



Board Enterprises proudly presents
Build Your Fantasy World in

Small Bites

THE MERCENARY VATORS OF MYORK

aka All About Men-At-Arms



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to How to Build Your Fantasy World in Small Bites, or more commonly (and vastly easier to say), just “Small Bites”. This month our theme is Men-At-Arms as seen in the Mercenary Vators of Myork.

But more importantly, what is this thing? Well, most people are seeing it as an e-zine published monthly. In many ways, it is that, but that’s not it. This is a way for the folks at Board Enterprises to share everything we’ve put out this month with you, our supporting audience. We’re going to pack it full of stuff, from characters to equipment (magical and otherwise) to rules to advice on how to build worlds and master games. Game Master - you know what we mean!

We’re giving this edition away free in order to give you an idea of what this project is going to be about. We hope you’ll use it to see what we’re doing here, and we really hope you like it! If you do, and want more of this kind of stuff, please visit our Patreon page and pledge your support. (more about that towards the end)

So what’s here? Well, let’s jump right in!

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FLETNERN WIKI

Years ago, Board Enterprises started a wiki for the World of Fletnern. As Fletnern was always intended to be free, we thought that rather than try to put out a huge massive source book, the wiki would serve to get content to the people more quickly, and even then we were thinking more about “bite sized pieces”.

But the wiki grew in fits and spurts. One of the main goals of this project is to focus more attention (from us and you) on the wiki so we can grow it faster and better. So here is our pledge: We’re starting at a guaranteed four posts per month (one per week roughly). As this project and the support through Patreon increases, we are willing to go at least to thirty-one per month (one per day).

All of the posts in this edition are already out on the wiki as this is published, and you can refer to them. We have gathered them here, because we think they are valuable in a group, and they all pertain to our theme for the month. All of them are also tagged as being in the categories of “Myork” and “Vators” in case you are more comfortable using the wiki instead of this edition.

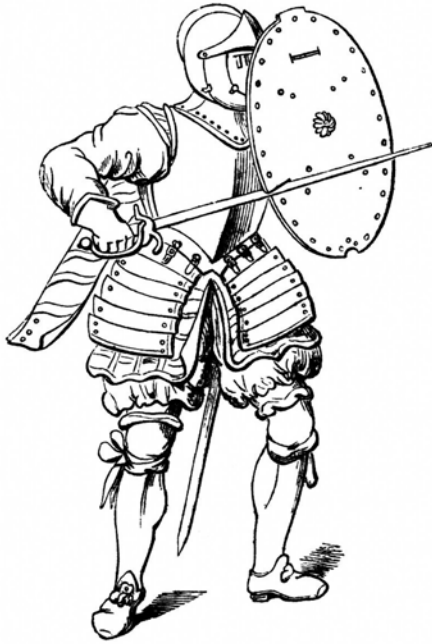
Anglic Straits

Site

The Anglic Straits separate the continents of Drentae and Hughijen and are the closest point that these two continents come together. On the east/Hughijen side is the port city of Myork, while on the west/Drentae side is the port city of Scaret. These two city-states have traditionally been close allies, and there is no history of them ever going to war against each other.

Travel in the Straits can be very difficult due to the odd currents that flow through. This patch of sea is a bottleneck for northern and southern waters intermingling and this causes these strong currents. The Ice Flow current rushes south from Semphesteus into the Anglic Straits along the coast of Drentae. When it hits the warm waters of the Sea of Kautyr it turns back on itself and runs northward along the coast of Hughijen. Sailors leaving Scaret catch this current and travel south before going north to Myork. Sailors leaving Myork must break across the northern current until they catch the southern current to Scaret. This is also the way these two trade with Helatia. The current is called the Ice Flow because legends say it is caused by the melting of the Frozen Sea and then the cold waters being rejected by the Boiling Sea and sent back north.

The Anglic Strait is quite deep. Several natural deep harbors can be found along its shores; Myork and Scaret are just two. At its widest point it is just over 400 miles wide, while at Crover’s Point it is only 125 miles. Southward along the coast of Hughijen the Anglic Strait



ends near the legendary site of Weqsertanc and the land of Vennurdoba.

Battalion (Myork)

Military

The most basic military unit in Myork is a battalion. Battalions can have from 100 to 4,000 members. They are created as a way to give command authority to an officer, thus the unbalanced nature of the unit sizes. Each battalion is established by official decree. Most were intended for a specific purpose or to award a particular person or family for services.

Battalions are organized by geography, with larger land holders being put in charge of local battalions that are designed to coordinate the military efforts of the nearby land owners. Military service in Myork is the responsibility of the larger land owners, who must provide soldiers to the military depending on the size of the land they own and/or the size of their family. While there are nuances, this is the standard formula for determining a family's required service:

- Any land owner with 25 acres or more of land is required to provide one soldier to one of the battalions of Myork.
- Any land owner with 50 acres or more is required to provide two soldiers to the Myork battalions.
- Any landowner with more than 160 acres of farm land is expected to organize various families within the land and thereby organize them to provide soldiers as is appropriate.
- Any family with more than four sons living on the family land must provide three soldiers to the Myork battalions.

The standard land owning family owns approximately 100-125 acres and maintains their family and a large number of servants. Because of this, most people outside of the city-state believe the abbreviated version of "every family must provide two soldiers".

While the battalion's commander is responsible for equipping the men in the unit, the families sending the soldiers are responsible for reimbursing the commander. When a battalion is first formed, the government will grant the commander a large sum of money to get the force outfitted, but it is never enough, and the commander and the families will need to provide the funds to completely fund the gear. The central government is also responsible for providing commanders with a food allowance in order to feed the men, as well as a small allowance to pay the men. Myork soldiers receive very little pay from the government as they are considered to be supported by their families.

Some battalions are seen as being "cheap battalions". These units are less expensive to outfit, most commonly being longbowmen wearing leather armor and a small melee weapon. While these battalions are not prestigious to the families who's sons are members, it is a way for the poorer farmers to provide the required troop(s) without going bankrupt. These battalions are far more common in the eastern regions.

Cathedral of Jhngeffery

Site

The Cathedral of Jhngeffery Drakeslayer is the center for the administration of the Angles religion worldwide (often called the Jemmistake Pantheon). This cathedral has been the recipient of various war prizes offered up to Jhngeffery. Stored away in its myriad of underground chambers are some of the most valuable and historic artifacts and art pieces from various cultures, including some no longer in existence. Although the cathedral is known to contain many items, the full inventory is unknown to any outside the cathedral's clergy. Some claim that less than three men know the full extent of the treasures contained there, while others doubt any one person could know them all.

While the cathedral is dedicated to Jhngeffery and his priests hold services there every day, much of the behind the scenes administration is actually handled by orders of monks and nuns dedicated to the gods Ehlizabeta Mourtage and Gylulihan. As a war god, Jhngeffery's followers are less inclined to handle paperwork and other bureaucracy.

Both spellings Jhngeffery and Jhengeffery are considered correct. They are simply different Angle dialects.

Foreign Quarter (Myork)

Site

Unlike many other similar references, the Myork Foreign Quarter is actually an abbreviated form of “The Foreigners’ Quarters”. Seeking to keep the non-Angles visiting their port from the local residents, the city of Myork has actually walled off the port and actively discourages foreigners from entering the city proper.

The laws in the Foreign Quarter are different from those within the city. Non-native churches are allowed in the Foreign Quarter but not in the city. The rules covering permitted businesses are also different, especially as it comes to Myork’s stringent rules about taverns. Like so many other major ports, Myork’s Foreign Quarter is bustling and lively, filled with warehouses, inns and many forms of entertainment.

Myork

City

Myork is the largest human city on Hughijen by a small margin, but the Anglic civilization clearly boasts the largest population on that continent. Inland of the capital city are huge tracts of plains and open farmland. Cereals grow much farther than the eye can see, supporting the people and their livestock. The weather is warm, but very pleasant (similar to San Francisco). Culturally they are similar to the British Isles during the Arthurian legends.

Myork is a major trading port, but the Angle people do not tend to look to the sea for careers. Most of the non-military sailors in Myork are Bortens from the city state of Scaret across the Anglic Straits. As this is the narrowest stretch of sea between the two closest continents, it is the most travelled sea lane in the world.

Centuries ago, the navy of the city-state of Caratok burned the harbor of Myork to prevent the Angles from becoming involved in a war on Drentae. Ever since then, the architects of Myork have designed and maintained stone and concrete docks and harbors throughout the city. Though vastly more expensive, no one is going to be able to damage the port of Myork ever again.

Order of the Bastion

Group

The Order of the Bastion is a unit of knights and soldiers within the confines of the city of Myork. While originally established as a fairly standard policing unit, they have developed into a unit of detectives. In order that they can search out evils and crimes within the city, they have been given a special mandate that allows them to violate certain established privacy laws that most citizens of Myork expect and rely on. This has given them the reputation of being a “secret police” unit, ready to break in on any criminal activity, real or imagined.

In truth, the Order of the Bastion takes the privacy and rights of the citizens of Myork very seriously. They fear having their mandate taken away and in some cases are

more careful and cautious than other units. But when it comes to acting against those who are not citizens of Myork, the Order of the Bastion is a break down the door first and ask question later (if at all) kind of unit. They have a few mentalists within their unit and will use mentalism as an investigative tool, but very few of the powerful folks in Myork are comfortable with using mentalism, especially when it appears to be toying with someone’s mind, even a criminal’s.

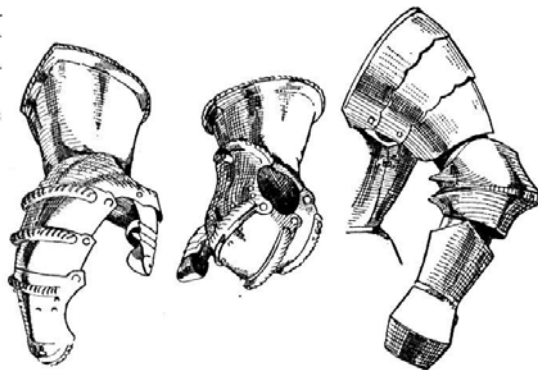
Order of the Thicket

Group

The Order of the Thicket was established as a “defense” against the elves of the Circle Forest. The elves and Myork have long been rivals and even in open warfare over the many centuries. To protect Myork’s northern border, the Order of the Thicket was established.

The most important factor for these knights and soldiers is that they are encouraged to use defensive magics. No other Anglic troop is encouraged to learn any magic, though magic is allowed for battle mages and other support units. Here, most soldiers know at least a minor defensive trick, while many knights are using more established counter magics, be they enchantments or spells. This also means that many of the Order’s knights are not wearing steel armor, though they often attempt to use something that looks like “standard” armor, such as boiled leather plates or scales.

The Order rarely gets into skirmishes with the elves, as the elves avoid contact. As they are intended to be a defensive unit, they are not permitted to cross the borders unless they are pursuing an enemy. They are more commonly pursuing poachers and other minor criminals, both human and elven.



Order of the White Crest

Group

The Order of the White Crest was formerly known as the Order of the Shipping Lanes, but that name was not romantic enough for them. They officially changed their

name to their nickname (White Crest) based on their symbol, the white wave on a field of sky blue.

The Order was developed to hunt down pirates and started as a naval unit. As they developed over the generations, they became more of a marine force, transported by ship, but mainly fighting in melee. This eventually split the Order into two: land based and sea based. While they still have a few patrol boats, the majority of the Order is now land based soldiers who attack pirate dens and strongholds.

When the Order was first created, they complained that they were being restricted by certain rules of warfare given to all Anglic military units. They felt they needed more leeway in choosing the proper weapons for certain fights than they might be allowed in a normal military conflict. They were granted this mandate and are now allowed to use any weapons or other military gear appropriate for the situation. This is most often used when they send soldiers into pirate dens in disguise or undercover, but it is also used in some odd schemes, such as using fishing nets to contain pirates seeking to flee out back doors and such.

Vator

Military

Most land owning families are required to provide soldiers to the military, but not every family has the sons to send or wants their sons to have a life long career in the army. In these cases, they will find a “vator” to serve in the military on their behalf. *Vator* is the modern version of an ancient language, meaning literally: *vato* - war and *rish* - child. Typically these soldiers are among the best warriors in the battalion, because they are professional soldiers, trained from early on. They also are desirable because they tend to be more loyal to the unit and the central government and less interested in the desires of the house that hired them. Despite this, their lack of noble birth often prevents them from becoming high ranking officers.

When a family intends to use a vator, they will often choose a peasant boy from among their servants and begin his military training around the age of nine or ten. By the time they are 14-16, they are ready to join the army. During training, these boys are referred to as *squibes* because they are not full squires. Upon joining the army, these men become vators. Squires are the actual sons of the land owning families that join the military unit even though their training is not yet complete. This is an uncommon occurrence, and typically happens when every son is intended to be in the military for three to five years and the older brothers are training the younger brothers.

Vators most typically come from the servants and farm hands, but they can come from a large number of other sources as well. When a family has too many sons and risks needing to provide extra soldiers, they may



choose instead to send one of the boys away to be a vator. For a family with 36 acres and five sons, sending one away brings their number at home down to four. Thus they only need to provide one soldier due to the size of their farm, and not three due to the number of sons. Vators also come from those sons who are unable to inherit due to the number of older brothers they have. If splitting the farm will make it too small to support two families, one of the sons will need to move on. The land owners typically choose the two biggest young men from their servants go off to fulfill the family’s duty as vators. The family of vator(s) will receive preferential treatment from the land holder because their son(s) are preserving the family honor.

There certainly are vators who are entirely mercenary and have no relationship with the families that sponsor them, but as the family’s honor is wrapped up in the service of the vator, this is only done by the poorest families required to provide service. Most vators are trained by the land owners, but a few are sent to military academies. Academy trained vators are typically attached to the more prestigious families where they have the excess wealth to “properly” train their vator.

Willchester Bay

Site

The capital city of Myork sits on the northern coast of Willchester Bay. It is believed that the bay is named for a now long gone community that was located on the eastern portion of the bay, being the first community to take advantage of the naturally deep harbor.

Willchester Bay is naturally deep because the warm waters of the Sea of Kautyr race northward along the coast of Hugijen. This natural current has washed away any loose sands in Willchester Bay and shifted them north. All that is left is the natural stone upon which Myork is built.

THE SOUNDING BOARD

Old Weapons and Safe Houses

What do your players / player characters do with their old weapons? Many times my guys turn them back to the enchanters to get a few silvers back in their pockets. But if you're playing a high risk campaign where actions have consequences, sooner or later the PCs should find themselves under attack in their home city. What do you do when the local police are staking out your home? If you cut your way through them, you are vilified - for good reasons. What would you do if you returned home from an adventure only to find your home city was under siege? Sure, you have most of your gear with you now because you were out adventuring, but how do you take care of the logistics? (food, water, shelter)

There may be (probably should be) times when the PCs are separated from their homes. If done properly, maybe even separated from their main weaponry. What do they do then? Well, established adventurers would go to their safe house and grab their backups. But what if you don't have an established safe house? and what do you stock it with if you are establishing one?

I think whatever the last set of weaponry you had makes the perfect stock for a safe house. Establish some type of apartment or something and place the last set of weapons inside. OK, don't just place them inside; they do need to be hidden in some manner. You'd hate for common thugs to rob your safe house and come out adventurers. But now - if you're out to the taverns (of course without your armor and weaponry), and you're being followed, you slip into your safe house, gear up and confront the morons who thought you were an easy target. Take the time to go back to your fortress (or whatever) and you'll find yourself ambushed along the way.

But why? Well, establishing a safe house helps the players learn more about the city. It helps them work to develop their own back story. It forces them to consider what's important - What are they going to need in an emergency? It also serves to drain some of their money. It takes some cash to buy a safe haven and a little more to maintain it - but that's OK. This might even lead to some short adventures - what if drifters start to live there? What if thieves were to steal the supplies? The more you and your players know about your world, the more fun it is to keep exploring.

An Island of Civilization in a Dangerous World

The city-state of Myork is filled with military academies where knights and vators are trained to fill out Myork's massive army. But like all schools, these do not

only teach the subject matter they are intended to teach; they also teach propaganda.

Myork sees itself as the only bastion of civilization in an incredibly dangerous world. To be fair, they have a forest of elves to their north who would like nothing better than to have the forests retake the stone cities and endless farmlands. They also have mountains and hills literally filled with dragons of nearly every type. Too far to the east and you run into the world's largest desert, an endless wasteland of sand and dehydration. So seeing the world as a dangerous place might be the intelligent reaction here.

But they also see the other continent as a dangerous place, a place where freedoms are not matched with an endless vigilance. In Myork, they know that freedom is not free and must be protected at all cost from tyrants and criminals. One minor problem is that they assume everyone on the other continent is a criminal.

So the military men (and women) graduating from these academies are ready to fight, and quick to find enemies. They think nothing of advancing on a Latvich troop and attacking them simply because the Lats might be across a border that has been undefended for generations. After all, in Myork, laws are obeyed, so that is the way life should be everywhere. The fact that some country on the other continent cannot guard their borders doesn't mean that the Lats get to expand, not when the Myork military is around.

Is the Myork army a force for "good"? Well, yes. They are at least a force for "law", but the law as they see it. Diplomats from all eras know that there are times when fighting is necessary, but that laws and treaties sometimes bend to the practical conditions of the times. The soldiers of Myork don't see it that way. They won't throw their lives away needlessly, but they don't see how right and wrong can have grey areas. Dragons flying over farmlands need to be slain before they can feed on innocent women and children. There is no question about that. Similarly, "evil" troops must be stopped before they enslave the weak. Their reasoning is actually pretty sound, but too often it may be impractical for those without their strong sense of justice.

What do the military academies of your game world teach?

Adventurers vs. Soldiers

We're working on an upcoming war for Fletnern. There is a good chance that if a major battle breaks out, it could be "adventurers" vs. soldiers. So what? It matters. The adventurers will likely have seen more action than the soldiers, and will therefore be assumed to be more "veteran" and have better skills. But they also need to be skilled at a whole number of things, where soldiers can be a little more focused on their martial skills and still do OK. Therefore skill-wise, they are likely equal.

Adventurers often have magical weapons. That should give them an advantage. But on Fletnern, some

of the troops do supply some of their soldiers with magical stuff too. Still, slight advantage to the adventurers.

Most of the soldiers will be doing this because they have some patriotism, whereas the adventurers may have opinions, but will likely see it more as a job, a job they can get just as easily in another town. Fierce loyalty vs. mercenary greed. Advantage Soldiers.

Here's the big one, and one that will be howled at by the various players (and maybe you too): Soldiers drill in tight formations. Adventurers don't. Adventurers often use long swords and battle axes, whereas soldiers will be tightly packed with spear and shield. In following commands, in moving as a unit, in staying within the boundaries of the camp (and not getting picked off), in not getting in front of the firing archers - the soldiers have a definite advantage. An advantage so great, that it should be able to wipe out the adventurers.

But wait - look at most FRPGs and you'll see that "men-at-arms" are low level and lack any real power. It is the adventurers that should rule the day. Well, if that's what you're FRPG says, you need a new game! I've already admitted that the more experienced adventurers would have more skills than the soldiers, and might even be better weapon's masters than the soldiers, but the efficient fighting force that acts as a unit will be vastly superior to a ramble of skilled swordsmen running all over the battlefield getting in each others' way. Sure, I'm exaggerating a bit, but let's think about a modern example. African/Arab pirates against a modern naval vessel. Yeah - fire a grenade and run! Is that what this fantasy era battle will look like? Could be!

Adventurers vs. Soldiers - Men of Steel or Wheat?

We started talking about adventurers vs. soldiers. That's a key theme both in the role-playing conversations between characters in my campaigns as well as between players outside of the games. So I wanted to get deeper into it!

One of the biggest problems I had with that original game was that adventurers got to be so much more powerful than everybody else, nearly right off the bat. By level 3 a fighter typically had four times the hit points of the common soldier and (I don't know if this rule is still in those rules) could attack three times in a single round simply because they were common soldiers (level 0). Let me complain about that for a bit, but then I'll tell you how it might be possible to justify it.

The urban legend when GENCON was still in Kenosha was that hit points were meant to be rolled at the start of every mission or every day. The idea was that you might be feeling poorly or you might have gotten a great night's sleep and be ready to kick ass. I never used that rule, but I always kind of liked it. I do think that if you rolled poorly that morning, you should be able to get a cure disease spell

or something of the sort and get to roll again, but that's just me using role-playing and not trying to min-max every opportunity.

But it is HP that is the issue. You take a guy with 70HP and he gets cornered in an alley by four city guards. The city guards are packing heavy crossbows which they have aimed at the PC. What does the PC do? He charges them! He has nothing to worry about. He has 70HP and the best they can do is $2-5 \times 4 = 20$. He slaughters them. Now here was how I played that as a GM (after having that BS happen one too many times): If someone has the drop on you, they get to use the assassination rules. You charge straight into a line of guys planning to shoot you with crossbows, they each get to roll to assassinate you. Admittedly, they are unlikely to get the instant kill, but then they fall back on the "backstab" damage which was at least double. It's still not enough to stop most guys with 70HP from charging, but even a 1% chance of instant death (multiplied by four guys) should make them think first.



So here's how I would justify it if I were still playing that game: Think of the adventurers as Jason Bourne or Black Widow. They go flying into the pack, sliding here, dodging there, throwing fists and people around, etc. It is high fantasy, so let her rip. After all, HP is not supposed to represent the physical damage the body can take, but instead how they use their luck and abilities.

But then why is a character supposed to rest for weeks in order to get all of their HP back? Do their skills not show back up again once they catch their breath, or at least first thing tomorrow morning? Shameless plug here, but in **LEGEND QUEST**, you have a certain amount of damage you can take physically based on your Endurance attribute

(your “Life’s Blood”). As you take damage you bleed, fatiguing you and eventually sapping your Life’s Blood even if you do not take additional hits. But those skills and abilities you have are represented by your skill levels, and they are back every turn. So this turn, I can use my shield levels to block an incoming crossbow bolt, use my sword levels to parry a thrusting spear, but still use my Strength attribute to slash at the spearman. Or I can just take the bolt and hope my armor stops enough of it and focus my shield’s parrying against the spear so I can use strength and skills on my sword attack. What’s the difference? Well - You get to decide on strategy. It is better to not get hit than to simply assume you can take huge damage. You also get to use your skills over and over in the day, deciding how it will happen. Look, the HP thing is a simplification of combat, and that works for a lot of people. It just doesn’t work for me, and from our sales figures, it doesn’t work for a lot of people.

But we were talking about adventurers vs. soldiers, right? Yep. The question is: Should the difference between adventurers and soldiers be 8 to 70 or 30 to 36? If you have any respect for the warrior NPCs, I think it has to be 30 to 36.



Adventurers vs. Soldiers 2 - Weaknesses and Benefits

First - No discussion of soldiers today should begin without some mention of the incredible number of men and women who gave their lives to insure our freedoms today. If you have never been to Arlington National Cemetery (or the equivalent in your home country) you do a disservice to yourself. It is both inspiring and horrifying to imagine the number of people who have died for us. While I pray we may never need to put them into harm again, I know that there are those in the world who believe our freedoms are not ours to keep, and we will again need to rely on our soldiers to protect us and those freedoms.

But this is about fantasy soldiers! OK, in the last post *Adventurers vs. Soldiers - Men of Steel or Wheat?*, I was going on about game mechanics, but that’s not everything to discuss here. Why should adventurers nearly always defeat soldiers? Well, magic! No, that’s not a cop out answer. Here’s why:

Most commonly a party of adventurers will be well rounded: tanks (aka bricks aka meat shields), mages, maybe a rogue. Soldiers are primarily just fighter types. While the adventuring fighter types are probably a little better than the soldiers, they are also backed up by spells,

magic items, healing potions, etc. etc. etc. That’s a huge advantage! Now I often give my military officers some minor magic, because my world has a lot of enchanters, so I think it makes sense. But the rank and file are probably on their own.

Also, soldiers are typically outfitted and trained for a particular style of combat. Adventurers are a bit more of the “adapting to chaos” style. Soldiers in a bar fight are less likely to see a chair, table or full beer barrel as a weapon than adventurers are. An archer unit expects to be able to get off a few flights before the enemy closes, but if the adventurers ambush them, this may not work out so well. Similarly, shield and spear infantry expect to be able to move in formations. If the adventurers can sucker them into battle in a ruined city and keep moving as the battle goes, the infantry unit is going to break formation and lose at least some of their best techniques.

So what do soldiers have going for them? Well, maybe not as much on the battle field (unless they get to choose it), but if you’re role-playing, they do have some great advantages. It may seem odd to start here, but history (even recent history in Egypt) shows us examples of where the military staged a coup and then went on to run the government. Adventurers cannot get the support of the people in that fashion. If adventurers stage a coup, they become “warlords” and you should count on the people being “liberated” by some force within a generation. Now a generation can be pretty long if you’re the warlord, but historically, it just doesn’t work.

But it’s more than just coups. Soldiers (unless the government is unjust) have the support of the people. If a soldier were wounded in battle and bleeding to death, if they could do it safely, most citizens would drag him to safety and dress his wounds. They would probably loot a mercenary (adventurer). They would let a soldier sleep in front of their fire on a snowy night, and probably make him breakfast in the morning. There are countless ways that simply being seen as a “good guy” by the people is helpful. Maybe some adventurers can get this (I’m thinking paladins or Robin Hood characters), but for the most part, adventurers are on their own.

Let’s not forget the other side to soldiers. If they lose a battle but escape, they can call for reinforcements. In fact they can probably be replaced by reinforcements (fresh troops). I haven’t seen an adventuring band able to pull off that maneuver yet. It may sound like I’m giving adventurers a lot of (in game) advantages and making the soldiers out to be less effective on the battlefield. I am. If not, why hire mercenaries, other than you don’t want your own soldiers to die. Both have their part to play in your fantasy world, and drawing distinctions between them makes each of them seem far more important when it is their turn to take action.



Adventures vs. Soldiers 3 - Morale

I really feel that the other articles in this theme have missed the most important part: Morale. I'm not talking about when one decided to turn tail and flee a battle; I'm talking about why they show up in the first place.

Why do adventurers fight? Most commonly, they fight for money. Someone promises to pay them for the mission plus they plan to loot the enemy. Now to many people, fighting for money is cold blooded and requires a rather sociopathic or psychopathic personality. I won't argue the mental case, but even fighting for money can be rather hot-blooded.

Why do soldiers fight? For patriotism. Because they know their cause is just. Because their enemy is threatening their homes, friends and families. Are they always right? Are the enemy always evil? Nope. But the generals and rulers must make them believe that they are on the right side of history and they are the good vs. the enemy being evil. If the army's leaders are unable to do this, the soldiers are going to be far less willing to go out and risk their lives in the taking of other people's lives.

That is one of the chief issues between adventurers and soldiers, and from a role-playing stand point, it is of the utmost importance. An adventurer or other mercenary can weigh the odds once the battle is about to begin and decide if the cost-benefit here is worthwhile. Is it worth getting into this particular battle or should we just retreat? But the soldier has to weigh other factors: If I flee, will that mean the death of my family? Will people lose their homes to these savage invaders? Recent studies have shown that

perhaps one of the most important factors that they weigh is the question, Will my friends in the unit be killed or maimed if I am not there to help them.

In many ways, the difference between adventurers and soldiers is one of cold math vs. emotion. Adventurers can afford to reduce it all down to how many coins are involved, but the soldiers cannot afford to do that (no pun intended).

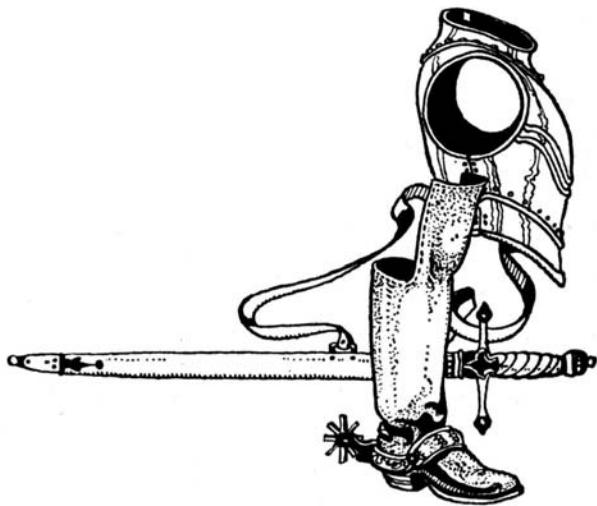
Military Recruiting

I have been thinking about how the soldiers get into the armies. For the smaller armies, it makes sense that the officers do their own recruiting, but for the big armies, there would have to be recruiters out there. Sure patriotism and desire for a better job than hog farming are strong motivators, but there has to be someone out there either strong arming these guys or convincing them. For towns with strong war gods, I would think that the recruiters were either associated with the temple or actual priests themselves. In Rhum, the Temple of Manoto sponsors a club for young boys where they learn wrestling and other teenage martial skills while being taught patriotism - practically a junior ROTC program.

I'm thinking mainly about the bigger militaries. Do any of your cities have standing armies that number in the thousands? There must be recruiters out there supplying men, even if the officers actually have the responsibility, they must be willing to pay the recruiters to bring them "fine, young men". I can see a recruiter going to a small town. First, he convinces one of the more popular kids to join the army. Probably tells him all the stories about how the chicks will dig it, and he'll be an officer in four months. Then he dresses this kid up in the full uniform with his weapons and uses him as a shining example of what the other boys in town will want to be like. I recall some of the stories, I think from the Civil War, where guys were joining up because the uniform came with a pair of boots, and they had never owned a pair of boots before. Certainly something similar could be true in a fantasy game.

What about conscription? Does every man have to serve two years? If so, how would you explain straight mage classed characters? What about "shanghaiing" recruits? Some poor slob gets drunk and wakes up on a naval vessel heading into a war zone. Maybe the lord of the manor has the right to simply assigning his peasants to his military force, like conscription, but more specialized.

There's a lot more about this I feel I need to flesh out, because each of the cultures in each of my cities is different, but the more I think about it, the more I think how someone gets into the military is just as important as how many are there.



Offensive vs. Defense

It seems to me that most FRPGs are all about offense and not enough about defense. What do I mean? When's the last time one of your players used cover as he advanced on a foe? Do your players want super powered weapons or super powered shields? (OK, they want both, but which one more?) Which has better bragging rights: I did 400 points of damage or He swung at me six times and never touched me? If your players are balancing a good offense with a good defense, then I think you're in the minority. Even adult players would rather be bare chested barbarians than shield and armor types. What about the whole "glass canon" mage types? It's not that they never consider defense, it's just that the standard defensive strategy is to bring a healer.

My biggest problem with this is the shield rules in most games. Shields in most games are a flat modifier to defense. In **LEGEND QUEST**, you use your shield levels, so you can be a skilled defensive fighter. Not surprising seeing my biases. In college, my character was known as the "damage sponge". I was a paladin with way too much armor, who would keep the bad guys busy while my damage dealing friends knocked off the other bad guys. Now a days, the computer games have taught us the value of a "tank", and yes, I often play one.

I think it comes down to an experience I had in my late teens. I have to say I was more of a leader than a follower in my youth (hopefully now too). We were somewhere we should NOT have been, and the other guys looked at me and said, "You go first." Man, that sucked! While this was going on, we accidentally walked into an even more dangerous situation, and I was the dude in front. (The statute of limitations has likely passed, but I do not want to give details for fear of encouraging bad behavior in others.) After that it has always occurred to me, that no matter what the standard party formation is, it takes some balls to stand in front,

especially if you expect that a lot of nasty guys are going to try and kill you.

My point is simply this. In real life, people avoid getting hurt. They do this by hiding behind barriers, advancing in covering teams, using shields and other protections, and countless other means, not all of them all that beneficial. It just seems that characters should do the same. No, it's not as heroic, but it might add a level of strategy to your game that could be very interesting!

Your Army is Doing What?

I often struggle with having massive standing armies in fantasy worlds. As you probably know - I have a tendency to dwell (probably too much) on the mundane things like feeding people and housing people. Having a large group of guys sitting around unproductively (between wars) is a drain on the entire community.

Wait! Don't think I'm ignoring the importance of an army, whether it be fantasy or real. What I'm really saying is that letting soldiers sit around and do nothing is really bad! "Idle hands are the devil's workshop." Leaving a massive group of well-armed and well-trained guys to get bored will end in disaster, or at least a military coup. So what do you do with them?

Before we get into soldiers, I want to stress the use of militias. Most of my fantasy kingdoms seem to have very few soldiers, but they have a trained militia. Militias allow for two things - peasants who are not push overs and a swelling of the army if the kingdom is ever attacked. These are good things! The army may be 2,000, but with the militia it is 10,000 trained (or at least semi-trained) soldiers - much more difficult for the invaders to take advantage of.

OK, so soldiers, between the wars. The main pursuit of soldiers is sentry duty. Sentries stand a post and look for danger, but there are several variations on how this can work. They could be wall guards, literally walking the walls of the castle or city wall. This is boring work; watch out for idle hands. They can be border guards, standing sentry at the kingdom's boundaries. Here they are often the guys supporting the customs and tax officials. A tax collector standing on the border is not going to be able to collect from a caravan with dozens of guards, but a tax collector backed by two platoons of armed and ready soldiers stands a far better chance. But there are also those soldiers who's job is to patrol the forests and middle lands, typically for bandits. This is a sentry job too, just a moving one. Most folks probably think this is what soldiers always do between major wars, but there is so much more they could be doing.

Construction - The Roman Legions were great builders. They built the roads and the walls. Some folks believe that Hadrian's Wall was built simply to keep the legions busy so they wouldn't have time to think about assimilating with the Scots. Today we have the Army

Corps of Engineers. They build all sorts of major projects, though they probably are not a material part of our forces (by numbers). So the precedent is definitely there to have soldiers building stuff.

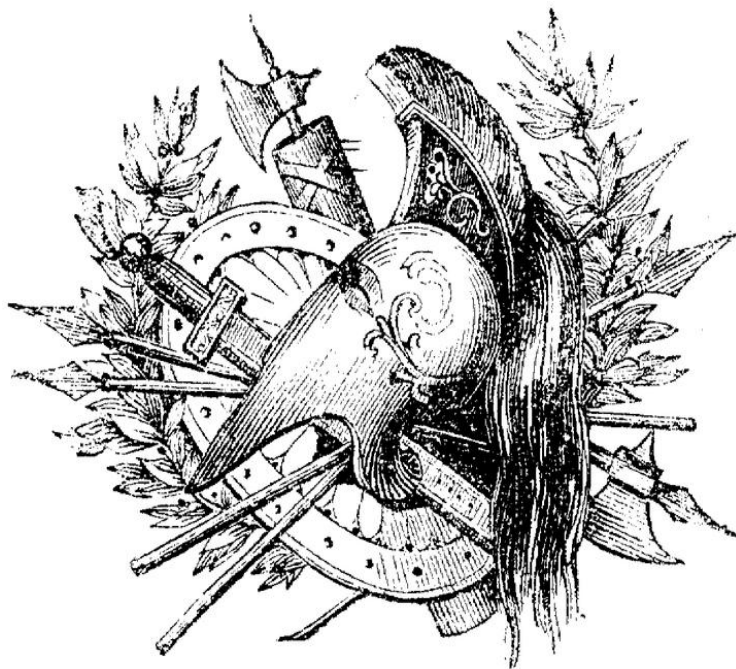
Messengers - Does your fantasy world have a postal service? If so, who's carrying the messages? Can they be trusted? Letting military units carry the messages, especially if they are cavalry, gets the job done, keeps the soldiers busy, protects the message by force, and allows the unit to review the region (checking for those pesky bandits and poachers).

Police - Soldiers are not police. Soldiers fight (at least typically - I know this whole post is about what else they do). Police keep the peace and investigate. That's not the same thing. That's why standard soldiers do not make for good policemen; it's just two different disciplines. However, using soldiers as police is a time honored tradition. Soldiers are best used when extra police are needed - like when there is a riot brewing. At these points, no one really cares if the soldiers are too rough - they do what needs to be done. Do be careful here, because if your culture believes in people possibly being innocent, sending a bunch of spear stabbers to "capture" the suspects usually doesn't end well.

Athletes - I don't want to get into whining over the "amateurs" that go to the modern Olympic games, but some countries clearly believe that they can employ athletes within the army. This may seem frivolous, but what sports are popular in your fantasy world? In mine, it's mainly what we see as track and field events. Having military units who are training for running, jumping and throwing events, and then performing those events at public competitions - that's the stuff that national pride is made of. Whether it is unit against unit or kingdom against kingdom, these events keep the soldiers busy and keep the public entertained. I do not advocate gladiatorial competitions between soldiers.

What else? Any of a huge number of things! Construction might also include such things as digging canals, painting buildings, or building fences. What about ship building? There might be reason to have the soldiers trained as smiths and be making armor and weapons for themselves and for the militia. There is always training, but training can get boring pretty fast. Military exercises are less boring, but still training. Soldiers often have some fashion of first aid training - can they use that to help civilians in peacetime? What about firemen? Someone needs to pull down burning buildings, and soldiers are typically brave enough to do it. There are other fields as well. If you agreed with having military smiths, then having soldiers mine the iron or cure the leather seem reasonable next steps. In Forsbury, it is common to go from being one of the Baron's cowboys to being one of his Border Watch (light cav).

Not enough? There is no rule that everyone has to do the same thing, so break it up a bit. Also remember that an army lives or dies on their logistics. Not to suggest that the soldiers take up farming their own food, but they might be active in moving barrels and cases of food around from ship to storehouse and from storehouse to barracks. Simply transporting goods around the city for their own purposes should keep quite a number of them busy at all times.



Where are the weapons at?

I came to a conclusion the other day. I was considering what I could do on Flettern to add a little drama to the backdrop, but not necessarily suck the PC parties into the action. The thought occurred to me (probably due to some Tamriel time) of a civil war. The regions the PC parties are in are pretty stable, so by putting an uprising somewhere else, I am adding to the perceived action without having to try and handle adventurers in the middle of massive battles.

The conclusion I came to as I starting to lay out the timeline on how this would occur is this: All revolutions, insurrections or civil wars all seem to start by both sides trying to acquire more weapons or prevent the other side from getting weapons. French Revolution starts with rioting in the streets, and the first major "action" was the storming of the Bastille. Why? To free the Marquis de Sade? Nope! To get the 250 barrels of gunpowder. (I once heard a quote attributed to Margaret Thatcher, something along the lines of "How can you trust a people whose national holiday is based on a jail break?" If

someone could find me the real quote, I would be eternally grateful.)

Want some more? The assault on Fort Sumter was part of a series of actions taken throughout the South. State governments took over federal possessions within their boundaries after they had succeeded from the Union. President Buchanan allowed the military commanders to surrender their forts and armories without violence, but Lincoln ordered the federal military commanders to hold on. President Davis ordered Fort Sumter to surrender, and they refused. Thus began the American Civil War. It was all about grabbing the weapons. Lexington and Concord - The British forces moved to cease weapons from the Massachusetts colony that had been declared in rebellion. John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry - trying to gain the weapons from the federal arsenal.

OK - So why? In **LEGEND QUEST Omnibus Edition**, we laid out the rules for breaking weapons. Fundamental to these rules is that weapons come in different grades. For example - revolutionaries seeking to overthrow their ruler (in a fantasy setting) would likely be armed with hunting bows, hunting arrows, boar spears, and axes for chopping wood. They would want to attack the armory in order to gain heavy crossbows with armor piercing bolts, lances and pikes, and war axes, as well as shields and other armor. It makes a difference, just as it makes a difference between hunting rifles and assault rifles. The way we described it, there is a difference between a silver plated letter opener (ornamental), a steak knife (standard), a butcher's knife (tool grade), and a knife strong enough to parry a sword attack (combat grade). You can still stab someone to death with a letter opener, but neither it nor your steak knife are going to hold up against armor. Depending on the culture and economy, would major arsenals also have some magic items in them? perhaps a stock of healing potions and some magical arrows at least?

Just to pitch the differences in games, in **LEGEND QUEST**, you rarely see magical arrows, because each one would need to be enchanted individually so it would not be worth it. Further, healing potions cannot be administered to unconscious people, so they would be more likely to give their officers and combat medics healing balms which can be applied to unconscious folks. So sometimes generic ideas do not carry all that well from game to game, at least not literally. Then again, it doesn't take much to make it work - one of the reasons we publish so many generic supplements.

Battle Captains

I've talked about this before, but it kind of bugs me that when an army "loses" a war, they are often considered to all be dead. That's not even slightly realistic and sucks if you are trying to create adventures. Just because they lost doesn't mean that they all died. How many surrendered? How many escaped or deserted? How many were off doing other missions and haven't been faced with the opposing army? Even if it is just a couple of units that were defending towns or territories that are now owned by the winners, there must be some guys who are still wild and free.

As important as it is to remember that there are some soldiers and other common guys out there who now need a new occupation, there will also be some leaders who escaped death or capture. These guys can now serve as a rallying point for any of the common soldiers who are still out there. Even if these battle captains are captured, they might serve as a rallying point as a couple hundred soldiers from the losing side might be willing to spring them from their jail (and maybe a bunch of extra POWs as well).

Did you make up the battle captains in your last war? Some of us do and some don't. What's a battle captain? Well, the army is probably run by a general who reports to and strategizes with the king (or whoever). The battle captains are the officers who report to the general or report to the officers who report to him. If the army really does get decimated, then maybe the only remaining battle captains are a couple of squad sergeants or legionnaires. The highest ranking of these guys will be the heads of the individual troops. Even if it is just a guy in charge of the archers, while another is in charge of the cavalry and a third has the infantry, there will likely be officers under the general. Even if you didn't make these guys up before the big battle took place, afterwards, you can still add them in. Normally you do this by something like: They bring word to you that Captain Fleyr of the enemy forces is rumored to be hiding in the village of North Uptown. Captain Fleyr was in charge of all the enemy's cavalry, and he is credited with that daring/cunning sweep that nearly took out your left flank during the decisive battle. They believe that he and his most loyal men fought their way clear of the battle. There were only a dozen of them when they fled, but they may be gathering numbers.

Need some drama after the massive climax of the huge war? Figure out what these battle captains are going to do. They might turn bandit. They might try to spark a rebellion. They might become a mercenary force. Meanwhile the guys who won the war are now going to have to defend every place that might get raided, so their forces are going to be severely strained. Perfect time to hire a party of adventurers to put down that rebel scum!

LIFESTYLES OF THE MAGICAL AND MUNDANE

The Vator (Man-At-Arms)

First an aside: This edition was originally intended to be a guide to the “knights” of Myork, but the further we got into it, the less it felt like knights and the more it felt like men-at-arms. So what’s the difference? Well, not all of these guys were going to be cavalry soldiers. Most of these guys are not rich or born to important families. As we added the content we thought would be most appealing to you folks, the more mercenary that content became and less the flower of all nobility.

We think this is actually of more use to the “adventuring class” as it is probably more familiar to them than might be the case if we truly presented the noble soldiers that we consider knights to be. So what does that mean? Look for a future edition aimed more specifically at knights.

Lifestyles of the Magical and Mundane is not about the parts of a fantasy character’s life that are played out during game sessions. That’s the 1-5% of their lives that are filled with action, adventure and often terror. This is about the other 95% of their lives - the humdrum time between adventures.

Category: Warrior - Military
Archetype: Soldier (variant)
Location: Urban
Magical?: Mundane

As the sun rose over Willchester Bay, the barracks remained silent. Shuttered and louvered windows did not spill too much light into the big room, at least not for an hour or so. So an hour after dawn, the farm raised James the Vator shook himself awake and began to prepare for his day, while the rest of his unit lingered in bed.

These weren’t horribly lazy men. They worked the evening shift, and so were not expected to be at drills until nearly noon. If they wanted to catch a little more shut eye, it was certainly allowed.

But James lacked the ability to stay in bed. Still quite young, only 22, he had spent all but the last ten years of his life on a farm, actively helping with any job he was old enough to do. It was about ten years ago when he had the first of several growth spurts that he had been tapped to enter the vator programs. That was late for most vators, many being tapped as young as six, but with his obvious frame even at that young age, they knew he was going to be a fine fighting man.

He seldom thought of the long hours over many months of his military training. Not that he is a stupid man, but twelve years on a farm had given him a steadfast, common approach to most things. He never went in for fancy or flowery, and his choice of weapon seemed to mirror that. He had been trained in spears, sword, and axes, but he took a liking to the mace. A good solid, serviceable weapon, especially in his huge mitts, the mace would serve him in his urban soldiering.

He quietly went about his morning routine, fetching water from the barrel in the hallway; doing his daily washing, grooming and shaving; and brushing out his uniform and shining up his boots, even checking his weapons and oiling his leathers - that sea air can age leather far too quickly in Myork. He ran some of the sea water through his hair to clear the grime, but with his “sheered” haircut, he never had to worry too much about how it would look. Most of the soldiers went with the half-inch hair style, so much easier to keep out of the eyes and insure there were no vermin.

While his unit was dragging themselves from their cots, he was the first on his way to morning meal. The “king’s pay” that might have been paid directly to him was instead paid to the battalion to house and feed him. If he wasn’t going to see the money, he sure was going to get at least his share of the food out of it. James grabbed an earthenware bowl from the stack and a steel spoon from the mug of them and offered it up to the mess cook. Thick oatmeal with some whole dried plums sprinkled on top, all and all a pretty normal start to the day. With the speed and efficiency only seen by military men trained to get in and out of the mess hall, he wolfed down his food and headed back to the barracks. Some mornings there was sugar or some other spice to enhance the oatmeal, but apparently none of the local families had gotten around to thinking about their policing unit today.

As his bunk mates shuffled off to mess, James threw open the shutters and polished his equipment in the now bright morning sun. The balance of his morning would be spent in the courtyard of the barracks, drilling with his squad and the others. As a six year veteran, he leads the exercises some mornings, but he is still not seen as one of the seasoned soldiers. For so many, military service is two or three years and then back to daddy’s plantation. But as a vator, he’s here to stay. There is no better life for him to go back to.

After exercise drills is lunch. Lunch is a more chaotic affair with multiple squads and shifts trying to get through the dining hall together. Plates are lined up along the counters, and each soldier simply grabs a plate and a stein. On each plate is a sandwich of thick slabs of wheat bread utterly hiding a thin piece of heavily salted ham. Still, the ham tastes better than the beef they often receive. Sandwiches are the norm here as some of the soldiers are not sitting down to lunch, but simply

grabbing it and heading back out on patrols. As it is early summer, some of the early crops have started to become available, and there's a cabbage salad with vinegar and horseradish. Not bad for mess hall food. Pretty soon the real harvest will happen, and then the food will get much better, at least for a couple of months. Then it's back to provisioned foods.

The stein is James' first "pony ration". The Myork army is intended to be a marine force and ready to board ships for long voyages at any given time. In order to have the men ready for this, twice a day they are given a "5/4" of water with some whiskey in it. On those long sea voyages, the whiskey helps to keep the slime down inside the barrels, and in theory keeps morale up amongst the men. Because of his second shift schedule, he normally takes his second just before going to sleep, while most take theirs with dinner. Summer days in Myork can be incredibly hot even with the ocean breezes, and keeping the men hydrated is important. Ordering them to drink at least 40oz. of water a day is part of the long term health plan.

With lunch being over, James and his squad begin to get suited up for their patrols. His battalion wears scale mail, though chain mail and plate mail are more common within the city. They are not a "formation unit", so they are allowed some freedom to choose their weapons. As mentioned, our vator has chosen the mace, though certainly there are others in the battalion who use swords, axes, flails and spears. All are expected to use a shield of some manner, though again they are given a wider range than would be seen in a standard infantry unit.

His armor and weaponry have been provided to him by the battalion, but his sponsors had to pay for it. His sponsoring family supports only the one battalion, so they knew when his training began what armor he would need to get familiar with.

Now seems a decent time to get into the money involved in keeping James housed, fed and armed. His sponsoring family is paying for his gear, but rather than charge the family for his equipment outright, it is factored into their monthly support payment. In other words, the battalion delivered the equipment to him day one and his sponsoring family will pay for it over the next two years. If he were a son of the family and destined to return home, he would likely take the equipment with him, should he ever need to lead a militia unit. As he is a vator, after his first two years, the cost of the equipment goes down as now the unit is typically only paying to sustain his equipment, not necessarily replace it. For his list of equipment, check out Gold, Silver, and What!?!

James and his unit are assigned to an area that includes part of the Foreign Quarter and part of the walled city. The assignments are typically mapped out

this way so that multiple units are responsible for the Foreign Quarter - that's where most of the trouble shows up. By having multiple units there, they can support each other if any one area gets too out of hand, plus (at least in theory) it puts less stress on the units that might have had all of the Foreign Quarter as their beat.

Another dull, boring shift. James thanks the gods as he returns to the barracks. Their room has a tiny shrine built into the wall with miniature statues of Jhngeffery, Taberfallo, and Pennibrah - the Three Princes. In the life of a city guard, dull and calm is wonderful, and they do give thanks to the divines for a lack of trials in their lives.

A quick clean up (mostly a wet towel over the face and hair), and they're off to dinner. Most of the other squads have eaten already, so the mess hall is all theirs. Some days the late meal means colder food, but more often they get to finish off any of the excess the other guys didn't eat. Their dinners are typically "casseroles" - meats and starches mixed together in pots and baked. Some people thought of them as really thick stews, but they don't have any liquid in that sense. Tonight's was pork sausage cooked with various tuber vegetables and corn muffins. The casserole was just food, but the corn muffins were really good, and there were a few extras left over from the other squads, so the evening shift got two each.

Dinner and a 5/4 of grog as he climbs into bed. Not a bad life. Granted, James' knowledge of the good life is somewhat limited, but a good life for a soldier, better than a farmer. Well cared for and his chances of actually dying in battle are pretty small.

Some of the terms used:

- King's Pay - stipend paid to the unit to feed and house the soldier. This stipend is rarely given directly to the soldier as then the soldier would be expected to feed and house himself, and most are housed in large barracks.
- Pony Ration - ration of water. called a "pony ration" because the sailors claimed the drink was diluted for the land based military men. The drink is made by adding whiskey to water. The result is "water" that is about 2.75% alcohol. The whiskey is a rye whiskey distilled in the eastern regions of the city-state where winter rye is a good crop for the sandier soils.
- A 5/4 - A standard measure in the Myork military - a pint and a quarter. This is a standard measure and soldiers are expected to drink a 5/4 of water and two 5/4s of pony ration every day to keep their hydration up. Sailors are expected to live on two pony rations daily, and only two.

Wet Behind the Ears

Everyone has to start somewhere, and here we lay out what we think a starting character needs to look like. We'll give you the stats from a **LEGEND QUEST** point of view, but please rely on the narrative and not the numbers when making things work in your world or your campaign.

The Man-At-Arms Archetype

Wet Behind the Ears is intended to serve as a platform to discuss the main archetype of this month's theme. They are "wet behind the ears" because we assume this is what the players will use to help set up new characters of this archetype, and we'll supply some examples.

The vator we have been discussing here is more of a city guard than a front line soldier. Even if wandering the countryside, he still feels a little more like a guard than an infantry man. That doesn't mean you cannot substitute the majority of this advice for nearly any military man, but the specifics will definitely align more to the soldier who makes his living as a city guard.

So what's the difference? Well, a soldier is a well-rounded fighting man. He needs to be proficient with melee weapons, shields, armor and range weapons. But a city guard, or any guard in general, needs to have skills other than battle. A city guard needs to be able to come upon a situation and understand what is going on: is this a brawl, a domestic dispute, an assault, or two old friends who haven't seen each other in a while? Understanding that first is the most important.

So a city guard needs streetwise and carousing to understand what people are doing and to read between the lines when hearing reports from citizens. The carousing will also help them communicate with people they run into during their day. In order to survive while doing this, guards tend to be defensive fighters. Far better to put your shield between you and a likely attacker than to start by swinging that weapon and trying to question the dead.

So short answer - city guard needs social skills (streetwise and carousing), defensive skills (most likely shield), and? Well city guards typically need to get into battle without killing people, so we're suggesting brawling. Yes, they need to have a real weapon, but if someone is simply running away from the guard, they would prefer to tackle him and then question him. Why were you running, rather than simply putting a feathered shaft into his back. In fact, we'd suggest that a city guard doesn't really need a missile weapon at all.

Probably best to have a basic understanding of some ranged weapon, just in case you find yourself in a war, but not for normal street use. Depending on how your rules go, carrying a blackjack or some other knock out weapon might be better than the brawling rules, but that's a rules specific issue.

So this is going pretty well - what else is your city guard looking for? We think senses or whatever stands in for the ability to detect people more easily in your rules. Thieves and other folks are going to try and be sneaky around a city guard, and he'll need to counter act that.

What else? Well, you still need all those character history style skills - what did this character learn as a small child, etc. If the character is originally an urban based character, then some of those social skills should serve dual purpose. This origin story also helps justify why a character might know the city like the back of their hand - an incredibly useful skill in policing.

What about law or some of the more scholarly skills? We don't see them. A city guard doesn't need to read and write or study the law to know that murder is wrong. That's why judges exist - to understand the nuances of the laws and how they should be applied. A city guard brings the guy in, and the judge determines what's appropriate.



OK, so that's a "standard" city guard. But the vators, they're mercenaries. Well, they are, but not in the truest sense. When they contract with a family, it is for the long haul. They aren't switching contracts every battle season. When one family decides to drop a vator (typically because someone else in the family is going to serve), the battalion will likely find that vator another sponsor. He may not need to negotiate the deal at all, though he does need to be made aware of it, even if it is

simply to change the family crest that he has on some of his uniform items.

If these were more “normal” mercenaries, then you would expect a whole additional set of skills to be required. Foremost, they need to be able to negotiate. A basic, “starter character” merc does not need to be able to handle extensive negotiations. Something more like: 10sc per day or 6sc plus a bunk house space. Later on, things like how much loot they get to keep, how often they are expected to fight, etc. will come up, but by then he will have hopefully been burned often enough on bad contracts that he knows what to bargain for. Most often these negotiations are part of the selling skill, but again, this is a rules question.

Most mercs become expert appraisers as well. Well, maybe not experts, but they learn enough to know what loot is worth carrying and what isn't. This does require a broad range of knowledge about a bunch of things, but typically understanding weapons and armor can get the merc pretty far down this road. After all, that is what they will most often be looting.

So how do you start one of these? Actually incredibly easily! Vators work nicely in game. Imagine this: A baby is left at the door of a church and the priest hands the baby off to some parents who would like a child but have not been blessed. While they raise the child reasonably well, they never intend to keep the child, but instead to hand the child over at a young age to be trained as a vator. This gains them standing with their landlord or feudal lord, and the lord gets a soldier to offer up to the army without risking any of his own children.

The parents don't know the child's history, assuming that he is the child of an unmarried woman who cannot afford the stigma of raising her bastard child. The priest claims not to know who the parent(s) are, which may or may not be true depending on how the GM wants to play the character history. Maybe he does know - maybe the child was born to parents who died of a disease and the priest thinks that if the child survived while the parents died, he must be a pretty darn strong child - perfect for soldiering later on in life.

Is this character simply a bastard? Is he an important bastard (like a duke's bastard child)? Is he a gift from the gods? He could be anything! After all, this is fantasy.

The character could be a kid from the streets. Most trouble makers on the streets either wind up as city guards or criminals, and this one fell towards the more acceptable profession. Raised in the city, knows the city, a rough and tumble kid turned into a rough and tumble guard - ready to wade into bar brawls and make arrests where needed.

Maybe along with that, he's the son of a sailor. With his father gone for long periods of time, his mother did her best to raise him, but not that good a job. When the father stopped coming home, he was forced to find a way to support himself, and city guard / vator worked. As a city guard, he could probably watch out for his mother, but as a vator, he might need to get out of the way as his mother remarried to a man who did not want him around.

The transition from city guard to adventurer can be any number of explanations. The easiest one is that he was simply bored. Others include greed - city guards make next to nothing, while adventurers often strike it rich. Did the army / guard downsize? If a war has recently ended, they might feel they are supporting too many professional soldiers. Maybe they tried to station him in some far off garrison and he either refused to go or went AWOL. In our vator examples - going AWOL would be stealing from the sponsor family (assuming he brings all his gear with him when he leaves). While this would make him a criminal, repaying the family later on should be enough to get the law to stop looking for him, which he might be able to do after a couple of successful adventures.

Are there more examples? Absolutely! One of the best things about our vator mercenaries is that they are trained for war, but have very few ties to the community. They are not the types to have huge families they left behind, though if they do, things will be extremely tough on that family if they desert their post. Yes, they are a more generic archetype, but here generic means that they can fit into nearly any type of fantasy campaign and party. Everyone needs “meat shields” to stand in front, and these guys are certainly trained for it.

HOW TO PLAY A ... Man-At-Arms

A man-at-arms is most typically a standard tank. They rely on their heavy armor and shields in order to avoid being hit and to take more hits than others. And yet they are a pretty practical sort of character. There isn't a lot of romance here. They fight, they live, they get their pay.

Men-at-arms do typically have a sense of the mercenary about them. They are not necessarily fighting for king and country, but because this is their occupation and how they earn a living. As such, survival is the most important thing to them, though loot and relationships are also high on the list of priorities.

For these reasons, men-at-arms are very good characters for beginning role-players. They tend to act

like players do - interested in the monetary gain and survival, not with some manner of game mechanic that the player may not be as concerned about as the character may need to be. They are not evil characters out to kill anyone, but they are very good at following orders and carrying out missions.

That said, they still come in a variety of personalities. There are young and idealistic types who believe what they are told and carry out their orders “knowing” that they are just and righteous. There are grizzled veterans who are cynical about everything that they are told, but at the same time continue to follow orders, though probably grumbling more than actually speaking. And there is everything between, shades of grey allowing for nuances whenever a player wants. So in many ways, they are the perfect characters to pattern after some of your favorite soldiers and police from movies, TV and books.



Men-at-arms are practical about their profession. Before they would buy armor, they would debate (probably internally) if the armor would truly be worth it. Is this the type of purchase that could actually save my life or at least extend it during a pitched battle? If not, they would most likely look for something that will keep them alive, and not just look cool. This economic sense is a balance of probabilities. There is no reason to buy (or not sell) a magical ring of fire protection if they are confident that they will not have to face down fire, whether magical or mundane. They don't always have to be right, but they would have made the decision based on a realistic assessment of the probable factors.

The same holds true for their weapons. They aren't seeking fancy weapons that will impress the ladies, but instead good solid tools of their trade, and their trade is war. Should they find themselves with a fancier weapon, they would be more likely to sell the fancy weapon in order to buy one that was plain, but equally functional, and a mule to help carry their gear.

They often start out working for knights and other fancy-pants. In this, they may disagree completely with

their more regal and elegant employer, but they are smart enough to keep their heads down and their mouths shut. Origin stories for men-at-arms often start with cautionary tales about how not to go into a war, stories that tell of how the knight was killed and the man-at-arms was left without an employer.

One thing we expect of men-at-arms is that they keep their gear and their character sheets pretty clean. When allowed to buy magic / alchemicals, they will most likely have the same number of healing potions at the start of every mission, and if buying replacement potions costs more than they earned on the quest, they get a little upset. Such a difference is like losing to them. It cost more to do the mission than they were paid. Other styles of characters don't approach their gear in this way, but a man-at-arms should, because to him, adventuring is a business.

The time may come when a man-at-arms is in the process of becoming a mercenary captain. At this point, he will need to start showing off far more than he has done up to this point, but even this is going to be in a more practical manner. Rather than hang onto expensive trophies like captured armor, they would go for things like captured battle standards or perhaps shields showing the units or knights that had been defeated by the man-at-arms or his company.

So are men-at-arms the boring tanks? Well, sometimes yes. They are dependable more than exciting and will likely look for the same in their companions. That doesn't mean they are never passionate, just that they are typically the masters of their emotions, and not the other way around.

HOW TO GM A ... Man-At-Arms

Men-at-arms are equally easy to game master. Their main objective is surviving until pay day, and pay is what they are after. They are easily encouraged to take on missions based on the amount of coinage they can expect to receive, but (and this one is important), they need to legitimately assume that they will be able to make it home. Offering them obscene amounts of gold to go on a suicide run, shouldn't appeal to them.

There should be other things that won't motivate them to go off on a mission. For instance, a promise of a favor somewhere down the road might be of great value to someone with more of a gambler's streak, but such wishy-washy, intangible benefits don't normally appeal to them. Their steadfast reliability isn't just how they are, it's what they want. Being asked to participate in a rebellion is usually not the style of mission they are looking for, unless they are convinced that the rebellion

is going to work. They just don't feel the romance of righting wrongs. They want a safe place to put their head down at night and being on the run from the king's guards doesn't make that work.

This sense of safety over justice can be worked as a game master to cause some stresses in the campaign. Should the old king have been overthrown by his son, the man-at-arms is more likely to go along with the new regime than to take up arms out of loyalty to the fallen monarch. Again, they aren't evil, just that they value their own security pretty highly. They might be convinced to switch over to the rebels' side later on, but it would have to be a pretty solid argument against the new king.

When you think about rewarding a man-at-arms don't go for the flash. If as GM you're leaving some sweet loot in the game intended for specific characters, go ahead and down play the man-at-arms a bit. He should be happier with a sword that will be better chopping through armor and not breaking or dulling than he would be with one that throws off electrical sparks every time it hits. Plus remember, this is a defense fighter relying on armor and shield. Let the other guys kill the enemy - the man-at-arms is there to stand in the gap and prevent the bad guys from getting to the softer, more easily killed.

Men-at-arms can be loyal to their ruler and land, despite their mercenary trend, but this would have to be established early on through character history. Even though they fight for mercenary reasons, they can be patriotic and take up the fight to save their homelands - this goes to the priority for safety and surety in their lives. Change is typically bad, so they would, given the chance, fight for the defense of their king(dom). But they would probably be gauging the strength of both sides as often as possible, and do what they could to be backing the winner or get out of there. Don't think of this as cowardice, but instead practicality. Especially if they have family members to protect, they are not going to be taking risks with their lives or those of their family.

Men-at-arms need to make friends with their suppliers. Knowing who is going to repair your armor is vitally important, both from a standpoint of being confident it will get done and knowing that it will get done right. GMs can assume that men-at-arms will have this type of relationship with some of the commoners, that their more high-society adventuring pals may not have, and it can lead to all sorts of missions showing up.

As we've mentioned, men-at-arms appeal to a certain type of role-player - one who doesn't think his character needs any flash or flair. These guys will treat the character more like a set of numbers, but that's OK here as the mercenary man-at-arms is going to see life that way too.

NEWS OF FLETNERN

Myork is actually a difficult city to understand the history of, so let's walk through some of their more "ancient history".

- About 4,000 years ago, there was a civil war amongst the titans. At the outbreak of that war, most of the humans (and giants and halflings) in the world were slave populations controlled by the titans.
- About 75 years into the titan civil war, one side detonated a weapon intended to wipe out an advancing army. Instead, this weapon caused such a massive shock to the region that the entire continent began to break apart. This necessitated an evacuation of the titans and their slaves from their home continent.
- The titans established several colonies on the continent of Hughijen, most notably within the Mountains of Purity.

The Angles are formed from two different sets of two escaped slave groups. The first groups, the Addawyr and the Loggawyr escaped early on and established farming and fishing communities respectively. Later the Gweffin (infantry) and Frylau (horsemen) also broke free of the titans and began to establish their cultures. To make a long story short, the Gweffin and Frylau allied together and forcibly convinced a large number of the Addawyr to come with them. This alliance of cultures is what has become known as the Angles today.

As the Angles grew and spread across the plains, they once again ran into the Loggawyr on the coasts. The Loggawyr had settled at Willchester Bay, and what started as an Angle outpost by their neighbors at Willchester Bay has become the capital city of Myork.

Once the outpost became a town, it was ruled by a monarchy. This line continued for nearly 1,000 years. Certainly it was not a single, easy father to son hand off for 1,000 years, but by and large a single family maintained power throughout.

That incredible monarchy came to an end about 100 years ago. We'll skip over some of the details, but in 536P Bayyis Hlachh Oriddhil assumed the throne. A big part of the problem was that Bayyis had to be recalled from Rimmim where he was attending school. Bayyis' mother had been a famously beautiful Maril noblewoman, making him shorter than most of his subjects and more inclined to favor other ways of thinking, such as were found in Brinston and Rimmim.

Bayyis was also monstrously arrogant. He knew "for a fact" that all of his ideas were simply the best and

it was his duty to correct the flaws that he saw in the city-state of Myork. Chief among these was his liberal attitudes towards religions. Where the nobility of Myork had long held that their religion was the one true religion, Bayyiis saw no reason to not open up the city-state to the multitude of religions brought there by foreign sailors and merchants.

Additionally, King Bayyiis saw the wealth of Myork as something that should be shared with all of her people. In order to do this, Bayyiis began to distribute grain to “the poor”. Not only did this cause issues with the treasury, but because he had the government giving food directly to the people, he circumvented the churches who had been taking money from the government and handling the charity work themselves.

This might seem harmless on its face, but Bayyiis gave the poor grain, not money, not flour. The poor then had to grind the grain, which Bayyiis thought was only just since they probably weren’t working and could afford the time to “be productive”. As might be anticipated, those receiving the grain turned around and sold it to millers who gave them coins. Worse yet, unlike the churches who had been handling charity for centuries, Bayyiis’ desire to be directly loved by the people had inexperienced folks giving out grain to anyone who stood in line, be they citizens of the city-state or travelers, and no matter how many times they stood in the line(s).

During the summer of 539P, King Bayyiis announced in court that he was cutting the rations budget of the military in order to increase the amount of grain he had to give to the poor. This was the final straw. Bayyiis’ reforms had gone too far. Bayyiis assumed that the noble families of the land would feed the soldiers and that it was not the requirement of the throne to do so. Both the nobles and the soldiers felt he was wrong. Add to this that the free grain allowances had brought a large number of the worst kind of immigrants to the city, all of whom were willing to stand in lines all day in order to sell grain and earn a daily wage.

In a nearly bloodless coup, the military captured the king and took over the capital. They forced Marshal Ryggard Leassorham to become regent, because he was the most honorable of them and he didn’t want the job. At the time, they expected the King’s six year old cousin to take the throne upon his maturing to adulthood. Unfortunately, this cousin died three years later, and the line of succession began to be disputed in the courts.

Rather than allow the courts to choose the next king, Ryggard remained “regent” until his hand-picked successor took over for him. After briefly trying a four general “council”, they quickly returned to a General Regent voted in by the military officers. This continued until two generations ago, when the title changed to Prince General. Prince Darren (the current ruler) is

likely to be the first in a long succession of hereditary Prince Generals, as the current officers believe that the title should return to being hereditary and fully expect to vote in Prince Darren’s son when the time comes.

All of that was to explain that Myork is under martial law - a military dictatorship established over 100 years ago and continuing to this day. Despite the fact that it is a military dictatorship, the Prince Generals have been exceptionally good leaders. They reversed the failed policies of the kings and have brought peace and prosperity to the city-state. They are traditional and conservative in their politics, and culturally Myork has not been growing, but economically and innovatively, the city-state has become a true superpower.

Sea Stones

It was about six years ago when Ian Mallard Shepher was pasturing his sheep in the Lancerow “martial zone” (north of the city of Myork). He found a pretty blue rock and picked it up, keeping it as a lucky piece. When bored, he would take out his stone and let the light of the campfire shine through it, and he found this mildly entertaining.

Several years later, Ian’s flock of sheep began to get sick. He had no idea what was causing the issue, but the more experienced shepherds were able to tell him that this was a dangerous disease and he needed to quarantine his sheep from each other or the whole flock would be lost. He managed to do this, but lost a little over half his flock, including some of his strongest sheep. By this time he had come to expect that his “lucky rock” was in fact a gem of some type, but he never expected it was a high quality aquamarine. Upon learning this, Ian contacted his brother and instead of buying more sheep, he sold the rest of the flock and raced out to where he had found the stone in the first place.

Ian and his brother Whysser “Buck” Shepher bought as much of the land in the area as they could afford, claiming to be raising sheep there. They got to digging. Being shepherds and not gem miners, they made a lot of mistakes. Over the course of two or three years the brothers managed to find a large number of aquamarines in the area, but nearly all of them were incredibly low quality - very small and nearly colorless. But that changed when they discovered the “Indigo Serpent”.

The “Indigo Serpent” was their name for a streak of blue they discovered under another layer of stone on their land. They gathered some samples and went to have them checked by geologists in Myork. Sure enough, these were aquamarines and of a much higher quality than what they had been finding closer to the surface. It appeared that after years of toiling, they had indeed struck it rich.

But finding the gemstones and harvesting them were two very different things. First off, they were already at about the limit of manual digging. Being 6-8' beneath the surface, they couldn't simply fling the loose rock out of the pit they had dug, but needed to use the far more labor intensive buckets system. Second, the rock that the Indigo Serpent ran through was very brittle and their pit had collapsed on them several times, including one when Buck was in it and suffered a fractured hand. This was getting too difficult for two shepherds to work, so they decided to sell the "mine" as it was.

Ian and Buck were able to find an honest broker to arrange the deal, but the company that offered the best price was a Tandish group from Purity. This made sense in that the Tands are well known for being skilled gem and precious metal miners. Investigations of the land were made, and the mining company (the Smaradadd Company) offered them a pretty penny for their land.

When the next thing you know, old Ian's a millionaire. His kinfolk said, hey move away from there! And he did. Ian split the money with his brother, but Buck only got one-third of the money from the sale of the mine. Buck used the money to build a beautiful house and barn near their hometown and went back to raising sheep. Ian took his two-thirds share and moved to Myork to live the good life.

- Six years ago - Ian Mallard Shepher found a pretty stone and kept it as a good luck piece.
- Three years ago - Ian lost half his flock to a disease and was forced to sell his pretty rock. This is when he learned it was an aquamarine.
- For the past three years - Ian and "Buck" have dug up as many aquamarines as they could find.
- One year ago - The two brothers discovered a "vein" of aquamarines.
- Current - The two brothers are selling their land to a Tandish mining company.

This story is intended to be the base for any number of missions. Adventures with this as their origin can include:

- dragons attacking the region near the Indigo Serpent, and the brothers needing to hire the party to protect their dig site (and paying them with minor aquamarines).
- locals are upset that a bunch of foreigners have moved to their area and are exporting the land's most valued resource. Guards who do not kill civilians are needed for protection.
- Ian is a fish out of water in Myork and though rich needs someone to protect him and guide him in avoiding all the con men after his money (or the PCs could be the con men). Ian could be an incredibly valuable contact and resource.



THE GOOD LIFE

Life in Myork is pretty sweet. The weather is typically good, other than a couple of major storms that sometimes come up from the south. The crops grow stronger and more abundantly than just about anywhere else. That means that food can be cheap, and famines are as rare as they are in any part of the world.

All this prosperity brings some odd cultural issues with it. While wheat still costs more than the other cereal grains, it is cheaper in Myork than any other major city in the world. The cheaper grains in turn cause the livestock to be cheaper to raise, so cheap that the difference between beef, pork and fish is smaller in Myork than is found in other lands. The Angles simply see food as food, and not always as different "levels" of food.

One way in which the commoners can compete with the nobles is in their hair, more importantly their facial hair. Facial hair is considered an important accessory for men, and very few Angles will be seen without at least a moustache. However, facial hair is only an accessory, and not a main feature. For this reason, they seldom grow full beards, but instead will have trimmed beards, elaborate sideburns, fancy (or sometimes not so fancy) moustaches, etc. A man with a full beard obscuring his face would be assumed to either be an uncivilized mountain man or some type of monk or other religious hermit, depending on his clothes. So yes, they do have moustache wax, and they greatly fear losing their facial hair in battle.

Building in Myork is more than just a profession, it is a passion. While the stone masons are typically

commoners, as they are elsewhere, architects are most commonly nobles. They have to be, because commoners cannot afford to attend the expensive architectural schools. It is often said that the dwarves may have invented the buttress, but the Angles invented the flying buttress, and these architectural designs and flourishes are the pride of the city.

Where other cities have a tendency to scavenge stone and materials from older buildings, stone and marble come into Myork in such large volumes that they typically just keep building up. It is common for those trying to repair their basement to learn that part of the problem was that the house was built atop a ruined block of buildings that may not have been properly braced to handle the load of the new construction on top of it. This does not mean that under Myork there are interconnected ruins mapping out some elaborate dungeon. There are ruins; they just aren't all that interconnected.

One of the notable impacts of the prosperity of Myork is seen in their fashions, specifically in dying. Every culture (on Fletnern) that can create thread also knows how to dye it, but this science is not absolute. Due to difference in the methods and materials, getting the same color on multiple garments is very difficult - assuming they aren't being dyed at the same time, and even then. Dying different types of fabric and getting the exact same color is that much more difficult.

But while most cultures will see wearing the same color but in different shades is fashionably appropriate, in Myork wearing an outfit where all garments (pants, stockings, shirt, vest, possibly gloves and hat) are exactly the same shade has become the latest fad. This has benefited the mercers, tailors and dyers - at least those who can accomplish the task - because now a person needs to buy all of their clothing, at least for that particular outfit, from the same shop in order to match the colors exactly. Those unable to coordinate their clothing to this level now appear to be wearing garments made in rural cabins as opposed to professional tailor shops.

This new fashion is not just amongst the very wealthy, but among the middle class as well. In many ways it serves to identify foreigners, because they would be far less likely to have this coordination predetermined. If this is a way to discriminate against those visiting the city as opposed to those living in it, it is a subtle but effective means of isolating the natives.

Other fashions typically affect only the uppermost levels of their society. Perhaps because their metal workers are second to none, most art, even that in peasant homes, is often based in some application of metal. Whether it is miniature weapons or armor or statuettes, the far most common artistic works in Myork are all based in metals, typically silver or steel.

OPTIONAL RULES

Flanged Maces



When looking at the bludgeon critical charts in the **LEGEND QUEST Omnibus**, it is clear that the minimum damage required for many of these criticals is higher than might be expected from piercing or slashing weapons. In order to more easily achieve these minimums, warriors from across the ages have used flanged maces.

The standard mace described in the rule book is a rounded head on a handle. These can come about in a variety of ways, but the key point is rounded. On a flanged mace, there are protrusions that jut out from the main body of the mace. In this way, the surface of impact is smaller, but the force remains the same. This means that the force is concentrated. In turn, this makes those criticals easier to achieve. Therefore, when using a flanged mace, the minimum damage required is halved from that shown on the chart.

This has been shown true in physics and in our own world. Some other variants that might work for you in game would be hexagonal shaped heads as they concentrate the force along the edge of the head and not along a broader rounded edge. Knotted or cleated maces should offer similar advantages, but probably not as much advantage. It would be up to the game master as to whether or not they would offer the minimum damage reduction, possibly reducing the minimum to two-thirds of that shown on the charts.

Remember, flanged maces do not cause criticals more often than regular maces, but once the critical has occurred according to the die roll, they make it easier to actually achieve the critical through damage. In a game where criticals do not have a minimum amount of damage required, flanged maces should probably receive a bonus on the critical chart itself, again, not making a critical more common, but making it more severe when it does occur.

Historically, flanged maces were designed that would actually pierce armor, but the penetration was typically shallow. Any flanged mace that deeply penetrated armor was more likely a war hammer or pick. We're going to assume that flanged maces do not receive benefits against armor as piercing weapons would.

GOLD, SILVER, AND WHAT!?!

We thought it might be fun to run through all the equipment we feel would be required by James the Vator in our Lifestyles segment. We think you'll be surprised when you start to think about how much gear he really needs, even though he is stationed in a barracks.

In an effort to show what he would and wouldn't need for certain situations, we've sorted the items into the things he would have out and ready in his **barracks**, the items supplied by the **mess** hall, the items he needs when on maneuvers or otherwise in the **field**, and his actual **battle** gear.

In typical **Grain Into Gold** style, we are showing you both the costs "At Source" and "In City". This is because it is cheaper to buy things directly from where they were grown or crafted. Buying products in the city means paying a merchant (middleman) to gather the products from their sources, transport them into the city, pay the taxes, and most likely set up a store front with employees. This increases the prices.

Typical markup for "in city" is +50%. For goods that are common (c) or very common (vc), this markup is reduced by stiff competition. This has all been factored in. If you want simple - ignore at source and just use the in city pricing.

Our vator also receives services at his barracks that we are not covering here including laundry services, repairs and other work from the smiths, armorers, etc., the cooks in the mess hall, and probably even medical help from healers and other magical care providers.



| <u>Sort</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Class</u> | <u>Com</u> | <u>Mats/</u> <u>Base</u> | <u>Cost at</u> <u>Source</u> <u>(sc)</u> | <u>Cost in</u> <u>City (sc)</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>APP</u> |
|-------------|--|--------------|------------|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| Barracks | Metal box (tin), steel, 3"d., holds 2.5oz., lid & bottom | Container | | 0.50 | 0.80 | 1.20 | | TNK |
| Barracks | Trunk, wood, 3'x2'x2', steel hardware, crude | Container | | 1.80 | 14.00 | 21.00 | | WOD |
| Barracks | Blanket, heavy wool, 7'x4' | Furnishing | | 13.50 | 19.50 | 29.25 | | WEV |
| Barracks | Blanket, linen, 7'x4' | Furnishing | c | 10.25 | 11.25 | 14.96 | | WEV |
| Barracks | Bowl, wash basin, earthenware, glazed, 3qt. | Furnishing | | - | 1.35 | 2.03 | | POT |
| Barracks | Brush, boot, wood w/ pony tail | Furnishing | | 1.00 | 6.70 | 10.05 | | WOD |
| Barracks | Brush, clothing, wood w/ pony tail | Furnishing | | 1.50 | 9.00 | 13.50 | | WOD |

| <u>Sort</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Class</u> | <u>Com</u> | <u>Mats/ Base</u> | <u>Cost at Source (sc)</u> | <u>Cost in City (sc)</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>APP</u> |
|-------------|--|--------------|------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| Barracks | Brush, shaving, horse hair in wood | Furnishing | | - | 2.00 | 3.00 | | WOD |
| Barracks | Comb, hair, wood, plain | Furnishing | | - | 1.00 | 1.50 | | WOD |
| Barracks | Cot, 7'x3", wooden frame w/ sailcloth | Furnishing | | 5.20 | 21.00 | 31.50 | | WOD |
| Barracks | Cup, shaving soap, earthenware, glazed, 4oz. | Furnishing | | - | 0.50 | 0.75 | | POT |
| Barracks | Knife, steel, wood handle bolted on, single edged | Furnishing | | 0.15 | 2.50 | 3.75 | S | WPC |
| Barracks | Mattress, straw, canvas-light/soft, 7'x3' | Furnishing | | 9.80 | 13.80 | 20.70 | | WEV |
| Barracks | Mirror, polished steel, 3" d. | Furnishing | | 0.40 | 1.20 | 1.80 | | MET |
| Barracks | Pitcher, earthenware, 2qt | Furnishing | | - | 0.50 | 0.75 | | POT |
| Barracks | Rag, linen-light/farm, 8"x8" | Furnishing | c | - | 0.10 | 0.13 | | WEV |
| Barracks | Sheet, canvas-light/soft, 7'x3' | Furnishing | | 4.90 | 5.80 | 8.70 | | WEV |
| Barracks | Towel, linen (farm), 20"x15" | Furnishing | | 0.70 | 1.00 | 1.50 | | WEV |
| Barracks | Wash rag, canvas-light/soft, 12"x12" | Furnishing | vc | 0.20 | 0.40 | 0.49 | | WEV |
| Barracks | Bottle, brown glass, 4 oz., filled with weapon oil (whale based) | Substance | | 0.10 | 0.30 | 0.45 | | GLS |
| Barracks | Dubbin, black, 2oz (shoe shine) | Substance | | - | 0.25 | 0.38 | | CHM |
| Barracks | Oil, mink, 2oz. | Substance | | 0.50 | 0.60 | 0.90 | | TAN |
| Barracks | Soap, shaving, puck, 4oz. | Substance | | - | 0.25 | 0.38 | | CHM |
| Barracks | Key, iron, to trunk | Tool | | - | 1.50 | 2.25 | | PKL |
| Barracks | Razor, straight, folding, steel | Tool | | 0.20 | 3.30 | 4.95 | T | WPC |
| Barracks | Figure, pewter, enameled, armored man, white helm, sword&shield, 5" tall, ~2lbs. | Valuable | | 4.00 | -- | 22.00 | | MET |
| Barracks | Figure, steel, enameled, armored man, white helm, sword&shield, 5" tall, ~2lbs. | Valuable | | 3.00 | -- | 20.00 | | MET |
| Battle | Belt buckle, steel, plain | Clothing | | 0.10 | 0.70 | 1.05 | | MET |
| Battle | Belt, leather, stitched, w/ steel buckle | Clothing | | 0.30 | 1.90 | 2.85 | | TAN |
| Battle | Belt, weapons, leather, thick, stitched, w/ steel buckle | Clothing | | 0.50 | 2.40 | 3.60 | | TAN |
| Battle | Buckle, belt, larger (weapons belt), plain | Clothing | | 0.20 | 1.00 | 1.50 | | TAN |
| Battle | Cloak, beaver fur | Clothing | | 24.00 | 80.00 | 120.00 | | TAN |
| Battle | Cloak, linen (light/good) | Clothing | | 4.00 | 8.50 | 12.75 | | WEV |
| Battle | Epaulettes, pair, wool fringe, dyed silver/grey | Clothing | | - | 2.00 | 3.00 | | WEV |
| Battle | Scale mail armor, full suit, steel | Clothing | | 60.00 | 350.00 | 525.00 | C | AMY |
| Battle | Shield, steel, medium, round | Clothing | | 17.00 | 60.00 | 90.00 | C | AMY |
| Battle | Pouch, leather (for manacles) | Container | | 0.20 | 1.00 | 1.50 | T | TAN |
| Battle | Pouch, leather, tiny (for whistle) | Container | | - | 0.20 | 0.30 | | TAN |
| Battle | Purse, "hunting bag", 6"x3", leather, flap and toggle lid | Container | | 0.30 | 1.30 | 1.95 | T | TAN |

| <u>Sort</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Class</u> | <u>Com</u> | <u>Mats/ Base</u> | <u>Cost at Source (sc)</u> | <u>Cost in City (sc)</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>APP</u> |
|-------------|--|--------------|------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| Battle | Quiver, leather, 20"tall x6"d, w/leather cap (holds 5 torches) | Container | | 2.25 | 5.50 | 8.25 | | TAN |
| Battle | Whistle, tin | Furnishing | | 0.30 | 1.00 | 1.50 | | FLT |
| Battle | Char cloth, 4 uses, ~2"x2"@ | Substance | | | 0.10 | 0.15 | | CHM |
| Battle | Key, steel, to manacles | Tool | | 0.10 | 2.40 | 3.60 | T | PKL |
| Battle | Manacles, steel, fit most human males, -10 locks | Tool | | 1.80 | 28.00 | 42.00 | T | PKL |
| Battle | Packet, canvas, flint rock & steel rod | Tool | | 0.20 | 0.60 | 0.90 | | MET |
| Battle | Torch, local wood, tallow soaked fibers (top), 20 candles for 30 minutes | Tool | | 0.20 | -- | 1.20 | | ANH |
| Battle | Club, oak, lead filled, 2' long | Weapon | | 0.40 | 5.40 | 8.10 | T | WOD |
| Battle | Mace, steel, flanged | Weapon | | 4.80 | 50.00 | 75.00 | C | WPC |
| Field | Backpack, leather, ~3.5cu.ft., "field pack" (sturdy) | Container | | 8.50 | 16.50 | 24.75 | | TAN |
| Field | Waterskin, leather, 3qt | Container | | 0.50 | 3.50 | 5.25 | | TAN |
| Field | Sleeping bag, wool fabric, 6'x3', sturdy construction | Furnishing | c | 12.00 | 22.00 | 29.26 | | WEV |
| Field | Tent, pup, canvas (strong), 6'x6'x4'h, w/ropes (~9lbs.) | Furnishing | | 28.00 | 36.00 | 54.00 | | WEV |
| Mess | Bowl, shallow, earthenware, 6"d | Furnishing | | - | 0.25 | 0.38 | | POT |
| Mess | Fork, steel, plain, 6" | Furnishing | | 0.10 | 0.65 | 0.98 | | TNK |
| Mess | Napkin, soft canvas | Furnishing | c | 0.30 | 0.50 | 0.67 | | WEV |
| Mess | Plate, earthenware, 7"d | Furnishing | | | 0.25 | 0.38 | | POT |
| Mess | Spoon, steel, plain, 6" | Furnishing | | 0.10 | 0.50 | 0.75 | | TNK |
| Mess | Stein, stoneware, brown, plain, 20oz. | Furnishing | | - | 1.80 | 2.70 | | POT |
| Xtra | Shield, large, white steel | Clothing | | 90.00 | 225.00 | 337.50 | C | AMY |
| Xtra | Shield, medium, white steel | Clothing | | 60.00 | 150.00 | 225.00 | C | AMY |
| Xtra | Bone, dragon, processed, pound | Substance | | 1.00 | 1.33 | 2.00 | | -- |
| Xtra | Bone, dragon, raw, pound | Substance | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.50 | | -- |
| Xtra | Steel, white, pound | Substance | | 0.44 | 3.00 | 4.50 | | SMT |
| Xtra | Sword, long, white steel, fine | Weapon | | 13.50 | 150.00 | 225.00 | C,F | WPC |

Notes:

- Note C: Combat Grade - Item crafted to be battle ready and capable of withstanding extreme use in the rigors of combat.
- Note F: Fancy - This item has some manner of artwork or other fancy embellishment that considerably increases its value. The price shown factors this into the costs.
- Note S: Standard Grade - Item crafted for regular home use and not intended to be used for combat or other extreme use.
- Note T: Tool Grade - Item crafted to endure regular, harsh conditions, though not as sturdy as a Combat Grade item. For example, a butcher's knife or a lumberjack's axe would be tool grade. Better than Standard Grade.

Mats/Base: cost if sold as raw materials. Ignores any craftsmanship of the item.

MASS MARKET MAGIC

Illumination enchantments are nothing new, but the Saint Lights brand of illuminations is something different. Not only are they cheap (relatively as compared to other magics), but unlike many illumination enchantments, Saint Lights tend to cast light over a broader area than most other lights. While the light is not as bright as some other forms, there is a “halo” effect, a softness to the light that tends to fill a space as opposed to directly light into it.

Being what they are, Saint Lights have been used mainly as street lamps. They don’t give off enough light to read by (unless you’re really close), but they do tend to light up neighborhoods and that in turn cuts down on crime and other activities that require darkness and shadow.

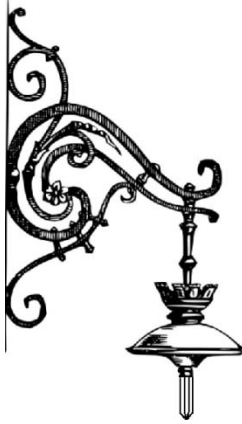
Despite being less expensive than other illumination enchantments, Saint Lights are not free. After first building their workshop in Scaret, the enchanters behind this brand moved their location to Myork fairly quickly. The prosperity of Myork and the desire of people to have (fairly) well-lit streets were much greater in the Angel capital. The lights cannot be turned off, therefore few people want them in their homes.

The enchantment is cast upon a glass rod, typically one that was cast as a “faceted” rod - most commonly a long hexagon about five inches in length. This rod is then inserted into a steel half-sphere. The interior of the sphere is highly polished, which allows the light given off by the glass rod to be directed, most commonly downwards from a pole or the corner of a building.

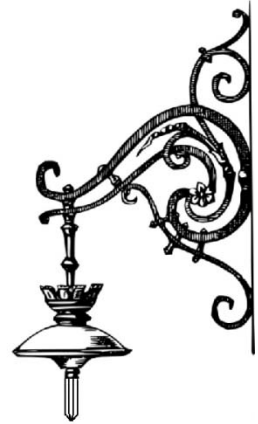
Unlike natural light which dims directly, Saint Lights carry farther due to their soft, supernatural light. This means that one could read by a Saint Light from up to 6’ away, even though the Saint Light seems no brighter than a torch. Anyone more than 25’ from one would suffer a “dim light” penalty, and at 36’+ there would be a “no direct light” penalty. This takes the reflective hood device into effect, and the light seems to travel about twice as far as a more natural light would.

The light emitting from the Saint Light will be colored with whatever color the glass rod is. This means that if the rod is stained to a yellow or green color, so too will the light be colored yellow or green. As with other enchanted lights, it is far more common for the rod to be

Saint Lights



Eternal



Bright

Cheap

Saint Lights provide your neighborhood with the safety and utility of light even in the darkest of nights. Don’t let your streets become the danger zones you find in other cities. Use **Saint Lights** for your protection and security.

clear glass and for it to be placed in a colored glass jar of some nature if colored light is desired. This allows the color to be changed in the most mundane fashion, without resorting to differently colored magical lights.

Saint Lights cost about half of what the more standard illumination enchantments do, or typically around 150sc for the light source. The hoods (steel construction and including the brace to attach it to something) are 9” in diameter and cost an extra 20sc. They are polished on the inside, but not extremely well. Still, they serve to redirect the light.

One problem that has not yet been solved is that the glass rods (the enchanted part) are fitted into a steel socket in the lamp structure, but then glued into place. Most often, if someone were to wiggle the rod around for a while, they would be able to break the glue and remove the enchanted rod. If placed, as many of them are, at 8’ off the ground, it is not that difficult to reach the rod. If this becomes a problem with people stealing the enchanted rods, the city will need to use magical glues or add a cage of some kind so the rod will not fit out of the lamp, whether it is in the socket or knocked loose.

MONSTERS AND OTHER MENACES

While developing this particular edition, we realized that the knights and men-at-arms of Myork really don't have a lot of monster interactions - other than killing dragons, but we want to keep all of that for another edition. However, they are just south of the "Thunder Plains", officially known as the Hasslem Plains, the home of the unicorns and pegasi. So we thought a bit more about unicorns and how they behave might be a little plus here. Yes, there is also an upcoming edition about the unicorns and pegasi of the Thunder Plains (and their on-going war with each other), but this is more of a steed thing and not about the animals themselves.

Unicorns

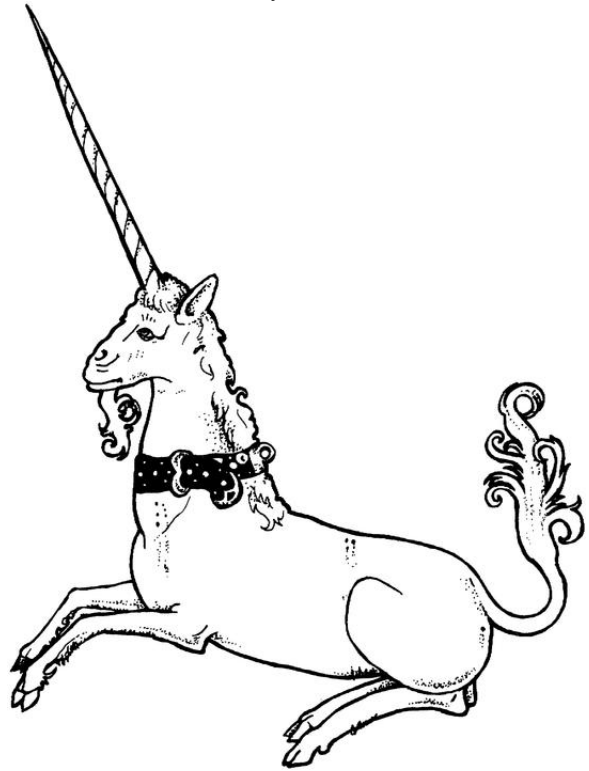
There are many stories about unicorns and what they are capable of doing, but just as many stories revolve around whom they will allow to ride them. First, a couple points of clarification: In **LEGEND QUEST**, unicorns are smaller than horses, averaging about 750lbs. This means that they would never be suitable for an armored knight (assuming a full grown muscular human), but could be ridden by human women of slighter builds, possibly even in armor, if the armor were light enough. We usually assume an equine can carry about 30% of its body weight, so a slightly larger unicorn should be able to carry a lightly armored female human or even a male elf.

But wait! A male elf? Why even consider a male riding a unicorn? Well, not every game rejects this concept. In **LEGEND QUEST** we've never published our thoughts about people riding unicorns - until right now!

Who can ride a unicorn depends on the unicorn. In the wild there would only be stallions and mares. Mares are honestly not all that particular about whom they would let ride them, except they have a pretty good sense by just looking at someone as to whether or not they can carry them. They will not allow anyone they would consider too heavy to get the chance. Does this mean they can tell how much someone weighs simply by looking at them? Well, yes. Not only in looking, but in feeling the vibrations in the ground as the person approached and other factors but yes, a unicorn mare can tell if someone is too heavy (>25% of her weight). They just will not let heavier people try.

Stallions are different. A stallion can tell if a person is a virgin or not, and stallions will not allow non-virgins to ride them. (We assume the females can tell as well, but they aren't as concerned about it.) Now most stallions will only allow female virgins ride them, but

there are some stallions that would allow a male virgin to ride them. It is really a matter of taste for the unicorn. In most documented cases, once the rider was no longer a virgin, the unicorn would refuse to serve as a steed, but there are some very rare cases where the unicorn had formed a bond with the rider over years, and once the rider was no longer a virgin, the unicorn still allowed them to ride. Even when the relationship continues, the unicorn does act differently around the rider.



To be clear - no wild unicorn simply allows a stranger to walk up and jump on. Getting a unicorn to allow a rider is far more difficult than getting a wild horse to accept a rider, and that isn't easy. Most commonly magic / spells are used to communicate with the creature or charm it in some fashion. Unicorns are intelligent and magical creatures. After the charm spell wears off, they will understand that they were attacked by magic and will do everything in their power to escape from this person that they identify as an enemy. That said, they do also understand things like being healed, being saved from a predator, etc. and these actions could earn the stranger a wider range of allowed actions.

As can be assumed from their size, unicorns make better mounts for elves than for humans, and in some worlds, there are elves who breed unicorns as steeds, especially war steeds. In these cases, the stallions are often gelded. Any gelding unicorn bred in captivity should be considered fully tame and will allow anyone to ride it.

So unicorn stallions can detect who is or is not a virgin and make decisions about people based on this factor. Why? The only assumption that can be made is that the stallion sees the female virgin as someone they might eventually conquer. In the wild, unicorn stallions will form harem herds where other males are chased off. The most widely accepted thought on why stallions allow virgins to ride them is that they see the virgin as one of their harem. This behavior has been seen where female stallion riders will have their steeds act overly protective, even placing themselves between their rider and males of her race. Please don't take this too far as there are no known cases of stallions forcing themselves on virgins, only demanding too much attention from them.

Characters with Character

Nibert "Burt" Relicguard is the eldest of four brothers and by far the most serious. His family owns considerable lands, and they were therefore required to send two soldiers to the battalions. Being just under the limit (they have 150 acres), they are not required to serve as the "vator police", but they have taken on this role.

As mentioned, Burt is the serious one. He is also the short one. Standing only 5'8" he is two inches shorter than his youngest brother, but five and six inches shorter than his middle two brothers. While his brothers have always been good natured in their teasing, Burt takes his height too much to heart.

After serving four years in the military, his next oldest brother was ready to take over the family's soldiering duties, so Burt came home. While his family values his military prowess and his patriotic commitment, it seemed that the household and plantation staff vastly preferred his more fun loving brother and not Burt. Burt stayed home for four years while his brothers served their time, but when it was time for his youngest brother, Burt returned to the military, deciding to make it a career and leave the farming and ranching to his brothers.

For the first three years of his second enlistment, Burt treated his youngest brother as his squire, something his brother has never forgiven him for. Now, Burt's family maintains a vator as his squire/man-at-arms. Burt is a ranking officer in his battalion and respected as a man who can get things done. He has a head for the bureaucracy of the military life and excels where others refuse to try. He is a ball buster when training fresh recruits, but his no nonsense style comes in handy in many circumstances. Burt will stay in the military for the rest of his life, forgoing his inheritance in favor of his brother.

SILVER SENSE

White Steel

Though its inventor is unknown, it is believed that white steel was first used by the titans shortly after coming to Hughijen. It is unlikely that they would have invented it in their homeland as there were no dragons there.

White steel is exactly what it sounds like - a steel alloy that is actually whitish in color - a metallic form of white, but definitely white. Though few know how to make it, most know that it is formed from burning / smelting dragon bones and iron together. Other substances are also used, including sulfur and phosphorous. It is thought that the sulfur and phosphorous may not be essential since these elements are often found in dragon bones naturally, but most smelters insist on them.

White steel is nearly as strong as regular steel, but it can be more brittle. Most smelters make a pure form of white steel and then alloy it with more iron in order to give it more elasticity. Tempering white steel to allow for this is extremely difficult because the steel does not show colors the way other steels do based on the temperature of the steel.

So what is its purpose? When the titans arrived on Hughijen, they are assumed to have left much of their belongings and tools behind. (Their ships would only hold so much, so some non-essentials were left behind.) Not yet having set up iron mining sites, their supply was too small for their needs as they fought the resident dragons for the territory they wanted to build their new cities. So white steel is assumed to have been a way to make the small amount of iron they had go farther. By using the corpses of their enemies, they were able to effectively double the amount of steel they could produce from the iron they had.

Today on Fletnern, white steel is more of a decoration. It is used extensively in Myork both for arms and armaments, but also in art and their metal sculptures. But requiring dragon bones, it is quite expensive, so it is frequently only used as an accent to more standard steel alloys. Outside of Myork and Purity, white steel is a rarity. On Drentae, they believe it to be weaker than normal steel and will avoid using it for weapons and armor.

This is not the same substance as the "white steel" known in modern times. Modern white steel is a pure form of steel while this is an almost alchemical alloy.

GM Only

So what's going on with the crafting of white steel? The secrets are kept by those who know how to create the substance, so certainly not everything is known. Some things that we do know include:

- The bones are not crushed before being added to the smelting process. The largest bones may be broken up to better fit the smelting furnace, but apparently the controlled burning / smelting is what joins the two key substances together.
- Dragon bones are not as dense as steel in their natural state, but white steel is pretty close to the same density as "regular" steel, so what happens? Dragon bones, like most bones, contain blood vessels and hollow spaces that are being compacted during the smelting process.
- White steel, once created, can be used almost exactly as steel is. It can be forged, smelted into other alloys, and re-melted to be reused. It requires a higher temperature forge to work it, but this temperature is not too difficult for most smiths to achieve. This factor also grants the object crafted from white steel the equivalent of a fire ward (Pow 1), which would reduce the standard fire breath attack of a dragon by about one-third. However, unless the person being breathed on is completely protected by white steel, the fire ward is unlikely to have any great effect.

Dragon bones once delivered to a place that is safe enough to smelt typically cost about 1.5sc per pound of material. This does not include any of the fancier pieces, like the skull or wing bones which would be used for other things - just the raw inglorious bones of the dragon. After being smelted into white steel, the smelters will normally charge 3sc per pound of white steel at the smelter, but by the time it gets transported to the big city and taxes and merchant markup are added in, you are paying 4.5sc per pound.

One of the common religious art pieces found among the vators is a steel statuette typically about 5" tall. It is of a man in armor, most commonly plate mail. The body is cast in one mold, but the sword, shield and head/helm are cast separately and then welded on. This is because they are either enameled in white or formed of white steel to represent St. Strahaearn from the religion of the Three Princes. After the white pieces are prepared, the extra parts are welded onto the statuette. While most are made from steel, some have steel helm, sword and shield, but pewter bodies. Most followers of the Three Princes will have something similar amongst their personal belongings.

CHURCH BELLS

The Angles of Myork worship a pantheon most commonly referred to as the Jemmistake Pantheon. Jemmistake on Waterbrook is the name of their heaven where their gods reside in relative peace and harmony, though every once in a while they need to ride out of their castles and crush some elves or some bandits ("elf" and "bandit" often being seen as interchangeable terms).

Perhaps the most common religion amongst the vators is the Covenant of Honor. More commonly referred to as the religion of the Three Princes, the Covenant of Honor was started several hundred years ago when a knight now known as St. Strahaearn. Strahaearn had been standing vigil over the altar of Jhngeffery when the three gods, Jhngeffery, Pennibrah, and Taberfallo, appeared to him. They told him they had plans for him and implanted the knowledge within him to start an order of warriors dedicated to the three gods and to preserving life in Myork as it was.

While Three Princes is a common enough religion and doesn't stray from any of the widely accepted norms of Angle religions, but it still has its detractors. The main contention is that Strahaearn saw the three gods as "blue apparitions", not as normal, solid people. Many priests of other religions have pounced on this point as proof that the gods were not truly appearing to him, but instead some manner of trickery was being used, whether it be divine (demonic) or simply mortal magic (illusion). While this may seem unimportant, Three Princes has taken followers away from older religions who believe nearly the same things. Fewer followers means less donations to support the priests.

Three Princes believes that St. Strahaearn was given three gifts from the gods. The first (from Taberfallo) was a white sword that would cut through falsehoods and his enemies. The second was a white shield (from Pennibrah) that would protect him from the slings and bows of his enemies (both physical and political). The last gift (from Jnhgeffery) was a white helm that was to gift him with the wisdom to stay on the right course as he built the religion. Many of the followers of Three Princes get equipment made from white steel in order to symbolize their faith and their bond to the three gods. Of the original gifts, the shield hangs in the Covenant of Honor's main cathedral in Myork. The helm is assumed lost, and the sword is rumored to be in use by a dragon slaying knight of the religion somewhere deep in the mountains.

Three Princes is a rather standard Angle religion. It praises honor, and all of its members strive to be as honorable as the Three Princes. It also stresses military power as the main way to fight against the religion's

enemies, though they do stress that living an honest and charitable life will serve as an example to others, even when they don't show that they have been affected. One difference from the more standard Angle religions is that Three Princes does feel the priorities should be gods, country, family, not the more common country, gods, family. This should not call into question the loyalty and dedication of any of its members, but it is sometimes used to suggest they cannot be trusted as much as other soldiers.

Most barracks in Myork will have a small wall shrine to the Three Princes. It is assumed that even if the soldier follows another religion he will be able to pray to his god at the wall shrine, because all three are represented. A wall shrine is what it sounds like - a small part of the wall made to look like the front of a church with small statues of the three gods within it. The shrines are most commonly 12"-15" wide and a similar size in height. They are seldom more than 3" deep, depending on the way they are attached and the wall itself. The statues are most often about 5-6" tall, and may be full bodies or simply torsos and up.

The other main religion of the vators is that of Antahlara the Converted. Antahlara was a noble warrior who fought as a mercenary for an elven army that was attacking Jemmistake. After being captured, he was guarded by Pennibrah, but his elven employers sent assassins to kill him before he could reveal the location of their base (something he had refused to do). Pennibrah protected him from the assassins and because his employers had tried to kill him, he turned against them and revealed their secrets. Antahlara is considered the patron god of vators and other people who fight for money. His religion works to show them that they can fight for money but still be honorable. His symbol is a gold coin, symbolizing that despite fighting for money, they can still be religious.

Antahlara does not have an established religion, and each of his priests in each of his temples preaches as he sees fit. Vators do tend to move around a bit, either because they are shifting employers or just shifting the unit they are assigned to. This allows various stories and styles of worship to merge, and keeps the priests from running too far from the standards expected.

The only other "major" religion in Myork is that of Ehlizabetha Mourntage. Ehlizabetha is the wife of Jhengeffery and the Casteleon of Jemmistake. While her religion is the main religion of the wives and mothers of the soldiers, many of the more male dominated religions see her as a villain. The stories and myths told about Ehlizabetha show her using her feminine wiles and other "trickery" to defeat vastly superior foes. Even when this was done to protect Jemmistake from a hostile bandit force, her husband and his enemies vilified her.

This is a major issue for the culture of Myork. With the queen of the gods seen as untrustworthy by the male religions, the men and women of Myork are being taught two different perspectives on reality. In the male society, honor and trustworthiness are held as the highest ideals, while in the female society, success at any cost is praised. Both sides believe they are right, and it is common for mothers to use tricks to keep their sons out of military service, but they typically need to trick their sons as well as the recruiters.

The religions of the Jemmistake pantheon have a major benefit in membership recruitment. It is illegal to establish a church to a god not approved by the Knights' Council. There is a small area within the Foreign Quarter known as Ambassadorburg where foreign temples are allowed, but technically they are not allowed anywhere else in the city. This is one of the major points of contention with the residents of the Circle Forest. Although some of the druids' gods have been approved, the druids are being heavily restricted in their religious freedoms. Glodian and Dharvic religions are completely forbidden, though sometimes this law is not enforced in the far eastern regions of the city-state.

BY THE NUMBERS

In **LEGEND QUEST (LQ)** and several other similar skill based games, the use of a shield is not as simple as adding a modifier to not be hit, but is instead an extension of how good the character is with the shield. Expert shield users are very difficult to injure, especially when the shield is paired with decent armor. But how valuable is that shield?

Let's look at LQ: There are two skills for shield - Shields Group and the specific shield skills. The Group is a 10 point skill and the specific is a 5 point skill. To use a large shield requires three levels, so let's call that Shield Group 1 (Large Shield 2) or 20 points. Against a single enemy this conveys a +23 to parry (+8 from the shield base and 3 x 5 from the levels). With an average human having an Agility of 5 (base 25% parry), parry is nearly doubled with this shield.

Is that enough? A common starting level character looking to get into a fight would have a Strength of 7 (or Agility of 7 if focused on range weapons) and perhaps 4-6 levels in weapons skills. Since we've always preached that a starting character should have a 100% to hit (attribute of 7 and six levels), let's go with that - 100% chance to hit in combat. Just to fill things out, let's give each of them a long sword.

So ignoring any other factors, a base starting character would have a 70% chance of hitting our defender (that was Agility of 5 x 5% + 5 for the long

sword's base parry). Not bad! So this character has an average damage of 11, hits 70% of the time and thus has an average damage per turn of 7.7. Now looking at the same attacker against our shield user: 100 to hit - (25 for Agility - 5 for sword - 8 for shield - 15 for shield levels) = 47% chance of injuring. That average damage per turn just decreased to 5.17.



Without any armor, our defender can take this damage for three turns without a shield or five turns (going below 0 during turn 6) with a shield. (We're assuming 30LB points.) So anything that extends his ability to survive would be a good thing, right? OK, so what works?

- We're using the guy without the shield as the base. He lasts until part way through turn 4.
- The guys with the shield spent 20 character points (cp) on shield skills and now lasts until turn 6.
- Increasing Agility to 6 costs 16 more points and allows the defender to last until the very end of turn 4. Increasing Agility to 7 costs 48 more points (those 16 + another 32) and the defender goes down during turn 5. Far more points - less durability.
- Increasing Endurance to 6 or 7 costs the same number of points as Agility, but boosts Life's Blood to 36 or 42. LB=36 extends life into turn 5, while LB=42 only makes it until the end of turn 6. If you've been trying to follow some of the math and are off by several points, it is likely because we are considering bleeding damage as well as weapon damage.
- Adding armor: One level of armor skill costs 6 character points and typically yields leather armor with a DAR of 1 (blocks one point of damage per hit). Two levels would be 12 character points and studded leather with a DAR of 2. (Suede and chain is not considered an easy to find beginning armor.) Three levels is 24 character points are likely chain mail with

a DAR of 3. So a DAR of 1 sees our defender last until turn 5. DAR 2 and he still dies / passes out in turn 5. DAR of 3 and he lasts until turn 6.

- Shield and armor and: DAR of 1, and he dies in turn 7. DAR of 2, and he goes until the end of turn 8. DAR of 3, and he doesn't die until turn 12.
- Increasing the shield levels is rather costly at 10 character points to increase either the group skill or the specific. Recall that our base shield user has 3 skill levels (20cp) and lasts until turn 6. Raising that to 4 levels (30cp) drops the chance of successfully damaging him (CoS) to 42 and he now lasts until the very end of turn 6. 5 levels (Group 2 & Large Shield specific 3) are 50cp, and the defender passes out in turn 7. Not a remarkable change for 20 extra character points.

So the numbers are telling us that the best way to stay alive for a longer time is to use shield levels and armor. We've spent 20cp on shield levels and 24cp on armor levels, not to mention the silver coins it is going to take to buy chain mail and large shield. Is 44cp too much? Well, maybe. Starting with 250 with a Strength 7, Agility of 5 and Endurance of 5, you've already used 140, leaving 110 for everything else. That is doable, but you might have wanted 54cp for your six weapon levels (Melee 1, Swords 2, and Long Sword 3).

What's all this mean? Here is what we suggest: At a beginning level, take the following skills, expecting to build to what we have above: Strength 7 Endurance 5 Agility 5 ARM 1 (Mails 1) MEL 1 [SWD 2 (Long Sword 3)] SHD 1 (Large 1). This costs 183 character points, gives the character a 100% base to hit with long sword (please feel free to substitute any other weapon here, most likely spear which at S7 would still do 2D damage), and allows the character to start with leather armor and a small shield. Leather and small shield or buckler are not as good as chainmail and large shield, but after the first adventure (assuming 11 or more character points), the character spends 6cp on Mails 2 and 5cp on Large Shield 2 and they are right where we've laid them out to be. Plus, leather armor and small shield are more likely to be affordable to a starting character. Even if the character could not afford the armor and shield after just one adventure, they are not a weak character (surviving to turn 5 of the fight in our statistically average fight).

So did we prove anything? Well, I think we proved that at least in **LEGEND QUEST**, a shield is a better way to survive a battle (character points wise) than Agility, Endurance, or armor. But the extra shield levels (4&5) should be traded for armor skills, where chain mail is more effective. None of this included magic, but we'll leave that for another month.

CAMPAIGN STARTER KIT

A Squad of Misfit Mercenaries

A Campaign Starter Kit intends to be just what it says - a full introduction to a new campaign or sub-campaign that you can use pretty quickly. The point of a CSK is not to hand you a series of modules with all the monster specs and treasure detailed, but instead to give you the background, the motivations, the setting, and the characters so you can set things up yourself. Oh, we'll give you ideas for the missions, but you'll have to jot down the numbers of coins and how hard the monsters are to kill.

If that seems like a cop out, please understand that we're trying to keep this generic and you can't be generic when you're constantly giving character stats. Further, most GMs have their own style of play. Some like the monsters to be incredibly tough, some like there to be huge numbers of lesser bad guys, some want to keep the magic items at the barest minimum. That's great! This will still work for you!

Plot:

In order to both use vators / men-at-arms, but not restrict the imaginations of your players, we think this set-up can work nicely. It starts by forcing the party into situations they cannot control, thus forcing adventuring on them, but that is often a good way to kick off a campaign - one where the player characters have no control, at least at first, and need to go along with what the GM throws at them.

A rag-tag unit of vators have been thrown together recently and contain some of the least common vators seen on the Anglic Plains. Very quickly, they are whisked across the Straits to become involved in some of the military and political intrigues going on there. They are immediately off on missions as soon as they disembark - apparently they were desperately needed.

The unit will continue to function, partially as adventurers and partially as a standard military unit, but one operating in a theater that they really don't have much business being in. While they may not belong here, they are needed!

Background:

Life in the eastern Anglic Plains can be dangerous, especially in the Hinterlands Martial Zone. Here there be dragons, intent on swooping in and stealing livestock or even citizens of the city-state. As it happens, the Sixth Company of the Northern Battalion of the Hinterlands encountered dragons recently. Knowing that they were up against some sheep stealers, the Sixth got out to the spot in an effort to avoid any loss of human lives. Once in place, they quickly found a pair of smallish dragons that had been stealing sheep.

What the company didn't know was that this was a trap. As soon as they engaged the small dragons, a stealthy, much larger dragon swooped out of the clouds and began attacking with fire and fury. The company was stuck in a horrible position, and suffered about 50% losses before being able to get into formation with their spears between them and the dragon. Those who survived were horribly wounded, but they had done some serious damage to that dragon as well.

But this is Myork. Land owners are expected to sponsor soldiers or vators in the army. With the deaths of many of their vators, the families that had sponsored them were desperate to field new vators or risk having their lands confiscated. So they were far more willing to accept nearly any mercenary that came along. That's how this party was put together.

GM's choice, but the assumption is that 12-16 soldiers are dead, 5-6 more are permanently maimed, and 4-8 more are injured and will require several months to heal. So 20-30 new vators are necessary or these land owners will have to offer up their own sons into the dangerous profession of keeping the Hinterlands safe from dragon attacks.

The northern Hinterlands Zone is a hilly agricultural area best known for its raising of livestock, including goats with very fine, soft wool. In fact the symbol of the Sixth Company is a goat with curled horns (silhouetted) standing atop a hill with clouds behind it. Not much needs to be known about this area, because the campaign will not be happening here.

Characters:

Here the easiest characters will be standard vators - men-at-arms who have been trained as soldiers with armor, shields and some weaponry. Nearly any style of vator will work, because these families are pretty desperate to get bodies in place. As with all the characters presented here, it is suggested that the GM not give them any money or equipment. That will come later as assigned by the quartermaster(s).

Any warrior types could be folded into the mix of mercenaries or patriots attempting to fill the ranks as would be necessary. Any rogues can be explained as people arrested for minor crimes, but the sheriff offering them a deal: become a vator or rot in prison. Magical types are not as easy as they will not be easily accepted by the people of the region, but they are in need of bodies. Magical types who can still wield a weapon will have their magical powers forgotten for the moment.

In the interests of having fun, here are some of the specific characters and histories that we think could work nicely in this campaign:

- A knight who is the son of one of the larger land holders. He has been classically trained in the arts of war and believes that taking his position in the military is the only honorable thing to do

here. His father and mother are horrified and attempting nearly anything to get him out of the military before he goes and gets himself killed. A variant on this could be that this knight's father or brother was leading the previous group. He should be dead or permanently maimed at this point, thus horrifying the mother that she is going to lose another. There will be some pressure on this knight to succeed "where his father failed".

- Another knight or otherwise goodly warrior type who is now in this unit for showing insubordination to his previous commander. That commander was making racist/sexist comments to and about another member of the unit, and this knight stood up to the commander on behalf of the other vator. For his troubles, both this knight and the target of the prejudice were transferred out of that unit and into this one. While this too is a knight, he was envisioned as a poorer knight than the first one. Either one could be seen as the party's leader due to their proper schooling in war.
- A half-giant or half-ogre warrior who was a slave at one point. Forced to work, a local knight freed him after his unit destroyed the slavers who were holding him. The knight took him home as a servant, not realizing that the boy was only eight years old and would be growing considerably from the size he was when first found. This warrior was awful with a bow, so the unit left him behind when they went to hunt the dragon. He was seen as too big a target and useless against a flying beast that would need to be brought down with arrows. This character should be a great help to any party as his strength will be off the charts, but he is a "savage". He was trained in some etiquette and social skills by the knight who he served, but only the bare minimum. While he was specifically a "servant", he was in reality a slave. He had no choice but to serve the knight. Had he attempted to run away, he would have starved before he was able to find help returning to his homeland.
- A female, half-elven archer who was the object of prejudice in her former unit, being transferred to this one along with the poorer knight. It is possible that she is half-elven, but looks mostly human, and her true race might be a secret of some sort. Elves and humans in this region do not get along too well, and though her human mother loved her elven father, they were never allowed to live together in either culture. Raised by her mother, she felt she had to leave home at an early age to get away from the

constant bullying. Her only real skill was with a bow, and she quickly became a vator.

- A warrior mage type with bow and spells, but as implied earlier, never recognized as useful simply with his spells. He has joined the vators because he can no longer afford his schooling, and needs to find reliable food and housing. He has an adventuring spirit and will likely be one of the few happy about being forced into action and adventure.
- A healer spell caster who never thought he would actually have to go off to war. He fully expected to be assigned to a hospital or at least a field hospital, but now he is in a front line troop ready to head into combat. He is likely the son of the landowners and not simply a vator. He will likely have an easier time with the knights than the vators as they are from his same social level. This doesn't mean he's stuck up, just not familiar with how commoners live. Naive, not arrogant.
- A vagabond or possibly even a peddler who was moving through the region and just could not resist the temptation of trying to steal a leg of mutton that was roasting unattended on an open fire. Unfortunately, the sheriff was a better tracker than this guy gave him credit for, and he was arrested just as dawn was breaking the next morning. This character might work as a NPC adding comedy relief, such as when he pretends to be a pacifist in hopes of getting sent away.

GM Only

So what is going on here is that the people in the Hinterlands threw together a unit of "soldiers" in order to fulfill their obligations and keep their sons out of the military. But because this became such an unsightly unit, the "top brass" of the battalion saw them as an embarrassment and wanted to get them out of sight as soon as possible. When the call went out for troops needed over on Drentae, they volunteered this squad to go. Any thieves who thought they had a chance of fleeing will find themselves in much hotter water, with chances to escape, but nowhere to go if they do, at least nowhere safe.

Missions:

OK, we just answered why this unit would find themselves involved in all of this, but let's give a little background on why a unit is needed. Give or take 25 years ago, a major war was fought between the Lats of Garnock and most of the rest of the continent. For a good portion of time, the Lats controlled two other city states, their northern neighbor Parnania and their western neighbor Nanerette. Once the Lats abandoned their

spoils (returning to fight in or avoid civil war), the Angles of Myork sent units over to help patrol the lands between Garnock and their eastern neighbor Scaret.

Scaret and Myork are strong allies and have been trading across the Anglic Straits for longer than people can remember. When Garnock appeared to be a possible threat, the Bortens of Scaret welcomed the Angle soldiers with open arms. Once the danger seemed a bit more distant, they started to accuse the Angles of attempting to conquer them through attrition. The Angles still had an interest in monitoring Garnock and defeating any of their plans, but now they were stationed in territory that was rapidly turning hostile. The Angles even gifted a fortress they had just completed building to the people of Scaret to show they did not intend to use it as a base against the Bortens, but the propaganda had already taken root, and the Angles were not welcome in Borten lands.

So the Angles are now reduced to stationing in a few castles owned by friendly allies, but are restricted in their actions by the other Bortens who wonder why these last few units have not gone home. Some of the things that this unit is going to be expected to do probably fall into the realm of war crimes. They will effectively be invading Latvich lands and killing Latvich soldiers. With Myork and Garnock being the true military superpowers, these types of things should be expected, but Angles are not very good at covert missions. They see themselves as the good guys who follow the rules. So in order to get a unit to invade Latvich territory, they needed a unit that didn't know the local maps and wouldn't realize they were invading when they went out on these missions.

Furthermore, it would be expected that while one or two of the party members might speak Borten, none should speak Latvich, so they won't understand if anyone tries to tell them they don't belong here. This language barrier shouldn't last too long, maybe the first two or three missions, but it will put them at a disadvantage at first.

The campaign starts with the player characters getting off the ships from Myork at a small castle on the sea coast. They will then be moved by wagon inland. During this deployment, they may see that the commoners don't seem to like them, but they are physically different (brown hair vs red, smooth complexions vs freckles, tall and broad vs. sort of wiry, etc.). Looking Borten will actually be worse, because if the locals think that one of their own has sided with the Angles, they may resort to throwing rocks or dirt clods at the "traitor".

So the Angles shouldn't be here and shouldn't be actively against the Lats during a time of "peace". This is part of the problem. The captain of a different troop

has been running illegal operations in Latvich lands. He has been paying spies, using his own scouts, and attempting to hinder trade. His hideout was discovered by a Latvich troop, and they attacked in numbers. They had thought this to simply be a bandit camp, and don't know what to make of the things they looted from the cabin and caverns this captain had based himself from.

Fortunately for the Angles, these soldiers took everything back to their base of operations and have effectively been storing it while they try to figure out what was going on. The captain and his scouts have attempted to get in there and recover the lost items - including journals and notebooks detailing everything he has been doing illegally here. This is why the unit from the Hinterlands has been brought in. They are to go to this base and recover the notes and logs, even if they have to kill an entire unit of soldiers to do it. Again, this is a legal defensive base within Latvich territory, and most Angle units wouldn't knowingly attack such a base as it would be a clear act of war.

So the officers are going to lie to the party - the new comers. They are going to tell them that there is a unit of deserters who have important documents that the Anglic army needs to take possession of. There are two captains based in the castle where the party has been brought to: Captain Carl Marmmitts and Captain Illsigggar (ell SIGG gar). Captain Marmmitts is the one who lost the records when he was wounded and forced to flee his base. He returned to this castle where Captain Illsigggar is in charge of all Anglic troops, but Illsigggar is a vator of Dharvic ancestry, and Marmmitts thinks he should be in charge simply due to the fact that he is Anglic.

Still too easy? Let's make it even harder. The base the party is being sent to invade is in the middle of a swamp. As few if any of them know how to paddle a canoe, this will be a challenge as they will need to canoe through the swamp in order to get to the site. As this is a swamp, they will be forbidden to wear any armor, and there is a fear that they could fall into the swamp and quickly be sucked under if weighed down. Further, they are being told they will be given weapons for the mission, but all the weapons they are given are non-standard military issue.

The armor restriction is basically for the reasons given - to avoid losing lives simply because a canoe tipped over in the swamp. The weapons restriction is to prevent these soldiers from being identified as Anglic soldiers. Should any of them be captured or killed and recovered, they would look more like bandits than a military company and the government of Myork would be able to disavow any knowledge of them.

Once they get to the site, they will discover that their enemies are walking around a base lined with brick or ceramic tiles. In other words, they aren't afraid to be

wearing armor and carrying heavy weapons, like the raiding party is.

So what should the party have? They will be shown to a pile of weapons and gear that will include such items as: small wooden shields, spears, bows (probably only short bows, not long bows), a large number of arrows, but few quivers, clubs, etc. Any “standard military gear” made from wood would likely be here (not crossbows or other “high tech” weapons).

Despite what they want it to look like, this is a military action. You do not need to leave it up to just the party. You should feel free to add another squad, though probably one made up entirely of men-at-arms style characters with very little variety. The two teams can work together in their planning, though they should probably split up to avoid having you as GM try to control all the bad guys and 8-12 support characters as well. If you feel they need still more, how about sending two of the scouts along, one for each squad. These would be archer or sniper types who can guide the two squads directly to the base and act as covering fire in battle.

The mission is to get there, kill all the “deserters”, acquire all written items in the base, and return those items to Captain Illsiggar. The PCs are not to read the books, as they might contain curses or other magical traps (and show the party what a failure Captain Marmmitts is). The scouts will actively attempt to reinforce this order to not read the books - not to the point of attacking the party, but certainly telling on them upon their return.

Captain Illsiggar is a hard ass, but he is fair. He has had to work twice as hard as the other officers due to his “foreign” blood. While a skilled soldier, his best skills are his horsemanship and his artillery skills, neither of which do him much good here. Here, his primary skill set is his leadership and discipline. He should become a strong ally for the PCs and party, if they let him.

A fun variant to this mission could be that the party succeeds at their portion of the mission only to have to go and save the other squad as they are under heavy counter-attack from the base’s defenders. Some of the other squad should be killed during this mission to help reinforce to the players that characters will die in this campaign. If any of the characters do die, they could easily be replaced by “recruiting” one of the other squad into this squad.

While the PCs should be able to loot and then use anything they can get off the defenders, they will not be able to hold onto any of the loot. Nearly everything will be marked with that unit’s insignia and sporting the insignias of hostile enemies will not be tolerated by the Angles or the Bortens.

So what missions will come next? From here on out, the players should be supplied with the appropriate

equipment they desire, including base level armor and weaponry. This means chain mail and even long swords should be OK, but probably not the more expensive armors, and no magical items. The restrictions are likely only a first mission issue.

The party should be reassigned to a different castle, likely due to arguments between Illsiggar and Marmmitts, where the castle’s owner sides with the less foreign Marmmitts. This will remove the party from actively adventuring in an area where they should probably be arrested if discovered and put them into a more frontier style area where law and order of any type is far less common.

Here they will come into conflict with the Lats, who are doing the same things Marmmitts is doing - sending scouts and other spies to annoy and discover. They will also run into loose orc and goblin groups - mostly raiders who are operating on their own and not under any direction or support from the nearby orc empire. They can also find themselves up against the more serious threat of centaurs, as there are centaur war bands in the region who have recently taken to running slaves in order to make a quick coin. Illsiggar will happily attack slavers given the chance, though he is less likely to care what happens to the slaves after he “liberates” them.

Here are some more ideas for good early missions for this campaign:

- Though he will not reveal his informant, Captain Illsiggar has been told that a caravan moving through the new area is going to be attacked. As the party is getting into position, they are guided to a particular spot by Illsiggar’s scout(s). Problem is, there are too many attackers for the party to handle. They are in position behind the attackers, but there are so many of them (30+) that any attack before the caravan gets here will result in the party being overrun and killed. The scout informs them that Captain Illsiggar’s orders are to wait until the caravan gets here, let the ambush happen, and then lend aid. But don’t communicate with the caravan. Under no conditions should the party let the caravan know they were here.
- Illsiggar hears that a crew of silly bandits has taken possession of one of the most valued “lost artifacts” from the end of the last war - General Cossari’s Map. This map is rumored to have been a compilation of every map held by the government of Parnania and allowed the Latvich army to move northward knowing exactly which villages to hit for supplies and where they would be. It is the most detailed map of this region ever crafted, and it is now in the hands of some fools who have no idea of its value. It’s 6’x6’ parchment map, but now it is

nearly 30 years old and has been held in poor conditions - no fireballs near the map! This is yet another mission that they could probably do fairly easily, but will be made more difficult with the restrictions they are forced to work under.

- Just a few short years ago, a group of orcs conquered some small human “kingdoms” and attempted to forge a new nation for their tribe. Several powerful human neighbors worked to remove the orcs as a threat and succeeded, but what no one had noticed was that a large number of kobolds had come to the “orcish” kingdom and were now entrenched. The neighbors who had helped were not concerned because the kobolds were no threat to them, and returned home assuming the disposed rulers of the tiny kingdoms would handle the kobolds on their own. These kobolds have proven very difficult to move out, because they are following some powerful religious leaders. These leaders have magics that they can use to protect their followers in battle, and while kobolds should not be difficult for any adventuring party to defeat, kobolds protected and enhanced by powerful magics can be, especially in the huge numbers to be found here. This should offer a wide range of possible missions as the former kings beg the military of Myork to return their land to them.
- Some of these “kobold missions” could include attacking a kobold church (in the middle of a large kobold town) in order to recover the “crown jewels” of one of these minor kingdoms. These jewels are displayed on the altar as something the kobold god(s) gave to this congregation, and they will defend this divine gift with their lives.
- Not all of the gathered kobolds are worshipping the same “gods”. Some are willing to do anything for power and have formed a cult of “demon” worshippers. These demon worshippers are allowing demons or some manner of evil spirit to possess their bodies in order to channel their powerful magics. What may look like a kobold (or goblin) could in fact be a powerful demon with deadly magic. These demon worshippers are also sacrificing a large number of victims to their “gods” making them a problem for the entire region.
- The kobolds have been using halfling slaves as farm hands and have been raiding the halfling villages not too far to the north. These halflings might also be looking for Anglic mercenaries

willing to take on the kobold hordes in order to free some of their relatives.

- The Lats are in the process of building an enormous ship, one that would serve more as a floating base of operations than a vessel. This ship will probably not be detected in the normal ways, but instead by the Angle scouts (including the party) noticing huge shipments of lumber that all happen to be going to the same small town on the sea shore. The shipyard is strongly defended - too strongly for the party to assault it, but simply gather intelligence about this ship will be of benefit to the military leaders back in Myork.
- The party is returning from another mission or out patrolling a newer area to them. At a crossroads, they bump into a group of worshippers - newly converted followers of the god Horroag. These newly devote people have been praying to their god Horroag (a war god) to send them help. As they completed their ritual, the party showed up, so clearly they must be the help their god sent. This mission could be nearly anything, but we’ll go with the idea that a family of great cats (mountain lions, blue lions, panthers, nearly anything will work) have moved into the worshippers home region and are killing all of their livestock. Hunting a family of big cats is tough. They are difficult to track, stealthy, and powerful in a fight. And there won’t be much of a reward for accomplishing the mission either.
- A shipment of steel brought in from Myork was stolen at the docks. (The shipment was supposed to have been secret, so it did not come into the major port at Scaret, but instead a much smaller dock outside the city.) The teamsters returned to the port two days later, but their story doesn’t completely add up. They were charmed as they left the dock, and while charmed, they diverted their wagon and began drinking whiskey (under the direction of the spell casters). Because of this, they woke up in the middle of a field with massive hangovers, and they do not think people will believe that they were forced to drink. So they will embellish the story as they were attacked by powerful necromancers who had auras of black around them (“the darkest of magics”) and they were unable to resist, when in fact it as a human and a halfling (both spell singers). The party needs to get the wagon back, but they are likely to be prepared for the wrong kind of fight due to the wild stories being told by the teamsters.

- Perhaps building over the course of several adventures, when the party returns to their barracks, either the local troops or a rival Anglic troop have begun to play practical jokes on them. Assuming they retaliate, the jokes will get bigger and bigger until someone goes way too far and someone gets hurt. This may not rise to the level of an adventure, but can still give the players something to have fun with, though hopefully something non-lethal.

Building the Future:

You have probably seen that everything is not always as it seems in this campaign. A chance encounter may or may not have been divinely inspired. Kobolds may be demons. Heroic military officers may be doing bad things for what they believe to be good reasons. Swamps may have brick walkways. Keeping your players and their characters on their toes is always fun, even for those players.

Captain Illsiggarr is intended to be the glue that holds this campaign together, at least at first. He is an honorable man and will attempt to accomplish missions he is assigned in ways that will keep the party alive. Not every mission he is given will make that easy, or it may be a lack of information that may make it more challenging. While he is unlikely to go out on missions with the party, he should be seen as their leader in addition to being the most common quest giver.

The party may be moved around from allied castle to allied castle and their treatment may vary with these changes. Anglic allies still in the region will do what they can to support the unit as long as they are doing good things, but small problems (like barroom brawls or accidentally setting fire to the Baroness' rose bushes) could have huge repercussions in what is truly a diplomatic post.

As GM, try to keep the party a bit frustrated with their role as mercenary force, members of the military, and representatives of the Myork government, but don't make it too onerous. In a true role-playing setting, few if any of these folks would be willing to desert. Desertion would ruin the family that is sponsoring them, make them outlaws in Myork, and remove any protections that they might have in this foreign land. You may want to let them return home at some point, but make everything so restrictive that they can't wait to get back out into the field again where they are allowed to think for themselves. Enforcing rules about wearing the proper uniform can work well here - Everyone wears the same armor, even if it ruins their abilities, carries the same weapons (no magical items should be seen), and is expected to line up in a row in order to fight, even when that puts everyone at the same risk of fireball attacks.

Huge Adventures

While every campaign should have an overriding arc that ties it together, we think every campaign world should too. This means that there may be times that multiple adventuring parties gets caught up in the same event(s) because they are on the same world. These can be wars, natural disasters, religious movements, famine, plagues, whatever!

But every party doesn't necessarily have to be as involved as every other party. Maybe the war breaks out. One party has chosen a side and is fighting gallantly, but the other just needs to get through the territory where the war is being fought. Something as big as a major war should impact an entire continent, but that doesn't mean that every player character will be heavily invested in it.

That is what this is going to be about - major world impacting things that could ripple through multiple campaigns, even if they don't get the PCs killed.

If you read The Avatar of Manoto edition (which is free if you haven't downloaded it yet - [click here](#)), you heard all about the avatar of the war god Manoto. The avatar was placed because Manoto was tipped off by a divine prophet that a war of the gods was brewing. Manoto is part of the Dinsthain Pantheon. The characters in this suggested campaign are from Myork and therefore either non-religious or worship gods within the Jemmistake Pantheon.

In 658P, the two pantheons will be drawn into a war of the gods. The point of this CSK is not to get anyone too deep into that holy war and the conflicts surrounding it. But the point is to let game masters know that this CSK can be the start of something far bigger - something we will be getting into in future issues!

The last mission idea (worshippers of Horroag) is a direct link as the holy war will initially be Manoto against Horroag. As one of the few Anglic units operating in this part of the world, this campaign could easily be drawn into the conflicts simply by trying to help some of their countrymen who might be a bit more eager to get into the war than the party is. By being good guys, they could get swallowed by the conflict or simply need to continue operating "next to" the war.

The worship of Horroag is centered around a religious military unit known as the Warriors of the Faith. They had always been a mercenary unit, almost a holy order of monks who choose their clients depending on what their god Horroag instructs them to do. Helping out a group of Horroag worshippers should introduce the party to the Warriors of the Faith very quickly. Lots more about this in the upcoming edition Paladin vs. Paladin aka All About Holy Wars.

SMALL TOWNS AND CITY NEIGHBORHOODS

Myork is a huge city, and they believe in building. Big houses exist wherever they are able to, with much smaller ones filling in all the other spots. From the land facing sides, the city is completely walled. From the sea facing sides, the city is also walled, except for the Foreign Quarter. If naval enemies were to invade by sea, the Foreign Quarter would be undefended, but the rest of the city would still be protected by walls.

Another sign of their excessive building is that nearly every street has curbs and gutters. The gutters direct the rain water back into the sea, while the curbs keep the wagons from skipping up onto the sidewalks. Ships filled with stone come into port nearly every day, and the city has no problem maintaining this incredible growth.

While Myork has wondrous architecture and buildings, this edition is about the far more common men-at-arms. It would seem wrong to focus on the best and brightest portions of Myork, so we'll give you a look into some of the smaller neighborhoods and how life is transpiring there.

The Cubbies aka the "Cubes"

A builder named Allan Decker was looking to set up economical spaces for small businesses, what he referred to as "private work spaces". The buildings could be seen as being three interconnected squares or as two long rows connected by four cross hallways: one at each end and two in the middle. This creates some open spaces in the middle of the building that allow for a small amount of light and a decent amount of fresh air.

Each of the private work spaces is 15'x15'x15'. Since few of the renters need a 15' ceiling, most have put in wood "ceilings" allowing for an 8' working space and a 6'+ loft. While the spaces are intended to be used only for craftsmen or service providers, some of the renters have chosen to live here semi-secretly - typically in the lofts. These are not the easiest places to live, but they can work in a pinch.

The building is built from specially crafted, large bricks (not unlike modern cinder blocks). For the architecturally sophisticated Angles of Myork, these buildings are abominations. They are big and ugly and block the sunlight for better buildings. But they were built efficiently - strong but cheap, and for some craftsmen, the cheap rent is keeping them in business.

The building is built blocky and completely uniform. The windows are high, but rarely allow in any light, so the entire interior of these work spaces is lit by

lamps, lanterns and torches. The two rows are only seven and a half feet apart, so very little of the sunlight gets into the spaces. No sunlight and some cheap lamps make the air in these workspaces thick if the weather isn't supplying enough breeze.

The Cubbies are common places for small craftsmen to work and produce. Cobblers, harness makers, wood carvers, and white smiths (smiths dealing in tin, silver and pewter) all find the work spaces to good spots for their trades. Those who need forges or other large fires will run the chimneys out the windows. Scribes and bookkeepers may also find the spaces work for them as they don't need to a lot of space.

The Cubbies are being built in neighborhoods that are primarily residential. This is bringing some tradesmen into these neighborhoods, allowing for the citizens to have more direct access, instead of always relying on merchants and other middle men. So far the new style has been working, but should the merchants feel they are losing business, things may turn sour.

This "O" shaped building is very common throughout Fletnern. Since the sun is always on the southern horizon / southern exposure. The guard barracks from James the Vator similarly has an open "O" layout with a north and south wing and a courtyard between them. This allows sunlight to light both wings. The northern exposure on these wings receives far less light, but does certainly receive sunlight during the day.

Triple Peaks

Another style of cheap rent store front is what is now known as Triple Peaks. Each building is built like a long warehouse with thin walls separating the entire space into three "rooms". Each of these rooms becomes an individual store.

This may seem very much like a modern day strip mall, and there is some similarity. But in a town that stresses architecture, warehouse-like stores are not acceptable. This is where the triple peaks comes into play. The roof of the warehouse is built with (you guessed it) three peaks. Some builders will use different colored roofing materials and even different facades to further the illusion that this is something more than a warehouse space used as a store front.

From the street, the warehouse seems to be three separate buildings built like row houses. This placates the architecture snobs, while allowing cheap rent to starter businesses. These are most commonly starter businesses, because once a business has begun to thrive, they typically look for better accommodations.

TAVERN TALK

My name is Guiseppe Vilvaldo O'Connerghy, but you can call me Guido, everybody does. My mother was Latvich and my father was Bortish, so naturally I grew up a little confused. I was comfortable in neither culture, so I went on the road. My father taught me the fiddle, while my mother taught me to sing. They may have performed calmly in churches and at festivals, but I learned very quickly to speed up the tempo and make them more tavern appropriate.

I cannot say I've been all over the world, but I've seen a lot of taverns and covered more miles than most. Does that make me the best person to tell you about these vital crossroads of cultures and happiness? Maybe not the best, but definitely one of the best! And that is what I hope to do - Tell you about the taverns so you can better understand the culture of the people who inhabit them every night.

Now I like my booze; everybody knows that! But Myork is just not a good town for booze. Once you leave the Foreign Quarter, you'll have some trouble finding a decent tavern, or public houses as they call them. You know why they call them public houses? Because typically you have to be a member to get into a tavern. Really! The most important building in any neighborhood, and they want to keep the riffraff out. As a dedicated member of the riffraff, I know we're the most fun!

These publicans or public house landlords tend to be a dour lot. Imagine - Someone who works in a tavern and has a sour disposition. These people are a mystery to me!

The majority of these public houses or pubs will serve wine brought in from the countryside all year long, but they will brew their own ale. Nearly all the ales in Myork are the brown kind, not the red, but they run the gambit on thickness. Some are outright watery while others are nearly stouts. They use a variety of flavorings to make each of their products unique enough to attract the locals including fruit essences and roasted nuts (hickory and pecan). While not all are bad, none are great.

The wines are passable, but again, nothing extraordinary. The Angles seem to like to have their favorite beverages and then just add some highly distilled whiskies to them. There is a part of that that I have to respect, though I just cannot get a taste for this sour orange and ale concoction that they so often drink (a "shandy"). I just don't get it, but they sure drink lots of them. I've had the lemon version in Caratok, and there I

felt it was alright, but I think that was because it was covering up the taste of the beer.

I do have to commend their distillers, possibly the most accomplished in the world. Angle distillers seem to have crafted the most pure alcohols I have ever tasted in my life, but they lack the imagination of what to do with them. Corn, wheat and gin versions exist, all of which are crafted with the best science, and no art.

Now, as for the pubs themselves, they are very similar to those I find in many parts of the world, including the Greenlands and the Rhoric regions - at least physically. As with most buildings in Myork, they are stone foundations and timber rooves, held up by timber beams. But despite that warm and comfortable feeling of settling into an old tavern, the atmosphere is completely different.

Sure there are the locals corded around the bar or at tables throughout, but other than a few old friends discussing current events, these places are often quiet. You must understand how maddening it is for me to be in a quiet tavern. No bustling, no life, no music. Ahhhh! I've been told, more than once, that public house licenses are difficult to come by, and the publicans are afraid to create any type of disturbance for fear of having their license revoked. Music is not a disturbance!

Oddly enough, the average Angle seems content with this. They all have their favorite chairs in their favorite spots, and they seem to enjoy the uniformity. For a people who so value their freedoms, they certainly don't seem to be expressing them.

Now I have only slipped into the "private clubs" twice, but I think I can give a sense of them. Far from the boisterous saloons of Scaret, these are far more lively than the public houses. Even more centered on the local neighbors, these places typically have some manner of entertainment, mild though it might be. One had several billiards tables, but those folks were too concerned about anything damaging their tables to allow for lively conversation. (No, I did not spill my drink on the table - that guy only thought I did.) The other had various forms of games of chance, but if they were gambling with more than a few coppers, I'd be surprised. At least that place could be described as energetic, not quite rowdy, but at least energetic.

So where is there some life after dark in the city of Myork? Only in one place: the Foreign Quarter. Here, outside of the walled city, the people know how to have fun. Sailors and traders from all over, but especially the major cultures of Hughijen, can be found. Truly a cosmopolitan "town", it is even more so as it is concentrated more than others of its kind. Some of the best Glodon food I have ever had was at Myork's port.

Do be careful when having fun in the Foreign Quarter! Myork city guards patrol the areas extensively, and they have absolutely no sense of humor!

Out of Character Info:

Most of the taverns in Myork are private clubs. A publican with a public house license can only sell beverages that are less than 5% alcohol. Hard liquor can only be sold in private clubs. This includes bulk hard liquor, and in order to buy a bottle or jug of whiskey, the customer must go to a private club. Of course there are private clubs that have a guy at the door who sponsors people for membership, and they sell nightly memberships, but should one of their members get out of line, the club is responsible.



Pubs or public houses are more common near the walls and the gates, while the private clubs are more in the residential neighborhoods. Private clubs compete against each other in a variety of things, most often bar games like darts, horseshoes or grass bowling (bocce ball). The fancier private clubs will have billiards or snooker tables, but as Guido mentioned, the members of the club are extremely protective of their tables.

The private club laws do not exist in the foreign quarter. There any alcohol can be purchased in any size without license or membership. Myork's laws are intended to protect her citizens, not her visitors.

PULL BACK THE CURTAIN

In the olden days, TSR said if you send us a SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope - that was how we did things back in the stone age), we'll send you our submission package for adventure modules. So I did.

I never submitted anything to them, but something in there stuck with me to this day. I'm paraphrasing, because I don't still have it, but here's what they said: In order to submit a module, it needs to be 100 pages long (typed, double-spaced, la la la). If you can't get your module up to 100 pages long, you really shouldn't be doing this, but if you are having trouble getting it down to 100 pages, then we want you to submit it. I get that now. That is where I am, in the "can't get things down to size" as opposed to getting them up to size.

That's a big part of what I'm hoping to coach other people to do. For me, it just keeps getting easier, and here's why: I know Baron Forsbury; I know him like one of my best friends. I know Kugington the Bard of Rhum (Dean of the School for Advanced Learning). I've known Kug literally for 35 years now. So when these two guys meet - I know exactly how it is going to go. Edward Baron of Forsbury is going to hate this guy, but Kug is going to be the life of the party and assume everyone loves him. There are a lot more layers (I mean A LOT!!) to it, but that's the basics.

When I am thinking of Forsbury Castle and how it would be decorated under Edward, it all makes sense to me. I know this guy; I can role-play this guy, even in the decorating of his castle. I also know his uncle Bart. Knowing Bart and Edward, I can easily make up family history stories about Edward's father Edmund. Seriously, this morning, while shaving, I came up with four. Will they see the light of day? That's unlikely.

If you know your world well enough, then when the players go off in a direction you weren't expecting, you're fine. So they went to Riverford instead of Forsbury - you've got this. I know a lot of game masters who believe they can play anything off the cuff. Some can; most can't. The ones that can't - more than likely it's because they don't know the world they're running. I know what the forests of Sylvania look like. I know what kinds of trees are in the middle, the outer portions, and on the border.

Do you need to be as insane as I am about your world? Absolutely not! But the more you know, the easier it is. The easier it is to game master without wasting time looking at notes. The easier it is to role-play NPCs. And most importantly, the easier it is to write more and more of your world and have it all fit together. Because in truth, that's what you want - a world you can game master well, without having to reinvent the wheel every game session.

Y? Y? Y!

The Basics of Fletnern

These articles often talk about our world of Fletnern, but they are intended to serve as an example. If you want to use all or part of Fletnern, please do! But if you don't, maybe we can use it to explain how we handled a particular situation or style of game play that might serve you well. That's what Y? Y? Y! is all about, telling you why we did certain things so you can take the ideas and enhance your game world.

Y? Y? Y! articles will only be available to Game Master level members as they are specifically focused at game world builders.

Fletnern was built with the intent of leaving it open and available to as wide a variety of fantasy as possible. So what were we trying to do? Think about some of the most common or popular styles of fantasy. Each one is here:

General European Medieval - Rhum and the Rhoric regions, similar to Germany and Central Europe.

Arthurian and Camelot - Myork and the knights of the surrounding area, even to the point of having military issues with the elves of the Circle Forest and dragons of the Dragon Lakes.

Musketeers and Court Intrigue - Brinston, both the massive city and the wealthy vineyards surrounding it.

Pirates - Caratok, the pirate port and tropical city.

High Fantasy - Rimmim, a city inhabited mainly by enchanters where flying devices are common as are golems and other magical creatures being used for labor.

Arabian Nights - Dalavar, city of the deserts where princes could be merchants or evil conjurers.

Fantasy Horror - The Darklands where vampire lords rule over tiny kingdoms with their palace staff as both servants and food.

Ancient Egypt - Chulme and the Glodon Desert, where a single river provides life to the region, but this river is starting to fail.

Ancient Greece - Helatia the port city, center of trade and learning.

Elven Forests - Sylvanian Forest

Dwarven Mines - The Rocchairian Nation

Vast tribes of orcs - The Wembic Empire

Utopia - Purity, city of justice and fairness, but also a powerful port and fishing center

Frozen Wastes - Traigar and the tundra surrounding it, still filled with woolly mammoths and other Ice Age monsters

Vikings - Glacier Point, the sea port for the barbarians of the frozen wastes

Gorilla Jungles - the Boundless Jungle is filled with lost cities and variant primates, some of which are of human intelligence.

So why? Too often (I felt) fantasy worlds did not allow for the variety of campaigns. A GM would build a world only to be forced into having only one type of campaign in it. A standard "European Fantasy" genre world would not allow a campaign or even a couple of missions founded in the Arabian Nights stories. Fletnern is the opposite. No matter what type of mission you want to run as a GM, Fletnern has a spot for you to do that. High fantasy, low fantasy, doesn't matter, it's here.

Still not enough? Those were just the two main "civilized" continents. There is still the scorching Sulnuun at the south pole, "the Monster Continent" west of the civilized lands, and the Great Archipelago, which was once a continent until the Titan Civil War literally blew it to pieces. Those are also great adventure regions.

What's the point? Even if you love one specific genre of fantasy, it is probably a good idea to have other opportunities open. It is pretty easy to have different continents with different cultures. Oceans can be crossed, but not without huge efforts, so it makes sense to have different settings on the different continents.

For example, the Sulnuun continent is not just hot; it is the birth place of dragons. Additionally, there they are ranchers, herding what are effectively dinosaurs. Even at 140 degrees (F), there are rivers and jungles to water and feed the herds. I haven't found a group willing to endure the heat to adventure there yet, but I like having such a wildly different setting should I ever choose to use it.

But even with a world you may have developed strongly over the years, there are still ways to give it some variety. Where do the mermen and other aquatic races live? I bet you haven't mapped the ocean floor yet, and there could be ample room for new ideas there. Do you have an arctic pole? Few world builders have fully fleshed out these icy "lands", especially those parts that might grow in winter and shrink in summer. When in doubt, go up. Cloud castles anyone?

And if those all fail to add any fresh lands and ideas to your game world, there are always alternate universes to use. Instead of rewriting your entire world, tweak one important piece of the world's history and redo the world under this new scenario. Most of the work you've done before will still be of value, but even if the party destroys the world in magical fire, you still haven't destroyed your actual game world.

Soldiering in Myork

Myork's military machine is one of the major super powers in the World of Fletnern. In the minds of most people, their only match would be the numerically superior Garnock military. But in many ways, they are

not as strong or effective as they might be, at least on parchment. Here are some of the reasons why:

- The Myork army does not fight using some of the more standard tactics, such as shield walls or phalanx.
- The bulk of the Anglic soldiers are short-term. As every family must provide men, they often send their sons for shorter periods of time (two to three years) and then send a different son to replace that one. While soldiers can be taught these tactics within this period of time, the constant revolution of soldiers within the battalion structure makes training new recruits in mass combat tactics more difficult.
- The equipment utilized by each battalion is different, and with some vators (and even nobles / knights) there will be differences within the units as well. Even if every infantry man within the unit is using a spear, if these spears are of different lengths or designs, some of the strategies and formations do not work.

This may seem crazy to other militaries who have no problem dictating exact specifications on weapons, shields and armor, but in Myork, liberty and freedom are paramount. Not only does this bulwark of law and order believe in personal freedoms, but they have been under the rule of the military for over 100 years. The military machine has no problem dictating that all streets be laid following strict specifications, but they do not wish the same force of uniformity to affect them.

Another issue directly affecting the strength of the Anglic military is that the battalions are organized under political reasoning, not necessarily what would be best for the army as a whole. This allows for more flexible rules and policies, but not for the uniformity required in a major military campaign.

The last “con” we want to show is the issue of Myork’s isolation. Myork is positioned on the southwest corner of the continent. To the north are rugged hills and mountains. To the east a massive desert. The sea to the west requires naval transport to reach the majority of the other cultures. Myork simply cannot march against any other city state with taking the massive logistic nightmares into account. Worse yet, her best troops are cavalry, making the transport to the other continent that much more difficult.

But what are the benefits? The top benefit is that nearly every able bodied man in the city-state has received some level of martial training. No human force has ever attacked Myork, only elven and dragon forces, but all have been repelled by the combination of strong walls and a trained militia, a militia trained better than most professional soldiers in other cultures.

IN CONCLUSION

This is only our second edition, and we truly hoped you liked it. If you did, please check out our Patreon page and sign up! Not only will you continue to get great content, but you will also get a say in what is coming out next, because that is what this is intended to be - a conversation between a content provider and our customers. We need your help. Yes, we need your financial support, but we also need your feedback on what worked here, what didn’t, and what you want to see.

This volume is honestly a little bigger than we expect to be normal. We got hugely eager and wanted to throw everything and the kitchen sink into this one. That was probably a good idea from the standpoint that it shows you a lot of what we’re aiming for. But we don’t want to try and trick you! We’re shooting for an e-zine slightly shorter on average. As our base gets bigger, we hope to expand that, hopefully even going to 40+ pages monthly, but let’s be real - That’s a **LOT** of content! We have it, but we don’t want to over promise and under deliver.

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