | +0 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat) |
| 2 nd | Borderer 1 | +2 | +0 | +0 | +4 | +2 | +0 | Track, Favoured Terrain +1 |
| 3 rd | Borderer 2 | +3 | +1 | +1 | +5 | +3 | +0 | Combat Style, (Character feat) |
| 4 th | Soldier 2 | +4 | +2 | +2 | +6 | +3 | +0 | Bonus Feat, (Single ability increase) |
| 5 th | Borderer 3 | +5 | +2 | +2 | +6 | +3 | +0 | Endurance |
| 6 th | Soldier 3 | +6/+1 | +2 | +3 | +6 | +4 | +1 | Formation Combat, (Character feat, all ability increase) |
| 7 th | Soldier 4 | +7/+2 | +3 | +4 | +7 | +4 | +1 | Bonus Feat |
| 8 th | Borderer 4 | +8/+3 | +4 | +5 | +8 | +5 | +2 | Favoured Terrain +2, (Single ability increase) |
| 9 th | Soldier 5 | +9/+4 | +4 | +5 | +8 | +5 | +2 | (Character feat) |
| 10 th | Soldier 6 | +10/+5 | +5 | +6 | +9 | +6 | +2 | Bonus Feat, (All ability increase) |
| 11 th | Borderer 5 | +11/+6/+1 | +5 | +6 | +9 | +6 | +2 | Improved Combat Style |
| 12 th | Soldier 7 | +12/+7/+2 | +5 | +7 | +10 | +6 | +2 | Formation Combat, (Character feat, single ability increase) |
| 13 th | Borderer 6 | +13/+8/+3 | +6 | +8 | +11 | +7 | +3 | Diehard |
| 14 th | Soldier 8 | +14/+9/+4 | +7 | +9 | +12 | +7 | +3 | Bonus Feat, (All ability increase) |
| 15 th | Borderer 7 | +15/+10/+5 | +7 | +9 | +12 | +7 | +3 | Second Favoured Terrain +1, guide, (Character feat) |
| 16 th | Soldier 9 | +16/+11/+6/+1 | +7 | +9 | +12 | +8 | +4 | (Single ability increase) |
| 17 th | Borderer 8 | +17/+12/+7/+2 | +8 | +10 | +13 | +9 | +4 | Favoured Terrain +3 |
| 18 th | Borderer 9 | +18/+13/+8/+3 | +8 | +10 | +13 | +9 | +5 | Swift Tracker, (Character feat, all ability increase) |
| 19 th | Soldier 10 | +19/+14/+9/+4 | +9 | +11 | +14 | +9 | +5 | Bonus Feat |
| 20 th | Borderer 10 | +20/+15/+10/+5 | +10 | +12 | +15 | +10 | +5 | Bonus Feat, (Single ability increase) |

- ❖ **Combat Style and Free Feats:** The character can choose a combat style and receive free feats.
- ❖ **Continued Advancement:** The borderer and the soldier share the same base attack bonus so the character's combat capacity does not diminish.
- ❖ **Favoured Terrain:** The borderers advantage in certain terrain is an asset to the soldier in the wild.
- ❖ **Slow Will Save Progression:** Especially at lower levels, the Will save progression for the scout is slow.
- ❖ **Feats:** The borderer gains a few free feats, but they are fixed, which limits the character's options, certainly in relation to his particular fighting style.
- ❖ **Armour Restriction:** The borderer cannot wear medium or heavy armour and still enjoy his many special features, which is a problem for combat-oriented scouts.

WEAKNESSES

The scout character has a few weaknesses.

- ❖ **Weak Parry Bonus:** The scout is much less capable of parrying attacks than a single-class soldier.
- ❖ **Slow Dodge Bonus:** The scout has a slower dodge through most of the levels, but by the time he is 20th level, he is just as capable of dodging a blow as a single class soldier.



RECOMMENDED OPTIONS

As the character combines soldier with borderer levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ✘ The borderer's combat style presents a chance for the character to gain feats he might not normally qualify for, provided he is willing to wear only light or no armour. The character should pick a combat style and either complement it with similar feats that complete the style or devote the soldier's bonus feats to other styles. Whichever the case, both bonus and free feats leave the normal character feats free for the player to assign them to areas important for his character concept, but not necessarily related to combat, such as Alertness, Athletic, Diehard and so on.
- ✘ The archery style is the best choice for the Hyborian character. It offers more possibilities for completion through soldier bonus feats and imposes fewer penalties to attack options. In addition, the Weapon Focus/Specialisation options chosen for the bows include regular and high-strength versions, something that does not hold true for different kinds of swords.
- ✘ Given the fact that borderers must wear light or no armour to enjoy the class's benefits, as well as the slow Dodge and Parry progression, soldier bonus feats should go towards defensive measures such as Dodge, Parry and Combat Expertise. Two-Weapon Defence is an excellent option if the character chooses the two-weapon style.
- ✘ A high Dexterity is desirable not only because of the bonus to Dodge Defence Value it provides, but also to meet the prerequisites of feats that complement both of the borderer's combat styles. Finesse weapons are a good option when the character has a mid or high Dexterity score.
- ✘ Survival is an essential skill for the scout, determining how well the character can track. Scouts are often called upon to find water, track food, track enemies and a thousand other tasks requiring this skill. The scout needs to keep this skill at maximum ranks to remain superior. Use bonus skill points from high Intelligence to keep this skill at maximum when taking levels in soldier.
- ✘ Hyborians make the best scouts, as both classes are favoured by the adaptive Hyborian race. The adaptability and background skill options of the Hyborians also work heavily in favour of this combination and race. A Tauran, a sub-race of Hyborian, also works well. Soldier is not a favoured class but borderer is. Also, the racial features of Tauran work favourably for the scout character, offsetting the slower gain of favoured class feats. Argosseans, Barachans and Hyperboreans are the worst choices for a scout character of the Hyborian races. Hyrkanians, although this combination is not favoured for them, make excellent snipers and the soldier/borderer combination enhances the natural talents of this race. Khitans excel at

gathering intelligence, although, again, this combination denies the character favoured class bonus feats. Still, the knowledge bonuses alone may make this an interesting racial choice for a scout. Shemites are another good racial choice for this character concept if the character remains in the appropriate terrain to gain the racial bonuses. Zamorians are probably the worst racial choice overall for this type of character, which in itself would make a Zamorian scout both memorable and interesting.

- ✘ An out-of-work mercenary scout would do well as a bounty hunter. Their ability to track prey, snipe and endure the wild make them dangerous men to have on a man's trail.

VARIANT RULES

- ✘ **Capable:** Upon gaining 4th soldier level, the character may elect to take Capable. The character's continual training in the fields of warfare and scouting give him an edge in areas where the two specialisations overlap. He gains a +1 competence bonus (which will stack with any other competence bonus) to any three skills that are class skills for both the borderer and the soldier (Climb, Craft, Jump, Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (local), Profession, Ride and Search).
- ✘ **Dogged Pursuit:** Upon gaining 8th soldier level, the character may elect to take Dogged Pursuit. The character's tracking skills and martial strength make him a feared opponent for any fugitive. If the character has successfully tracked a target for at least an hour, he begins to pick up subliminal clues about the fugitive's character. Only one target may be tracked in such a manner at a time. If the character catches up with the fugitive within a week, the character gains a +1 bonus to Bluff and Sense Motive checks and +1 bonus to damage rolls against the target for the duration of their first encounter.

OFFICER (SOLDIER/ NOBLE)

Most Hyborian Age armies require officers to have noble blood, so this is a perfect class combination for those soldiers who have a desperate desire for command and authority. These characters love having people follow their orders but are not content to have slaves and servants at their disposal. The officer character wants to command units of armed forces, legions of death-dealing mercenaries and entire armies of cities and nations. Strategy is a game to prove one's intellect and war is a means to honour and glory. An officer's worth is based on ratio of wins to losses. An officer on a post can expect to have three or four rooms to live and work in (as opposed to the line soldier's bunk bed in a shared barracks). The officers are expected to call the soldiers to drills

each morning, assign duties and details, perform inspections (called guard mount) and maintain discipline. In many Hyborian nations there is a wide gulf between officers and soldiers that cannot be crossed, however, this is not always the case. Officers have to be tough and be able to maintain order. Some keep order by earning their men's respect, being tough but fair; others keep order with their fists, brawling on duty and off. Yet others keep order with staggeringly harsh punishments for infractions.

STRENGTHS

An officer gains a number of benefits from adding noble levels to his soldier class, the following being the most important for the role of the soldier.

- ❖ **Special Regional Feature:** Most of the racial regional bonuses for the noble class include attack bonuses for certain weaponry, enhancing the attacks of the military officer armed with weapons typical for the race. This may slightly offset some of the combat dilution that occurs with this mixture of classes.
- ❖ **Wealth:** Most soldiers are poor. Officers are not. They do, however, have a need to purchase the best armour and shields because of their weak dodge and parry bonuses.
- ❖ **Improved Will Saves:** Officers are trained to be strong-willed. They have approximately twice the willpower of a line soldier of the same level.

WEAKNESSES

The officer dilutes his combat ability by taking up noble levels, and have the following weaknesses.

- ❖ **Slower Base Attack Bonus progression:** Officers are not as well trained for combat as the typical front-line soldier. Although the special regional feature of the noble class offsets this weakness somewhat, it is undeniable that the noble-born officer is less able to launch an attack than a straight class soldier of equal level.
- ❖ **Hit Dice:** The noble's d8 Hit Die is less than the soldier's d10, creating a character with slightly fewer hit points on average per level.
- ❖ **Weak Dodge and Parry Bonus:** Officers are less capable of parrying blows and dodging attacks than single-class soldiers of equal level.
- ❖ **Weak Fortitude Saves:** Officers are less able to endure hardship and physical stress than a line soldier.

- ❖ **Slow Reflex Saves:** Officers do not react to danger as quickly as a line soldier at most levels, breaking even at 20th level.
- ❖ **Feats:** The noble gains the Leadership for free, which limits the character's options related to his particular fighting style as the noble class does not offer bonus feats.

RECOMMENDED OPTIONS

As the character combines soldier and noble levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ❖ Due to the restrictions of multiclassing into the noble class, it is easier to start this progression off with the noble class at 1st level instead of the soldier class. Although the Noble Blood feat from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos* will allow a character to meet the requirements to be an officer, this class offers more of the abilities of a noble than just a mere bloodline.
- ❖ To compensate for the weak parry and dodge bonuses, military officers tend to have the best armour available.
- ❖ Most officers prefer to be mounted, so ranks in Ride and feats such as Mounted Combat and Mounted Archery are appropriate.
- ❖ An officer should put ranks into Diplomacy and Intimidate in order to influence troops and superiors. Feats such as Negotiator and Persuasive are appropriate for an officer character.
- ❖ Officers should choose social abilities that will help him in a military sense. Ally, Refuge, Reputation and Smear Others are excellent choices for officer characters.

A Hyborian is an excellent choice for an officer because both classes are favoured. An alternative is a Vendhyan. The Vendhyan officer also has both classes for favoured classes, plus the Vendhyan officer gains racial bonuses to Diplomacy and other skills useful to the officer.

VARIANT RULES

- ❖ **Blaze of Glory:** Upon gaining 7th noble level, the character may elect to take Blaze of Glory. Drawing upon the power that is his own shining legend, the character can surpass his own potential for brief periods. Once per day, as a standard action, the character may adopt a base attack bonus equal to a soldier of his character level. This lasts for a number of rounds equal to his Charisma modifier; the character is fatigued for an equal number of rounds after using this ability.



Officer (Soldier/Noble)

| Level | Class | Base Attack Bonus | Base Dodge Bonus | Base Parry Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special |
|------------------|-----------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|--|
| 1 st | Noble 1 | +0 | +0 | +0 | +0 | +0 | +2 | Title, Rank Hath its Privileges, Wealth, (Character feat) |
| 2 nd | Soldier 1 | +1 | +0 | +0 | +2 | +0 | +2 | Bonus Feat |
| 3 rd | Noble 2 | +2 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +0 | +3 | Special Regional Feature +1, (Character feat) |
| 4 th | Soldier 2 | +3 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +0 | +3 | Bonus Feat, (Single ability increase) |
| 5 th | Soldier 3 | +4 | +1 | +3 | +3 | +1 | +4 | Formation Combat |
| 6 th | Noble 3 | +5 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +2 | +4 | (Character feat, all ability increase) |
| 7 th | Soldier 4 | +6/+1 | +3 | +4 | +5 | +2 | +4 | Bonus Feat |
| 8 th | Noble 4 | +7/+2 | +3 | +5 | +5 | +2 | +5 | Social Ability, (Single ability increase) |
| 9 th | Noble 5 | +7/+2 | +3 | +5 | +5 | +2 | +5 | Lead by Example +2, (Character feat) |
| 10 th | Noble 6 | +8/+3 | +4 | +6 | +6 | +3 | +6 | Enhanced Leadership, (All ability increase) |
| 11 th | Soldier 5 | +9/+4 | +4 | +6 | +6 | +3 | +6 | — |
| 12 th | Soldier 6 | +10/+5 | +5 | +7 | +7 | +4 | +7 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat, single ability increase) |
| 13 th | Noble 7 | +11/+6/+1 | +5 | +7 | +7 | +4 | +7 | Special Regional Feature +2 |
| 14 th | Soldier 7 | +12/+7/+2 | +5 | +8 | +7 | +4 | +7 | Formation Combat, (All ability increase) |
| 15 th | Noble 8 | +13/+8/+3 | +6 | +9 | +7 | +4 | +8 | (Character feat) |
| 16 th | Soldier 8 | +14/+8/+4 | +7 | +10 | +8 | +4 | +8 | Bonus Feat, (Single ability increase) |
| 17 th | Noble 9 | +14/+8/+4 | +7 | +10 | +9 | +5 | +9 | Social Ability |
| 18 th | Noble 10 | +15/+9/+5 | +7 | +11 | +9 | +5 | +10 | Lead by Example +4, (Character feat, all ability increase) |
| 19 th | Soldier 9 | +16/+10/+6 | +7 | +11 | +9 | +6 | +11 | — |
| 20 th | Noble 11 | +17/+11/+7 | +8 | +11 | +9 | +6 | +11 | Do You Know Who I Am?, (Single ability increase) |

Special: The character must have at least four levels of soldier before selecting this variant.

JINETTE (SOLDIER/NOMAD)

The jinette is a soldier who has added nomad levels to his class. This combination is powerful because, unlike many of the class combinations available to the soldier, this one does not dilute the soldier's base attack bonus progression or change the character's Hit Die. The jinette is a master of mounted combat. Jinettes often train soldiers in mounted combat or mounted archery. Jinettes may also lead cavalry divisions (especially if the character has taken the Noble Blood feat from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*) or function as a mounted scout or courier. Jinettes also care for the horses used by the cavalry and knightly divisions of the army.

STRENGTHS

A jinette gains a number of benefits from adding nomad levels to his soldier class, the following being the most important for the role of the soldier.

- ❖ **Stronger Fortitude and Reflex Save:** The jinette is tough and rigorous. The jinette is also quick on his feet, boasting of a much stronger Reflex save progression than the single-class soldier.

- ❖ **Continued Advancement:** The nomad and the soldier share the same base attack bonus so the character's combat capacity does not diminish.
- ❖ **Favoured Terrain:** The jinette gains bonuses to Dodge Defence as well as circumstance bonuses to several useful skills.
- ❖ **Nomad Charge:** The jinette can charge his mount with greater skill than a single-class soldier mounted on a horse.
- ❖ **Mobility:** Because the jinette has a weaker Parry bonus progression than a single-class soldier, the Mobility bonus feat, especially if used with some ranks in Tumble, helps to protect the character.

WEAKNESSES

The jinette has a few weaknesses.

- ❖ **Weak Parry Bonus Progression:** The jinette is less capable of parrying a blow than a single-class soldier.
- ❖ **Slower Will Save:** The jinette has a slightly slower progression of Will saves than a single-class soldier, breaking even for many levels.
- ❖ **Feats:** The nomad gains a few free feats, but they are fixed, which limits the character's options related to his particular fighting style.

The Jinette (Soldier/Nomad)

| Level | Class | Base Attack Bonus | Base Dodge Bonus | Base Parry Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special |
|------------------|------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|---|
| 1 st | Soldier 1 | +1 | +0 | +0 | +2 | +0 | +0 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat) |
| 2 nd | Nomad 1 | +2 | +0 | +0 | +4 | +2 | +0 | Track, Favoured Terrain +1, Born to the Saddle, (-2 penalty) |
| 3 rd | Soldier 2 | +3 | +1 | +1 | +5 | +2 | +0 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat) |
| 4 th | Nomad 2 | +4 | +2 | +2 | +6 | +3 | +0 | Bonus Feat, (Single ability increase) |
| 5 th | Soldier 3 | +5 | +2 | +3 | +6 | +4 | +1 | Formation Combat |
| 6 th | Nomad 3 | +6/+1 | +2 | +3 | +6 | +4 | +2 | Endurance, (Character feat, all ability increase) |
| 7 th | Soldier 4 | +7/+2 | +3 | +4 | +7 | +4 | +2 | Bonus Feat |
| 8 th | Nomad 4 | +8/+3 | +4 | +5 | +8 | +5 | +2 | Nomad Charge +1, Favoured Terrain +2, (Single ability increase) |
| 9 th | Soldier 5 | +9/+4 | +4 | +5 | +8 | +5 | +2 | (Character feat) |
| 10 th | Nomad 5 | +10/+5 | +4 | +5 | +8 | +5 | +2 | Mobility, (All ability increase) |
| 11 th | Soldier 6 | +11/+6/+1 | +5 | +6 | +9 | +6 | +3 | Bonus Feat |
| 12 th | Nomad 6 | +12/+7/+2 | +6 | +7 | +10 | +7 | +4 | Diehard, (Character feat, single ability increase) |
| 13 th | Soldier 7 | +13/+8/+3 | +6 | +8 | +10 | +7 | +4 | Formation Combat |
| 14 th | Nomad 7 | +14/+9/+4 | +6 | +8 | +10 | +7 | +4 | Bonus Feat, (All ability increase) |
| 15 th | Soldier 8 | +15/+10/+5 | +7 | +9 | +11 | +7 | +4 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat) |
| 16 th | Nomad 8 | +16/+11/+6/+1 | +8 | +10 | +12 | +8 | +4 | Favoured Terrain +3, (Single ability increase) |
| 17 th | Nomad 9 | +17/+12/+7/+2 | +8 | +10 | +12 | +8 | +5 | Second Favoured Terrain |
| 18 th | Soldier 9 | +18/+13/+8/+3 | +8 | +10 | +12 | +9 | +6 | (Character feat, all ability increase) |
| 19 th | Soldier 10 | +19/+14/+9/+4 | +9 | +11 | +13 | +9 | +6 | Bonus Feat |
| 20 th | Nomad 10 | +20/+15/+10/+5 | +10 | +12 | +14 | +10 | +6 | Improved Mobility, (Single ability increase) |

RECOMMENDED OPTIONS

As the character combines soldier and nomad levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ☒ The jinette needs his mount, so he should choose some skills that create synergies with other skills and feats to protect his mount. An excellent combination is to put five ranks in Handle Animal, maximise his Ride skill and take Mounted Combat and Skill Focus (Ride) for feats. The Mounted Combat feat allows a character to negate a successful melee hit against his mount by making a Ride check. Putting five ranks into Handle Animal gives the jinette a +2 synergy bonus in Ride. Taking the Skill Focus (Ride) gives the character a further +3 bonus to the Ride check. By taking Animal Affinity, the Ride check gains another +2 bonus. By 2nd level, a jinette could be making Ride checks at +12, not counting Dexterity or any further racial bonuses.

- ☒ Take feats to enhance the character's mounted capabilities. Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Animal Affinity, Weapon Focus (heavy lance) and

Improved Critical (heavy lance) are all useful feats for the mounted warrior.

- ☒ Heal and Survival are both good skills for the jinette, who must not only care for himself but also his mount.
- ☒ Hyborians are well suited jinettes, as both classes can be treated as favoured classes. Turanians and Hyrkanians are excellent candidates for the jinette combination. The nomad is the favoured class for these races, plus they have bonuses to archery and have Ride and Survival as background skills. The Ghanata are well known as expert riders and they also make fantastic jinettes. Like the Hyrkanians, nomad is a favoured class of the Ghanata, plus Ride and Survival are background skills. Further, though, the Ghanata gain a racial bonus to Ride and circumstance bonuses to Spot and Survival. Likewise the Shemites make renowned jinettes. Again, nomad is the favoured class and Ride and Survival are background skills. Their bonuses with bows and Spot checks only increase their abilities with this class combination.

VARIANT RULES

- ☒ **Mounted Cleave:** Upon gaining 7th soldier level, the character may elect to take Mounted Cleave. The jinette may follow through on a powerful blow, using the inertia of his mount to drive the blow on. If a jinette strikes down



an opponent (such as by knocking him unconscious, killing him and such like) during a Ride-By Attack, he is granted an extra melee attack at the same bonus as the blow that struck down his initial target. Before making this second attack, he may continue the movement of his mount as per the Ride-By Attack feat, using this extra melee attack anywhere along the course of his mount's movement.

MARINE (SOLDIER/ PIRATE)

Marines are those sailors who study naval warfare, hand-to-hand combat and the art of boarding other ships. A marine is better trained and better equipped than the typical pirate. Although most marines can act as able-bodied seamen, this is not their area of expertise. Marines, instead, are trained to bear the brunt of any naval engagement. A marine is created by combining the soldier and pirate classes, merging their unique talents together to form a combat-trained sailor.

STRENGTHS

The soldier gains a number of benefits from adding pirate levels to his soldier class, the following being the most important for the role of the marine.

- ✦ **Stronger Fortitude and Reflex Saves:** The marine has impressive saving throws, especially Fortitude and Reflex saves.
- ✦ **Seamanship:** This helps the soldier with his weaker defence when on ships.
- ✦ **Ferocious Attack:** The initial boost to Initiative and melee attacks and damage gives the marine the edge over a standard soldier. The additional attack gained later is another advantage the marine has over the land soldier.
- ✦ **To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter:** The free action *coup de grace* gives this soldier the ability to kill fallen opponents quickly.
- ✦ **Sneak Attack:** Although less useful than the sneak attacks of the guerrilla option, this is a powerful ability given to the marine at mid-levels.
- ✦ **Virtual Feats:** Although the marine has fewer bonus feats than a single-class soldier, the pirate class offers many virtual feats in trade, such as Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Improved Uncanny Dodge and Improved Mobility.

WEAKNESSES

The soldier dilutes his combat ability by taking up pirate levels, adding the following weaknesses.

- ✦ **Slower Base Attack Bonus Progression:** Although the marine has a slower rate of progression for base attack bonus than a single-class soldier, the marine does progress faster than a pirate, making this a foe of considerable power when set against pirates.
- ✦ **Hit Die:** The pirate's d8 Hit Dice diminishes the soldier's ability to endure long battles or sustain damage.
- ✦ **Fewer bonus feats:** The marine has fewer bonus feats than a single-class soldier. The virtual feats of Mobility and Uncanny Dodge mitigate this loss somewhat.

RECOMMENDED OPTIONS

As the character combines soldier and pirate levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ✦ Marines should take the Marine Formation (see *Conan: Pirate Isles*) at 5th level instead one of the standard formations presented in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.
- ✦ Useful feats for the Marine include Improved Bull's Rush. Bull rushing opponents off the edge of ships is an excellent choice of tactic, especially if the opponent is heavily armoured. Athletic is another good choice of feat, bolstering both

Marine (Soldier/Pirate)

| Level | Class | Base Attack Bonus | Base Dodge Bonus | Base Parry Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special |
|------------------|------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|--|
| 1 st | Soldier 1 | +1 | +0 | +0 | +2 | +0 | +0 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat) |
| 2 nd | Pirate 1 | +1 | +0 | +0 | +4 | +2 | +0 | Seamanship +1, ferocious attack |
| 3 rd | Pirate 2 | +2 | +1 | +1 | +5 | +3 | +0 | Pirate Code, To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter, (Character feat) |
| 4 th | Soldier 2 | +3 | +2 | +2 | +6 | +3 | +0 | Bonus Feat, (Single ability increase) |
| 5 th | Soldier 3 | +4 | +2 | +3 | +6 | +4 | +1 | Formation Combat |
| 6 th | Soldier 4 | +5 | +3 | +4 | +7 | +4 | +1 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat, all ability increase) |
| 7 th | Pirate 3 | +6/+1 | +4 | +4 | +7 | +4 | +2 | Sneak attack +1d6, Sneak Subdual |
| 8 th | Pirate 4 | +7/+2 | +5 | +5 | +8 | +5 | +2 | Uncanny Dodge, (Single ability increase) |
| 9 th | Soldier 5 | +8/+3 | +5 | +5 | +8 | +5 | +2 | (Character feat) |
| 10 th | Soldier 6 | +9/+4 | +6 | +6 | +9 | +6 | +3 | Bonus Feat, (All ability increase) |
| 11 th | Soldier 7 | +10/+5 | +6 | +7 | +9 | +6 | +3 | Formation Combat |
| 12 th | Soldier 8 | +11/+6/+1 | +7 | +8 | +10 | +6 | +3 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat, single ability increase) |
| 13 th | Pirate 5 | +11/+6/+1 | +7 | +8 | +10 | +6 | +3 | Mobility |
| 14 th | Pirate 6 | +12/+7/+2 | +8 | +9 | +11 | +7 | +4 | Sneak Attack +2d6, Seamanship +2, (All ability increase) |
| 15 th | Pirate 7 | +13/+8/+3 | +9 | +9 | +11 | +7 | +4 | Bite Sword, Ferocious Attack (additional attack), (Character feat) |
| 16 th | Soldier 9 | +14/+9/+4 | +9 | +9 | +11 | +8 | +5 | (Single ability increase) |
| 17 th | Soldier 10 | +15/+10/+5 | +10 | +10 | +12 | +8 | +5 | Bonus Feat |
| 18 th | Pirate 8 | +16/+11/+6 | +11 | +11 | +13 | +9 | +5 | Improved Uncanny Dodge, Poison Resistance +1, (Character feat, all ability increase) |
| 19 th | Soldier 11 | +17/+12/+7 | +12 | +13 | +13 | +9 | +5 | Formation Combat |
| 20 th | Soldier 12 | +18/+13/+8 | +13 | +14 | +14 | +10 | +6 | Bonus Feat, (Single ability increase) |

Climb and Swim checks. Weapon Focus is a good feat to use, especially in conjunction with a finesse weapon. Use feats from *Conan: Pirate Isles*, such as Hard Hands. If your character is Zingaran, take Freebooter's Fortune at first level so the character qualifies for Up the Rigging, Wave Dance and Viper's Speed later.

- ❖ Try to get the prerequisites for as many combat manoeuvres from *Pirate Isles* as the character can. Take ranks in either Jump or Tumble, take ranks in Swim, increase the character's Reputation, take feats such as Improved Grapple, Leadership and Combat Reflexes.
- ❖ Take skills that improve the class features of the pirate, such as combining Tumble with Mobility.
- ❖ Although Hyborians treat all class combinations as favoured classes and can use Adaptability and their choices of background skills to great benefit, the Zingarans are also a good choice of race for this combination. Both soldier and pirate are favoured classes for the Zingarans and the Zingarans have a bonus to Sneak Attack, giving the Zingaran marine a powerful advantage over low-level marines of other races.



VARIANT RULES

- Old Hand:** Upon attaining 7th soldier level a marine is well versed in the art of scrabbling through, around, over and under rigging, knows a plethora of complex knots and is especially competent at tying off and hauling loads using ropes and is used to treading the decks of a ship as it pitches on the violent ocean swells. The marine has been swept overboard more than once and is often called upon to make hull repairs from outside the safety of the ship's hull. The result of these experiences is a +2 competence bonus to the marine's Climb, Use Rope, Balance and Swim skills.
- Captain's Ear:** Upon attaining 11th soldier level the mariner may make a single request of their captain in their entire career with them. This request may be anything the captain could reasonably accomplish or grant. The Games Master has the final decision on whether or not the captain grants the request. Even if the captain refuses or otherwise is unable to perform the action requested of him, this one-shot ability is considered to have been used.

ADJUTANT (SOLDIER/SCHOLAR)

Adjutant's are a military unit's key advisor and principal assistant. Historically, the Nemedians were the first to formalise the position of adjutant. In Nemedica, adjutants are the only officers invested with the authority to speak and sign official correspondence 'for the commander'. In Aquilonia and other nations, any regimental staff officer who assists the commanding officer of a garrison or regiment is an adjutant. The best adjutants are those whose skills and knowledge is wide and impressive, making the scholar the person of choice. The soldier/scholar aids the commanding officer in the details of regimental and garrison duty. In larger, more organised armies, an adjutant is attached to every battalion of a regiment. It is his duty to superintend, under his superiors, all matters relating to the ordinary routine of discipline in the military unit.

STRENGTHS

The soldier gains a number of advantages by taking levels in scholar. Usually such soldiers are made into officers or sergeants.

- Skill Points:** The adjutant has far more skill points than a single-class soldier, able to round out the knowledge and skill base of any given military unit. This character is well suited to survive in the Hyborian Age via his skill base.
- Improved Reflex and Will Saves:** The adjutant is more wilful and reflexive than a single-class soldier, which helps

his Initiative as well. The bonus Iron Will feat gained 9th level adds to the adjutant's ability to resist manipulation.

- Lighter duties:** From a roleplaying standpoint, one of the advantages of this combination is a lighter duty-schedule. The adjutants tend to have more brain-heavy tasks as opposed to physical duties. While other soldiers are on guard duty or marching in rough terrain in armour, the adjutant is assisting the commanding officers in relative comfort.

WEAKNESSES

Levels in scholar dilutes the soldier's combat ability, adding the following weaknesses.

- Low Base Attack Bonus:** The adjutant of a military unit is not a fighting man. His base attack bonus is lower than a single-class soldier.
- Hit Die:** The scholar's d6 Hit Die is far inferior to the soldier's d10, diminishing the soldier's ability to survive prolonged combat. On average, he will have 20 fewer hit points by 20th level than a straight class soldier.
- Defence Values:** The adjutant is severely hampered in his ability to defend himself compared to the straight class soldier.
- Abilities:** An adjutant's only advantage for the soldier is his access to skill points, thus Intelligence must be high, which may diminish one or more of his physical attributes, affecting his ability in combat.
- Potential scapegoat:** Unlike a common foot-soldier, the adjutant makes decisions and is a key person in the military unit – thus he can often be blamed for unforeseen problems or downright mistakes, whether or not they are his mistakes. Diplomacy ranks are a must for this class combination.

RECOMMENDED OPTIONS

As the character combines soldier and scholar levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- The adjutant character should take bonus feats instead of new sorcery styles and the bonus skill points instead of advanced spells to maintain the appropriate atmosphere in the campaign. Having mercenary spell-casters is probably inappropriate in most cases. A soldier/scholar villain who is a spellcaster is a unique character and should be developed along different lines.
- During character creation, the character should consider having a high Intelligence in order to maximise the benefit of having a large skill selection. This also allows the character to increase skills that are not class skills for the soldier when taking levels in that class, as bonus Intelligence skill

The Adjutant (Soldier/Scholar)

| Level | Class | Base Attack Bonus | Base Dodge Bonus | Base Parry Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special |
|------------------|------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|---|
| 1 st | Soldier 1 | +1 | +0 | +0 | +2 | +0 | +0 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat) |
| 2 nd | Scholar 1 | +1 | +0 | +0 | +2 | +0 | +2 | New Sorcery Style, Scholar, Background, Base Power Points, Knowledge is Power |
| 3 rd | Scholar 2 | +2 | +0 | +0 | +2 | +0 | +3 | +1 Power Point, New Sorcery Style, (Character feat) |
| 4 th | Soldier 2 | +3 | +1 | +1 | +3 | +0 | +3 | Bonus Feat, (Single ability increase) |
| 5 th | Scholar 3 | +4 | +2 | +2 | +4 | +1 | +3 | Advanced Spell, Bonus Spell |
| 6 th | Soldier 3 | +5 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +2 | +4 | Formation Combat, (Character feat, all ability increase) |
| 7 th | Scholar 4 | +6/+1 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +2 | +5 | Advanced Spell, New Sorcery Style |
| 8 th | Soldier 4 | +7/+2 | +3 | +4 | +5 | +2 | +5 | Bonus Feat, (Single ability increase) |
| 9 th | Scholar 5 | +7/+2 | +3 | +4 | +5 | +2 | +5 | Advanced Spell, Iron Will |
| 10 th | Soldier 5 | +8/+3 | +3 | +4 | +5 | +2 | +5 | (All ability increase) |
| 11 th | Scholar 6 | +9/+4 | +4 | +5 | +6 | +3 | +5 | Advanced Spell, +1 Power Point, Increased Maximum Power Points (triple) |
| 12 th | Soldier 6 | +10/+5 | +5 | +6 | +7 | +4 | +6 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat, single ability increase) |
| 13 th | Scholar 7 | +11/+6/+1 | +5 | +6 | +7 | +4 | +6 | Advanced Spell, Bonus Spell |
| 14 th | Soldier 7 | +12/+7/+2 | +5 | +7 | +7 | +4 | +6 | Formation Combat, (All ability increase) |
| 15 th | Scholar 8 | +13/+8/+3 | +6 | +8 | +7 | +4 | +7 | Advanced Spell, New Sorcery Style, (Character feat) |
| 16 th | Soldier 8 | +14/+9/+4 | +7 | +9 | +8 | +5 | +7 | Bonus Feat, (Single ability increase) |
| 17 th | Scholar 9 | +14/+9/+4 | +7 | +9 | +9 | +6 | +7 | Advanced Spell |
| 18 th | Soldier 9 | +15/+10/+5 | +7 | +9 | +9 | +7 | +8 | (Character feat, all ability increase) |
| 19 th | Scholar 10 | +16/+11/+6/+1 | +7 | +9 | +9 | +7 | +9 | Advanced Spell, +1 Power Point |
| 20 th | Soldier 10 | +17/+12/+7/+2 | +8 | +10 | +10 | +7 | +9 | Bonus Feat, (Single ability increase) |

points may be spent on any skill as though it were a class skill.

- ☒ To compensate for the poor Dodge and Parry bonuses, the adjutant must either rely on armour or ranged weapons. Choose the best armour possible and available and avoid combat as much as possible. When combat is inevitable, try to stay at range to avoid being hit by powerful melee weapons. Pick feats to maximise the character's ability to fight with ranged weapons. The adjutant's fighting style should emphasise avoiding combat, so feats such as Dodge, Mobility, Parry, Combat Expertise and Archer's Bane are recommended. Spending a few bonus skill points from Intelligence on Tumble is not a bad idea.

- ☒ A high Charisma aids the adjutant in helping the military unit. Not only is the character better able to gather information and be diplomatic (to avoid becoming a scapegoat when things go wrong), but if the character takes the Leadership feat he can be the head of a loyal intelligence network, which only increases the character's value to a military unit.

- ☒ The adjutant should maintain maximum ranks in Knowledge (warfare), he should spend some of his points (required by the scholar class) in Knowledge (local), Knowledge (geography) and Knowledge (architecture and engineering). He may want to invest a lesser amount of skill points in Knowledge (history), Knowledge (nature) and Knowledge (nobility).

- ☒ Although Hyborians are suited for all class combinations, as all classes are treated as favoured classes, there are some excellent alternatives. A Khitan has the scholar as a favoured class and has background skills in Knowledge. The Khitan adjutant also has racial bonuses to Knowledge checks and a bonus feat to help mitigate some of the disadvantages of this class combination. A Stygian has the scholar as a favoured class as well as a racial bonus to using Stygian bows. A Pelishtim makes one of the best adjutants in the world, as both soldier and scholar are favoured classes. They also gain useful circumstance bonuses in several skills and have excellent bonuses with bows, helping the character excel with ranged weapons. Having any one Knowledge skill in addition



to Knowledge (arcana) as a background skill is also an advantage for choosing a Pelishtim adjutant character.

VARIANT RULES

- ❖ **Aide de Camp:** Upon attaining 3rd soldier level an adjutant gains the benefits of the Aide de Camp feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites for this feat.
- ❖ **Battle Tactics:** Upon attaining 7th soldier level an adjutant gains the benefits of the Battle Tactics feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites for this feat.

GUERRILLA (SOLDIER/THIEF)

The guerrilla is the master of dirty fighting, an invisible warrior who vanishes as quickly as he appears, having struck a blow during his brief appearance. Many find guerrilla tactics unmanly or cowardly, but the guerrilla just wants to win. Fair

play or chivalry in battle is an alien or foolish concept to this character. The ends usually justify the means. They are the ghosts of the armed forces. The deadliness of the sneak attack is combined with military training. Usually entire units are made up of these ambushing soldiers, although some armies may have one or two guerrillas working for them for special jobs. The guerrilla also makes for a fine assassin.

STRENGTHS

By taking levels of thief in addition to his soldier class, the guerrilla maximises his ability to strike terror into his opponents. Some of the most important benefits offered to the soldier from this combination of classes follow.

- ❖ **Eyes of the Cat:** The ability to see in the dark is invaluable to the guerrilla.
- ❖ **Improved Reflex Saves:** The guerrilla relies on his reflexes more than a standard soldier, and adding thief levels to the soldier has the benefit of increasing the Reflex saves at the cost of diminishing Fortitude saves slightly. This also has the added advantage of improving his Initiative, which is useful in light of his sneak attack ability.
- ❖ **Sneak Attack:** The guerrilla strikes fast, hard and precise. He often has time for one attack before he must flee, thus the sneak attack is perfect for the guerrilla fighter, providing the soldier with a truly devastating attack.
- ❖ **Skills:** The thief's large skill base provides the soldier with the means to hide and scurry effectively. He also has more defensive options, especially with the Tumble skill.

WEAKNESSES

In addition to diluting the soldier's combat ability by taking thief levels, the guerrilla also suffers from the following weaknesses.

- ❖ **Decreased Parry Bonus:** The guerrilla, more concerned with offence than defence, has a slightly lower Parry bonus than a straight class soldier. His Dodge bonus, however, is only slightly slowed.
- ❖ **Hit Die:** The thief's d8 Hit Die is smaller than the soldier's d10, giving the guerrilla approximately 10 hit points less than a single-class fighter by 20th level.
- ❖ **Base Attack:** The base attack bonus of the thief is not as strong as the soldier's, thus lowering the character's chances to hit a target.
- ❖ **Fortitude Saves:** The character's Fortitude saves are slightly diminished compared to a single-class soldier, but his Reflex saves are improved.
- ❖ **Feats:** The character will have fewer bonus feats than a single-class soldier, but the thief does offer several virtual feats in lieu of the bonus feats.

Guerrilla (Soldier/Thief)

| Level | Class | Base Attack Bonus | Base Dodge Bonus | Base Parry Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special |
|------------------|------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|--|
| 1 st | Soldier 1 | +1 | +0 | +0 | +2 | +0 | +0 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat) |
| 2 nd | Thief 1 | +1 | +0 | +0 | +2 | +2 | +0 | Sneak Attack Style, Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8, Trap Disarming |
| 3 rd | Soldier 2 | +2 | +1 | +1 | +3 | +2 | +0 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat) |
| 4 th | Thief 2 | +3 | +2 | +2 | +3 | +3 | +0 | Eyes of the Cat, (Single ability increase) |
| 5 th | Thief 3 | +4 | +2 | +2 | +4 | +3 | +1 | Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8, Trap Sense |
| 6 th | Soldier 3 | +5 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +4 | +2 | Formation Combat, (Character feat, all ability increase) |
| 7 th | Thief 4 | +6/+1 | +3 | +4 | +4 | +5 | +2 | Sneak Attack Style, light-footed |
| 8 th | Soldier 4 | +7/+2 | +4 | +5 | +5 | +5 | +2 | Bonus Feat (Single ability increase) |
| 9 th | Thief 5 | +7/+2 | +4 | +5 | +5 | +5 | +2 | Sneak Attack +3d6/+3d8, (Character feat) |
| 10 th | Thief 6 | +8/+3 | +5 | +6 | +6 | +6 | +3 | Trap Sense +2, Special Ability, (All ability increase) |
| 11 th | Soldier 5 | +9/+4 | +5 | +6 | +6 | +6 | +3 | — |
| 12 th | Soldier 6 | +10/+5 | +6 | +7 | +7 | +7 | +4 | Bonus Feat, (Character feat, single ability increase) |
| 13 th | Thief 7 | +11/+6/+1 | +6 | +7 | +7 | +7 | +4 | Sneak Attack +4d6/+4d8 |
| 14 th | Soldier 7 | +12/+7/+2 | +6 | +8 | +7 | +7 | +4 | Formation Combat, (All ability increase) |
| 15 th | Thief 8 | +13/+8/+3 | +7 | +9 | +7 | +8 | +4 | Sneak Attack Style, Poison Use, (Character feat) |
| 16 th | Soldier 8 | +14/+9/+4 | +8 | +10 | +8 | +8 | +4 | Bonus Feat, (Single ability increase) |
| 17 th | Thief 9 | +14/+9/+4 | +8 | +10 | +9 | +8 | +5 | Sneak Attack +5d6/+5d8, Trap Sense +3 |
| 18 th | Soldier 9 | +15/+10/+5 | +8 | +10 | +9 | +9 | +6 | (Character feat, all ability increase) |
| 19 th | Thief 10 | +16/+11/+6/+1 | +9 | +11 | +9 | +10 | +6 | Special Ability |
| 20 th | Soldier 10 | +17/+12/+7/+2 | +10 | +12 | +10 | +10 | +6 | Bonus Feat, (Single ability increase) |

❖ **Armour Restrictions:** In order to best utilise the thief's skills, including Light-Footed, the character must limit his armour options, especially if the *Evasion* special ability is chosen.

RECOMMENDED OPTIONS

As the character combines soldier with thief levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ❖ The sneak attack is the supreme advantage of combining soldier and thief levels. Soldier bonus feats should be chosen so that they complement the sneak attack's chance to hit and damage an opponent. These range from the simple attack bonus feats like Weapon Focus and Point Blank Shot (which conveniently has the same maximum range as ranged sneak attacks), to more sophisticated manoeuvres like Improved Feint to create the chances for sneak attacks rather than wait for them to happen. Improved Initiative

and Lightning Reflexes both improve Initiative, which increases the odds of successfully getting a sneak attack. Improved Feint also enhances the capabilities of gaining a sneak attack later in the melee.

- ❖ Choose feats from other *Conan* products such as *Across the Thunder River* and *Shadizar, City of Wickedness* that expand the capabilities of the sneak attack ability. Feats such as Out of Thin Air (from *Conan: Across the Thunder River*) or Brutal Attack (from *Conan: Shadizar, City of Wickedness*) are useful for sneak attacks.
- ❖ Choose feats that work well with the thief's skills, such as combining Mobility with Tumble or Skill Focus (Bluff) with the Bluff skill. Alertness and Stealthy are also good feats to choose.
- ❖ A guerrilla should exploit the options for high Dexterity and concentrate ability increases that way. Choose light, finesse weapons to get around armour or opt for ranged attacks.
- ❖ Take special abilities such as *Crippling Strike* or *Opportunist* to maximise sneak attacks and quick hit-and-run attacks. Avoid *Evasion* as this limits the armour choices of the character.

- ❖ Soldiers simply do not have a lot of skill points, but thieves do. The mixture is diluted somewhat. Pick up a few skills according to the character concept. Guerrillas should take ranks in Hide and Move Silently, as well as Tumble, Spot and Listen. Ranks in Bluff increases the odds of later sneak attacks. Ranks in Climb allow the character access to difficult to reach places. Ranks in Knowledge (local) and Knowledge (geography) are important for the guerrilla, who needs to know the lay of the land and where aid can be found. Characters with a high score in Intelligence will be able to treat some of those thief skills as class skills in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.
- ❖ Guerrillas often are not as organised as standard soldier units. Many have to fend for themselves in terms of equipment. Ranks in Craft (weaponsmith) or Craft (armourer) helps the guerrilla repair tears, dents and holes in their armour, as well as sharpen or repair their weapons.
- ❖ Many guerrillas often need to catch sleep in snatches and opportune moments. The Sleep Mastery feat is a good choice for this character concept.
- ❖ This class, like all class combinations, is perfectly suited for Hyborians, who treat all classes as favoured classes for purposes of determining bonus feats. Bossonians, Gundermen, Hyperboreans, Meadow Shemites, Pelishtim, Zamorians and Zingarans also do well with this class combination. Bossonians treat soldier as a favoured class and have racial bonuses to attack rolls with Bossonian longbows. The Bossonian character can choose two of the guerrilla's preferred thief skills as background skills at 1st level, giving the character an interesting edge from the beginning. Gundermen also treat the soldier as a favoured class and can also choose thief skills for background skills. The Hyperboreans have soldier as a favoured class and a bonus to Intimidate. The Meadow Shemite and Pelishtim have soldier for a favoured class and also gains a circumstance bonus to Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot in the plains, perfect skills for a guerrilla. In addition the Meadow Shemite and Pelishtim gains a racial bonus to Bluff and to attack and damage rolls with bows. Be wary of Meadow Shemite or Pelishtim guerrillas. The Zamorians have thief as a favoured class and a +2 bonus to Dexterity. The Zingarans have soldier for a favoured class and a bonus to sneak attacks, giving the character a sneak attack at 1st level. Zingarans also have a racial bonus to attack rolls with broadswords and arming swords.

VARIANT RULES

- ❖ **Take Cover:** Upon gaining 3rd soldier level, the character may elect to Take Cover. The character's versatility means he can make the most of any cover available to him, and reduce the penalties incurred when fighting in odd positions. The character gains a +6 bonus to his Dodge Defence Value against ranged attacks rather than

the usual +4 (see Cover in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*) when behind cover. The character also suffers only half the listed penalties when travelling through difficult terrain, obstacles or squeezing through a tight space.

Special: The character must have at least three levels of thief before selecting this variant.

- ❖ **Close-Quarters Fighting:** Upon gaining 7th soldier level, the character may elect to take Close-Quarters Fighting. The thief's profession has converted the soldier into being a capable fighter with subtler weapons than the battleaxe and shield. When wielding only light weapons for which the character has the appropriate Weapon Focus feat(s), the character gains a +2 dodge bonus to his Dodge Defence Value when moving into or within threatened areas and gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Initiative whilst within an area an opponent threatens.

Special: The character must have at least seven levels of thief before selecting this variant.



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