

**WARHAMMER**

# THE EMPIRE



**WARHAMMER ARMIES**







# THE EMPIRE



By Mathias Eliasson  
v.1.5



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Compiled & Edited by: Mathias Eliasson

Cover Art: Dave Gallagher

**Art:** John Blanche, Alex Boyd, Kevin Chin, Paul Dainton, Dave Gallagher, Neil Hodgson, Karl Kopinski, John Michelbach, Adrian Smith, Paul Bonner, Ian Miller, Ralph Horsley, Sebastiano Angiacobino, Cheol Joo Lee, Lukasz Jaskolski, Erik Polak, Gergely Fejervary, Scott Purdy, Sam Manley, coskoniotis, Artgerm, Phil Moss, capprotti, Sam Wood, Diego Gisbert, MStarbuck, ilacha, telthona, juantole. **Book Design:** Mathias Eliasson. **Additional Material:** Anthony Ragan, Kate Flack, Chris Pramas, Jake Thornton, Tuomas Pirinen, Daniel Lovat Clark, Graham Davey, Chris Gerber, Clive Oldfield, and Dylan Owen. **Previous Editions by:** Robin Cruddace, Alessio Cavatore, Graham McNeill, Rick Priestley, Nigel Stillman.

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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Warhammer: The Empire*, your indispensable guide to the largest and most powerful realm in the Old World. This book provides all the information you'll require to collect and play with an Empire army in games of Warhammer.

## WARHAMMER – THE GAME OF FANTASY BATTLES

If you are reading this book, then you have already taken your first steps into the Warhammer hobby. The Warhammer rulebook contains all the rules you need to fight battles with your miniatures, and every army has its own army book that acts as a definitive guide to collecting and unleashing it upon the tabletop battlefields of the Warhammer world. This book allows you to turn your collection of Imperials into an army renowned for its discipline and martial skill throughout the Old World.

## THE EMPIRE

The Empire is a vast nation of Men that fights for its survival with each passing day. Ruled over by the Emperor, Karl Franz, the discipline and martial skill of its armies is renowned throughout the Old World. The backbone of the Empire's military might, and the reason it has endured in a world filled with both brutal savages and bloodthirsty monsters, is its armies of professional soldiers.

An Empire army deployed for battle is a magnificent spectacle. The Emperor's forces comprise columns of brightly uniformed soldiers marching to war beneath glorious banners. These seasoned warriors are supported by a wide assortment of troops, including noble knights armoured in fine polished steel, thunderous black-powder artillery pieces, mysterious Battle Wizards and religious devotees who can harness the power of the gods.

## HOW THIS BOOK WORKS

*Warhammer: The Empire* contains the following sections:

- **The Heirs of Sigmar.** This section describes the history of the Empire, from its founding by Sigmar over two and a half thousand years ago, through centuries of terrible invasions and civil wars, to the current reign of Emperor Karl Franz. Also included is a map of the Empire and details of the many heroic battles fought as the Emperor's forces have struggled to protect their realm from the predations of its enemies.
- **Soldiers of the Empire.** Each and every troop type in the Empire army is examined here. You will find a full description of each unit alongside the complete rules for any special abilities or options they possess. This section also includes the Imperial Armoury, detailing weaponry and upgrades that are only available to the Empire, and the Heirlooms of Magic – magical artefacts that are unique to the army – along with rules to use them in your games.
- **The Empire Order of Battle.** This section takes all of the characters, warriors, monsters and war machines from the Soldiers of the Empire section and arranges them so you can choose an army for your games. Units are classed as characters (Lord or Heroes), Core, Special or Rare, and can be taken in different quantities depending on the size of the game you are playing.









## THE HEIRS OF SIGMAR

*It is the year 2522 of the Imperial Calendar, and Karl Franz is the ruling Emperor. More than two hundred years have passed since Magnus the Pious reunited a divided Empire during the Great War against Chaos. In these two centuries, the Empire has thrived in stability wealth and military might, becoming the largest and most powerful kingdom of Men in the Old World. Still, it is such a vast land that law cannot reach all the hidden recesses of its dark forests and impenetrable mountain ranges. Mutant monsters prowl its dark forests, malevolent ratmen plot beneath its cities and the living dead rise from its graveyards. Old enemies look enviously across its borders and Orcs raid its borders. The menace of Chaos is growing stronger in the far north, where Warlord Archaon is massing his armies in preparation for the Last War. These and other enemies, internal as well as external, have to be fought and defeated by the armies of the Emperor. Indeed, the Empire faces dire circumstance, and to survive, it is constantly at war.*

*And it has ever been thus. The Empire's very birth was forged in battle: the legendary warrior Sigmar united the primitive tribes of Men in order to drive off hordes of Orcs and Goblins. Since those ancient times, the Empire has grown into the prominence with which it dominates the Old World. These are the chronicles of the Empire's rise to power...*

# THE EMPIRE

Over centuries of war, the Empire has grown to become a vast realm of provinces and city-states, bound together under the rule of the Emperor. The Empire lies at the heart of the Old World and it is the most powerful of all the realms of Men. But it is a realm in constant turmoil, beset on all sides by the ferocious and the unholy. Truly, the Empire is a land of ever-present danger where death and war are never far away. Yet despite the bloodshed, this great nation endures still, its cosmopolitan cities and military strongholds forming bulwarks against the sea of savagery. The cities of the Empire are undoubtedly the jewels in the nation's crown, where the pinnacle of human achievement is clear for all to see. Glorious palaces are surrounded by temples, the gilded minarets of arcane universities, and the flag-swathed keeps of military institutions founded at the dawn of the nation. But for the most part the Empire is a land of superstition and faith, where peasants clutch talismans to ward off evil and the corrupting power of Chaos. The land is adrift in an endless sea of forest, so dense that a man can travel beneath its canopy for weeks and not see a glimmer of sunlight. Nonetheless, the Empire is a truly vast nation, and all the more powerful for it.

The Empire stretches from the icy Sea of Claws in the north to the soaring Black Mountains in the south. It is a land covered by dense forests and surrounded by mountain ranges, all infested by murderous brigands, foul mutants and ravenous monsters. Isolated against this treacherous backdrop are prosperous cities, where

skilled craftsmen and affluent merchants trade their wares, and where brave soldiers and noble statesmen work to safeguard the Empire's future. Beneath this veneer of sophistication, however, the Empire is a brooding land full of ignorance and superstition, where fearful peasants clutch talismans to ward off evil sorceries and appease the gods of old. In stark contrast to the wealthy districts are slums, rife with thieves, vagabonds and heretical cults that prey on their fellow man. All aspects of human endeavour can be found within the Empire, and for every noble hero that walks the streets, there is a murderous cutthroat lurking not far away.

## THE BATTLE OF BLOOD GORGE

*Blood Gorge was my first battle, and damn near my last. See this scar, and this? My empty sleeve, and this patch where my eye should be? They were all gained on that black day.*

*The Orcs had been restless all summer and finally swept down from the mountains like a spring flood, smashing aside the militia, burning and pillaging all they could reach. By the time we'd mustered our scattered forces they were withdrawing with their loot back into the mountains. It was in Blood Gorge that we caught them, uncounted Orcs and numberless Goblins, eager for battle. I was young then, like you are now, and proud to lead the valiant but doomed Wolfenberg Halberdiers.*

*We fought like Unberogens, slaughtering dozens of the foul Orcs, but there were always more. Mind you, it's not just scars that I have from that day. No, I have other reminders of that grim battle. See here, the battered Orc shield took from the dead hands of the beast that slew Beckmann. The cunning Orc had caught his halberd blade with it and disarmed him. I was too late to save Beckmann, but not to pay the brute back. Here too is the sword I finished that day with. Took it from one of our dead. Always carry two weapons lad, that's a lesson I learned the hard way. If I hadn't picked this up I'd not be talking to you now. See the fine pommel and the sold work? Forget 'em and look at the blade. Finest Estalian steel. That's what matters. That's what'll bring you back home. That's also what I used to relieve one of their spell casting witches of his head after he'd turned my hammer into a snake. This bird skull totem was his. And the Book? No I can't read any of it either. Magical, I'd say. Took it from the witch too, but it was loot. Not an Orc thing. Every time I look at it my eyes go funny, so now I don't. Head hurts? That's magic for you.*

*And this takes pride of place. The helmet that belonged to the biggest of the scum. The one who killed most of my brave lads. No, I'm fine, just got something in my eye. Yes, like I said, the Orc's helmet. It took a bit of a battering, but then so did the pair of us. Still, it's me with his helm and not the other way about, and for that I truly thank Sigmar. Now run along and play...*





## THE RULERS OF MEN

The Empire was founded many long ages ago by the warrior-god Sigmar, and since then, it has seen its people through a great deal of upheaval. Though the Empire has not always been united according to Sigmar's vision, and has even suffered long periods of internal strife, it has always stood strong against those forces that would threaten its survival.

The Elector Counts, as the rulers of the provinces, forge their alliances, maintain their militaries and run their governments as suits their own region and its needs. However, their strength together has always been the source of their greatest victories, especially when united behind a capable Emperor.

The Emperor's position is that of first amongst equals rather than absolute monarch. Although in practice rule of the Empire often passes from father to son, in principle the leaders of the various states choose the Emperor from amongst their own number. The Emperor can, in theory, call upon the other Electors to supply troops for the Emperor's campaigns. By the same token, individual Electors can call upon the Emperor or neighbouring states to send reinforcements in times of war. Jealousy, rivalry and politicking mean that some states inevitably support or oppose others. Minor territorial disputes or claims over tolls and access rights often lead to direct confrontation even with the Empire.

The Emperor is not just a figurehead, he formulates the foreign policy of the whole Empire and marshals its forces to war. It is also his responsibility to maintain the crack Imperial regiments of the Reiksguard as well as the Imperial artillery train. Training and equipping the Empire's regiments is a very costly affair, and producing new cannons is even more expensive. For this reason alone the Emperor is usually elected from the wealthiest province in the Empire.

## RUNNING AN EMPIRE

The popularly propagated image of the Empire is that of a powerful unitary state, ruled by a wise emperor who is advised by his loyal Elector Counts and the leading priests of the cults, all working together for the good of the Empire and its peoples. Like most propaganda, that image has little to do with reality.

At its heart, the Empire is a confederation of provinces, the inhabitants of which are mostly the descendants of the ancient tribes that allied with Sigmar at the Battle of Black Fire Pass. Sigmar recognised that the Empire is too big for one man to rule alone, and so he made the tribal chiefs into Counts, each responsible for affairs in their own area, but bound to obey the Emperor in those matters that applied to the Empire as a whole. Their independence would serve as a counterweight to a tyrannical emperor, while their ambitions would keep each other in check.

Sigmar's lack of an heir and the creation of the electoral system was the fly in the ointment, however. Successive electoral councils would make demands of candidates for the throne, who would then often grant privileges and weaken the power of the office in order to win. The interests of the Electors were such that they would rarely coalesce around a strong candidate, for fear that a vigorous emperor would curtail their independence. Even when the throne passes to an heir, the Electors are swift to remind the Emperor-elect of promises made by his forbears and to have them reconfirmed. Though the Empire has produced strong emperors when needed—at least, so far—"congenial nothings" more often than not occupy the throne, and electors are often free to do what they wish, even so far as to ignore inconvenient Imperial edicts.

Sometimes, however, the system slips and a strong emperor comes to the throne even when there is no national emergency. A new ruler may be much more politically savvy and ambitious than thought, or be of such strong character that he persuades many among his peers to follow his lead. Fortunately, Emperor Karl-Franz has shown himself to be one of these.

In theory, the Emperor is the supreme ruler of the Empire, able to issue laws as he sees fit, levy taxes and spend Imperial revenues at will, and declare war and make peace. The Cult of Sigmar goes so far as to say he rules "in place of Divine Sigmar" though few outside cult radicals truly believe that. The truth of the matter is that there are several checks and restraints on an Emperor's powers.

## THE COUNCIL OF STATE

The day-to-day demands of governance are too much for one man or woman to keep track of. Dozens of decisions each day demand the Emperor's attention, from policy on grain taxes to the final appeal of a prisoner condemned for treason to officially opening the Grand Altdorf Fair. To prioritise this mess and make sure that only those with the most urgent business get an audience with the Emperor himself, successive emperors appointed members of prominent families to advise them on matters of law, finance, diplomacy, and military matters, among others. Over time, this group of advisors grew into a formal body, the Council of State, the membership of which almost always includes the current Grand Theonist.

The Council has no formal power, although Emperor Mattheus II, grandfather of Karl-Franz, tried to write a constitution for the Empire built around the Council. This was quietly quashed by the Electors, who oppose anything that would limit their authority. The Council, however, does control access to the Emperor and thus what information he receives. Their power is, therefore, quite strong – when they can make a united stand. When this happens, it is usually due to the Grand Theonist's behind-the-scenes machinations on crucial issues.

## COUNTS AND ELECTORS

The counts are hereditary rulers whose families have long and famous histories. Many of them number former Emperors amongst their ancestors. Over the centuries the title of Count has passed from family to family as old dynasties withered away, intermarried or perished in battle. On numerous occasions the succession has passed to near relatives; at other times an entirely new dynasty has taken over either peaceably or otherwise.

Intermarriage between the noble families means that all the counts are related at least distantly, and many are cousins or half-cousins. When the ruling Emperor dies a successor is chosen from amongst the counts. In practice it is usual for the new Emperor to be the son and heir of the old Emperor, as the Imperial family will use all its power and influence to prepare the way for its own candidate. However there is not always a suitable candidate from the Imperial house, or there may be another powerful count who is preferred. The current Emperor is Karl Franz, Prince of Altdorf and Count of Reikland.

Many of the counts also hold titles associated with towns or cities, such as the Prince of Altdorf. These titles date from centuries ago before many of the larger cities became self-governing states. The titles themselves do not always carry political power within the places so named, and very often the individual does not live in the city whose title they hold. In many cases this would be impossible as the count may hold titles in two or more places! An interesting example is the Count of Nordland who is the Prince of Marienburg

from which the ruling Burgomeisters have forbidden him to return upon pain of death, Marienburg having seceded from the Empire. Fortunately the Count of Nordland is also the Prince of Salzenmund, where he has an imposing and comfortable fortress.

Rulers of the Grand Provinces, the Elector Counts are, in theory, the Emperor's loyal advisors who work to ensure justice and peace in their domains. They are also the only ones in the Empire who may choose a new Emperor, or depose a current one, a duty they carry out with sobriety and a sense of responsibility. Sometimes, that is.

More often the Electors are a fractious lot, scheming against each other as often as they cooperate. Wars between the Grand Provinces have not been uncommon in the Empire's history, fuelled by religion, pride, or a need for revenge—or sometimes all three. When not plotting against each other, they work to ensure the Emperor does not grow too powerful. One result of this late in the 11th century was the creation of the Electoral Embassies and the Prime Estates. The rulers of each Grand Province established a residence in the capital, an embassy run by a trusted family member. This person in turn sits in council with the other envoys in the Prime Estates, which functions as a form of review board. The ambassadors examine any new Imperial edicts or laws and make reports back to their Electors. Since Electors have it within their power to ignore any Imperial decisions they do not like, gaining the approval of the Prime Estates has become important to the Emperors, if they want to accomplish anything.



With the death of the Emperor, the Counts gather to choose one of their own number as successor. Hence, in addition to being counts they are also Electors, and for this reason their full title is more properly Elector Counts. All counts are Electors but there are others who have gained the right to vote through politics, bribery and religious influence. These other Electors can vote for their chosen candidate, but they cannot put themselves forward as Emperor. When the first elected Emperor was enthroned there were only Elector Counts, but later on other powerful individuals won the right to cast their vote and help decide which count would become Emperor.

The powerful cults of Sigmar and Ulric, the old god of wolves and winter, can both cast their vote and influence which Count will become the Emperor. Curiously, even the Elder of the Mootland, the leader of the Halflings, has earned the right to vote in the election, due to the Halflings contribution to Imperial cuisine! However, the current Elder of the Mootland, Hisme Stoutheart, is more interested in the timing of his next meal than political intrigues. During the reign of Karl Franz there are five of these Electors: three representing the cult of Sigmar, one representing the cult of Ulric, and the Elder of the Moot representing the Halflings. The Sigmar representatives are very influential, and because they cast their votes for the same candidate they wield influence out of proportion to their numbers. Historically the Sigmar votes tend to be cast on behalf of the Count of the Reikland, while the Ulric vote almost invariably goes to the Count of Middenheim should he be contesting the election.

## THE RUNEFANGS

After a combined army of Men and Dwarfs put paid to an Orc invasion at the bloody battle of Black Fire Pass, where the power of the Orcs was broken for a thousand years, thus saving the Dwarf realm from destruction,



King Kurgan Ironbeard showed his gratitude by presenting a gift of magic to the men of the newly fledged Empire. A Dwarf will always repay a favour (just as he will never forget a grudge), and Sigmar's warriors had been instrumental in the defeat of the greenskin hordes. Thus the King set Alaric the Mad, greatest of the living Runesmiths, to work making twelve rune swords, one for each of the great chieftains of men who commanded Sigmar's armies. Each blade was forged from a solid nugget of the magic metal Gromril, worked under the light of the full moon, fired by the breath of the dragon Snarkul the Red, and cooled in daemon blood. With incredible patience and skill, runes were carved upon them, secret Dwarf signs whose shape and carving traps magic and binds its power into their works.

It is the Lore of Runes which entraps and binds the Winds of Magic into the metal and makes the Dwarfs

### THE RULING ELECTORS OF THE EMPIRE

*(Name of Elector Count's Runefang within parenthesis)*

*Elector Count of Averland (Mother's Ruin)*  
*Elector Count of Hochland (Goblin Bane)*  
*Elector Count of Middenland (Legbiter)*  
*Elector Count of Nordland (Crow Feeder)*  
*Elector Count of Ostland (Brain Wounder)*  
*Elector Count of Ostermark (Troll Cleaver)*  
*Elector Count of Reikland (Dragon Tooth)*  
*Elector Count of Stirland (Orc Hewer)*  
*Elector Count of Talancland (Stone Breaker)*  
*Elector Count of Wissenland (Blood Bringer)*  
*Elector Count of Solland (Grudge Settler)*  
*Elector Count of Drakwald (Beastslayer)*  
*Elector of the Moot*  
*Elector of the Cult of Sigmar*  
*Elector of the Cult of Sigmar*  
*Elector of the Cult of Sigmar*  
*Elector of the Cult of Ulric*

*Marius Leitdorf\**  
*Aldebrand Ludenhof*  
*Graf Boris Todbringer*  
*Theoderic Gausser*  
*Valmir von Raukov*  
*Wolfram Hertwig*  
*Emperor Karl Franz*  
*Graf Alberich Haupt-Anderssen*  
*Helmut Feuerbach*  
*Emmanuelle von Liebwitz*  
*Eldred\*\**  
*Konrad Aldrech\*\**  
*Elder Hisme Stoutheart*  
*Grand Theogonist Volkmar*  
*Arch Lector Kaslain*  
*Arch Lector Aglim*  
*Ar Ulric Emil Valgeir*

*\*The countship of Averland is currently disputed following Marius Leitdorf's death.*

*\*\*The provinces of Solland and Drakwald no longer exist and the named Elector Counts were the last of that particular province.*

unrivalled smiths, whose magical weapons, armour and Elven smiths. Only Dwarfs know the true secrets of the Runecraft, and they guard their knowledge jealously. Now this skill was harnessed to make blades of unsurpassed power for Sigmar's generals.

For many years Alaric toiled, and his beard grew long. Many years even for a Dwarf, and more than a lifetime for a Man. When Alaric finally emerged from his secret forges beneath the mountains, Sigmar had long since passed eastward to whatever fate overtook him, and the chieftains who fought for him at Black Fire Pass were long dead.

The Runefangs were presented to the ruling Emperor Heydrich, who divided them between the Elector Counts. Each blade was a mighty weapon in its own right, making the wielder all but invincible on the battlefield. It also became a symbol of the authority and prestige of the Elector Count who wielded it, and priceless heirlooms of those ruling families. The Counts have borne them into battle many times to slay enemies of the Empire, and they are occasionally presented temporarily to a trusted general or hero, if the need is dire and the Count himself cannot fight.

Since that distant time the Runefangs have served the counts of the Empire, having passed from ruler to ruler until the present day. Many years have passed and the

talismans are prized even above the works of the great Empire has fought many wars and withstood countless invasions, but the Runefangs have survived through the ages. As there are now only ten counts, as opposed to the original twelve, the two spare Runefangs, the Drakwald and Solland swords, are held by the Emperor as part of the Imperial armoury. They are kept securely locked away in the treasure house of the Emperor, but are sometimes brought out and used in times of extreme need by mighty heroes or powerful wizards.

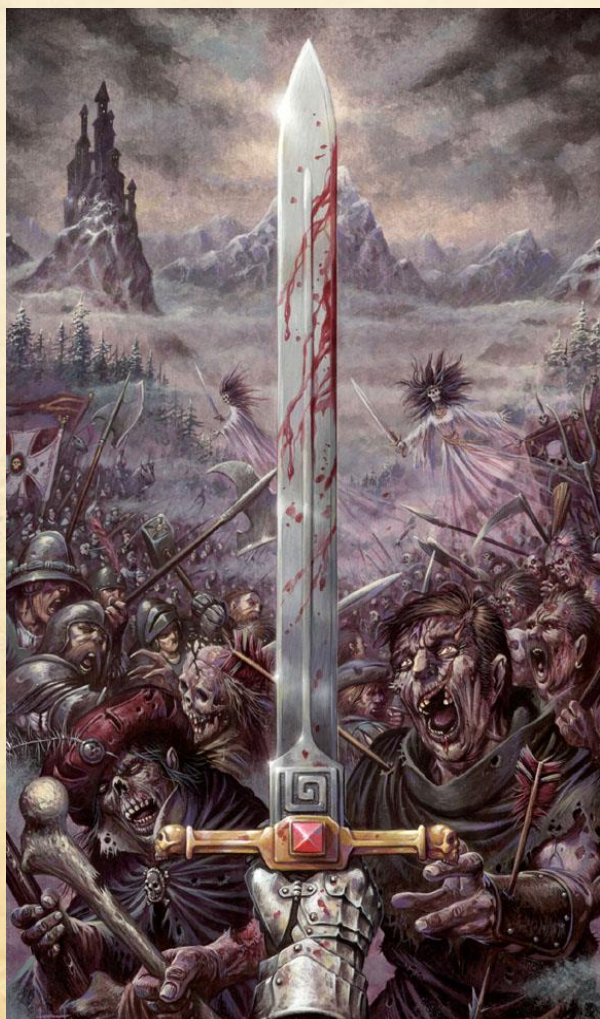
Many times in the past Runefangs have been lost to the enemy, only to be later recovered. The most famous of these tales is the legend of the Solland Sword. It was taken by Gorbard Ironclaw, the greatest of all Orc warlords ever to tread the soil of the Old World. The ravages of this dreaded greenskinned despot devastated Solland to such an extent that it has never recovered. The Count of Solland was slain by Gorbard and the Runefang taken from his corpse. It was only after many years that an expedition of Dwarfs and Men recovered the revered blade from Chimera's lair beneath the mountains of the Worlds Edge. Today the Runefangs remain as they always have been: symbols of the glory of the Empire and magical weapons of terrifying power.

## SMALLER PROVINCES

The lands of the Great Provinces are themselves a patchwork of smaller provinces, holdings belonging to a cult or order, chartered towns and cities, and lands held by nobles and even electors of other provinces. This patchwork is the result of millennia of feudalism, inheritance, war, and purchase. It has led to oddities such as the Elector Count of Reikland, who is the Emperor, also being the vassal of the Elector Count of Talabecland because he rules some small Talabeclander fiefs, as well as the Cult of Ulric holding the rights to a Sigmarite monastery in Wissenland.

Each noble, from the smallest landholder to the greatest, is theoretically beholden to one above him, up to the Electors, who answer only to the Emperor. In turn, those above owe protection to those below. Thus, if the Emperor has a problem with the Duke of Niebelwald, he has to make his complaint through the Elector of Averland, whose vassal the Duke is.

To complicate matters, the rise of cities and towns and their commercial power has led to some receiving rights and charters that free them from most of their feudal obligations in return for favours granted someone higher in the feudal chain. Thus, the town of Kemperbad received a charter from Emperor Boris the Incompetent in 1066 removing its obligations to Reikland in return for a gift of rare wines. Nobles hate this, for it often means lost revenues and prestige for them, and they will often work to undermine a chartered town's privileges. Thus, when Streissen suffered bread riots in the year of Karl-Franz's accession, then-Elector Countess Ludmilla of Averland demanded the surrender of the town charter before she would send in the troops.





## THE PLACE OF SORCERY

Sorcery, though partially legalised under Emperor Magnus the Pious, has a tenuous position within the Empire. Its inherent unreliability and the fact that its most notorious practitioners traffic with daemons and creatures of Chaos has not helped gain it the trust of the people or their rulers, despite the undoubted benefits it brings to the Empire's security. Priests of the cults are especially suspicious of them, since they believe any power not channelled through the gods will inevitably corrupt the user.

The Electors themselves are not happy with the concentration of magical power in Altdorf, the location of all the Arcane Colleges since Magnus's dispensation. Such power at the Crown's beck-and-call potentially changes greatly the balance of power between the Emperor and his Electors. Many since then have tried to induce wizards of the Arcane Colleges to settle in their courts, with only limited success. There are rumours, however, that three powerful Fire Magisters have accepted the offer of the Elector of Talabecland, who, taking advantage of the Emperor's distraction, will announce the formation of a new college near Castle Schloss in the near future. Whether the Witch Hunters will make any move against them, and what the Emperor's reaction will be, can only be guessed at.

## A LAND OF FAITH

Religion is an important part of life in the Empire. While for most people the gods are a distant force, casually sworn by in everyday conversation and invoked when convenient, their existence is considered a fact of life and no Old Worlder would dream of offending them. The wrath of the gods is all too plain to see – in the Old World nothing is coincidence in divine matters, as too often an anomalous sea-storm or freak lightning strike have proved fatal to those who have tempted the anger of the gods. There are many gods of the Old World, and each was the ancient god of one of the tribes of Men. After Sigmar founded the Empire, civilisation grew and the tribes mingled. Their

cultures inevitably began to influence each other, as much in religion as any other sphere of life. The gods of each tribe gradually came to be acknowledged by the others, and after many centuries the Old World pantheon as it stands today began to appear.

The Empire is a polytheistic society, a realm where it is considered only right and proper to honour all the gods. Even those priests who dedicate their lives to the worship of a particular deity show respect to other gods. That isn't to say that the holy men of a particular priesthood don't resent the influence of a neighbouring temple in whose shadow they lie, but to offer insult to any of the gods is tantamount to insanity. The Temples of Ulric, for example, almost always have at least one shrine dedicated to Shallya, the goddess of healing and mercy, whose blessings can restore a warrior's wounds, and a shrine of Morr, the brooding god of death who will tend to those soldiers who cannot be saved.

Often the god most honoured in a state or province will be the one that was originally the god of the tribe from that area, since that god's powers and domain will be the most relevant to them: but each god is considered the equal of the others in power and importance. Ulric was the god of the Teutogen tribe and to this day is the patron of much of the Empire's north, but while a citizen of Middenheim might invoke Ulric for protection or strength, he will still pray to Morr when grieving for a loved one, or to Taal for favourable weather.

However, of all the gods, it is Sigmar who is accepted as the patron of the Empire. This is true throughout the Empire – even in places such as Middenland, where Ulric, the warrior god of wolves and winter, is favoured and in Talabecland, where his brother Taal, the noble lord of nature, is more actively worshipped.

## THE CHURCH OF SIGMAR

The Church of Sigmar preaches a warrior doctrine of duty, honour and courage. Established after the Empire's founding father, the priesthood of Sigmar is one of the most powerful organisations in the Empire.

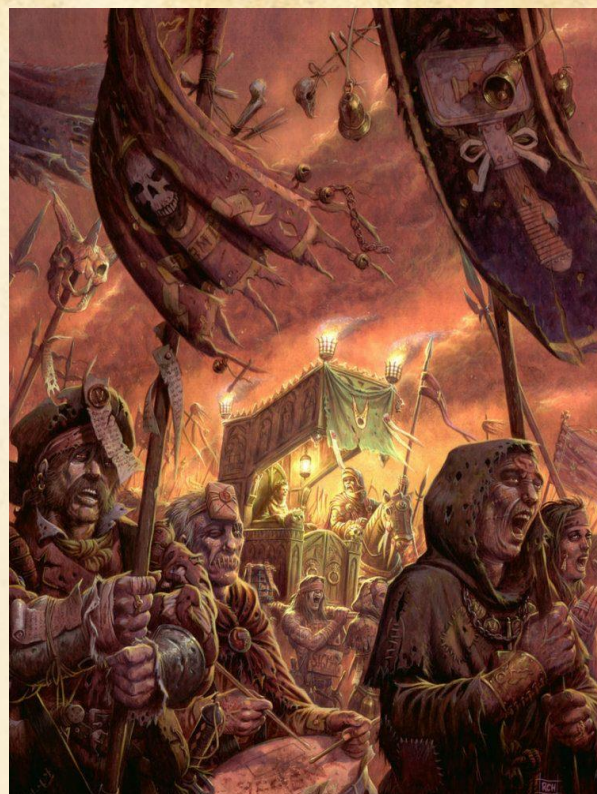
Because Sigmar stands in such a personal relationship to the Empire, he is often portrayed as symbolic of the nation, and the priesthood of Sigmar is closely associated with the state and the imperial family. Of all the gods, Sigmar is the god of the Empire as a political body and to many worshippers, this high level of state recognition is an unattractive aspect of the Sigmarite temples. To more spiritual folk it is seen as an imposition upon the personal god. As a result, many sub-sects of the cult have grown up that worship Sigmar in their own way.

Consequently, of all the gods, Sigmar inspires by far the most theosophical discussion and variation of belief and practice. As well as the principal Holy Temple of Sigmar there are a number of splinter groups and several main branches of theology. And, although there

might be a keen sense of rivalry and even passionately expressed differences of thought, there is still a universal belief in the power of Sigmar that is respected. Only rarely, and only amongst the more extreme sects, does that rivalry turn to dissension. In the most extreme cases this has given rise to the cults of self-flagellation, mendicants, stylites, hermits, apocalypsts, processional or wandering bands of zealots, and so forth. Each preaches a warped, self-sacrificing version of Sigmar's vision.

Throughout the Empire it is considered right to honour all the gods. Showing proper respect for the gods is a mark of good manners and is associated with developed ethics and high intelligence. Neglect of the gods, disrespect, or openly expressed disregard of such things is seen as a mark of low breeding and ignorance – furthermore it is just plain unlucky. Even the priests of a particular god show proper respect to other gods and spirits in appropriate situations. As such, there are many gods worshipped by the people of the Empire, though Sigmar is far and away the most widely venerated.

The Grand Theogonist has remained head of the Cult of Sigmar since the earliest days of the Empire, appointing two Arch Lectors beneath him. Beneath these Arch Lectors are a number of ordinary Lectors who minister to the various regions of the Empire. When Sigmar passed from mortality to divinity, the tribal chieftains he had appointed to control the lands of the Empire feared for the future of his lands. But rather than falling into civil war, they decided that future emperors would be chosen by election from amongst their number, and thus were the first Elector Counts of the Empire created.



As the power of the church grew and expanded, it was not long until the Grand Theogonist was appointed as an Elector, having a powerful say in the election of a new Emperor. With such an influential voice in the Empire, it did not take long for the two Arch Lectors beneath the Grand Theogonist to be appointed Electors also, much to the chagrin of the Cult of Ulric.

Within the Cult of Sigmar itself there are three orders; the Order of the Silver Hammer, the Order of the Torch and the Order of the Anvil, each concerned with a different aspect of theology. Priests of the Silver Hammer travel the Empire, rooting out heretics, smiting greenskins and promoting the faith in the cult. Those of the Order of the Torch administrate the churches and temples of Sigmar, officiating at religious ceremonies, while the Order of the Anvil is a monastic order that studies and interprets the word of Sigmar.

### The Sigmarian Heresy

Though united in its belief, the Cult of Sigmar has, on occasion, been split by differing factions of worshippers. The widely differing practices of worship throughout the Empire has led to several schisms that have threatened to tear the church apart, though such a terrible fate has, thus far, been avoided. Internal politicking concerning the election of Lectors and Arch Lectors has brought about much petty squabbling, but such things are of little consequence when put alongside deliberate attempts to split the church.

According to some legends, Sigmar was always only half-man, a demigod fathered by Ulric upon a mortal woman, and this is promulgated openly by the Cult of Ulric, who are also keen to point out that Sigmar himself was crowned Emperor by the high priest of





their order. At one point, this belief led to the priests of Sigmar being considered little better than heretics during a time known as the Sigmarian Heresy. In 1360, Ottilia of Talabecland declared herself Empress without election. In this she was supported by the high priest of Ulric, who was himself an Elector (appointed as a counterbalance to the growing power of the Sigmarite Grand Theogonist and Arch Lectors).

Relations between the two cults had been strained for some time, and when the Count of Stirland, Ottilia's longstanding rival was elected Emperor, she approached the high priest of Ulric and convinced him that the Church of Sigmar had been founded on a lie. The vision and the comet were nothing more than signs that Sigmar's reign had been blessed by Ulric. This suited the high priest's political ambitions nicely, and he declared all followers of the Cult of Sigmar to be heretics, with the cult's outlawing in Talabecland swiftly following. Sigmar's temples were burned and his followers persecuted by witch hunters. This state of affairs was to continue in Talabecland for several hundred years, until the arrival of Magnus the Pious.

### The Church of Today

In these dark times, faith in Sigmar is needed more than ever. The tribes of the north may have been pushed back to their cold steppes and the Lord of the End Times defeated, but in the wake of such great conflict inevitably comes famine, sickness and deprivation on a vast scale. Many towns still lie in ruins, the fields go untended, and countless thousands remain without homes, having lost everything to the war. More and more of the desperate people of the Empire turn to the church for guidance and yet others take to the path of the Flagellant, travelling the highways of the land and spreading their apocalyptic message of doom. It is a dark time for the Empire, but with faith in Sigmar and courage, it may yet survive.

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Over the centuries the Empire's diplomats have woven a complex web of treaties and obligations. These treaties promise military support to almost every human nation in the Old World against just about every other nation. Of course these treaties also enable the Emperor to call for aid from other nations too. In practice these paper promises amount to very little, but provide a pretext for the nations of the Old World to make and break alliances as they see fit, sending forces to support first one nation and then another. It has been known for whole nations to change sides halfway through a war, using their incomprehensible treaty agreements as an excuse for switching to the winning side. At its most extreme this can even result in two Imperial forces fighting each other, as happened during the battle of Remas when a combined force of Tileans and allied Empire troops found itself fighting an invading Bretonnian army accompanied by a substantial allied Empire army, more Tileans and Wood Elves. Needless to say both sides upheld tradition and fought bravely against foe and fellow countrymen alike.

### Bretonnia

The Empire's relations with Bretonnia have not always been harmonious. In the days of Sigmar, the Bretonni tribes refused to join the Heldenhammer's alliance. While the Empire was founded only a year after the Battle of Black Fire Pass, it was 980 years until Gilles le Breton united the Bretonni tribes and founded a nation. Since the Empire is the elder state by nearly a millennium, its rulers have often taken an arrogant approach in dealing with Bretonnia, one the noble descendants of Gilles le Breton have not appreciated. During the Great War Against Chaos, the Bretonnians declined to send aid to Magnus the Pious, leaving the men of the Empire and Kislev to defeat the Chaos Incursion.

## Kislev

Kislev has suffered greatly in the war, with the destruction of Erengard and much of the lands between there and the Empire. Nevertheless, they remembered their ancient alliance with the Empire and how the Empire under Magnus once came to their aid. As a consequence, the Tzarina dispatched the young boyar of Erengard, Alexei Makarev, with an army to help with the resistance in Ostland and Middenland. Emperor Karl-Franz, touched by Kislev's loyalty, has vowed to do all he can to help them.



Not all in the Empire bear Kislev goodwill, however. The Elector Count of Talabecland remembers his province's ancient claims to large portions of Kislev. Whispers in the corridors of power say that he is planning to press those claims soon, by force if necessary.

Trade between Kislev and the Empire moved mainly along the River Talabec, and this has fallen off greatly since the war began, leading to shortages and higher prices for some staple goods, including the imported vodka favoured by the wealthy and middle classes. More importantly, refugees have fled west along the river and are now crowding into shanties in Talabecland's eastern towns and at Talabheim. Already there have been riots between locals and the newcomers in some places.

## Tilea

Far from the immediate concerns of war, the Tilean City-States continue their blithe habits of arguing, fighting, and trading with each other, when they are not arguing, fighting, and trading with the Estalians or the Arabyans. Although once, long ago during the reign of Emperor Gunthar II "the Faithful", the Empire ruled much of northern Tilea, contact between the two realms is largely confined to trade via the middlemen of Marienburg, though some Tilean Merchant Houses, especially from Miragliano and Remas, have taken advantage of the recent discovery of the River of Echoes from northern Tilea to Wissenland to set up trading offices in Nuln, Pfeildorf, and other southern towns. They hope to use this as a reliable route to bypass Marienburg and cut costs, since the mountain passes are frequently blocked by snow.

With the coming of war, Tilean influence has increased in military affairs. Tilean mercenaries, particularly their crossbowmen and pikemen, were always a common

sight in the Empire, but, more and more, priests and priestesses of Myrmidia are taking positions of influence with southern and western nobles, as advisors and even field commanders. The Cult of Ulric looks askance on this challenge to their influence.

## Others

Far across the stormy Sea of Claws, small Norscan kingdoms generally friendly to the Empire cling to the coasts, trying to hold out against the Chaos-aligned barbarians and berserkers of the interior.

To the south and southwest of the Empire, the lands of the Border Princes have long been both a thorn in the side of the Empire and a safety valve for its malcontents. The princes and petty lords of this land must deal with frequent raids by Orcs and Goblins, some of which are large bands trying to reach the Empire. The local rulers fear that, if the Greenskins raise enough trouble in the Empire, then the Counts of the southern Grand Provinces may decide that the time to reannex these lands has come.

Marienburg, for all the occasional noises from the Empire and the Cult of Sigmar about "reclaiming lost provinces," has good if quiet relations with the Empire. The similar culture and shared history helps, as do the regular payments on the debts owed by several Electors, lower nobles, and free towns. Marienburg also relies on the Empire to be a counterbalance to Bretonnian ambitions. Thus, the current weakened state of the Empire has the Directorate concerned.



## THE ARMIES OF STATE

It is not easy for a human being to survive in a world populated by huge monsters and supernatural creatures such as the living dead. It is not easy, but the men of the Empire make good use of their best weapon: their intelligence. Their bodies are not protected by tough hides or hard scales, so they forge steel and make armour. They lack the strength of an Ogre or the vicious claws of a Daemon, so they manufacture swords, spears and bows. They cannot fly or breathe fire on their enemies, so they build machines that tame the power of blackpowder to blow their foes to smithereens. They cannot match the numbers of the countless Skaven and Goblin hordes, but their tactical skill can bring their victory even when outnumbered. Though many of the foes of the Empire boast warriors stronger and more powerful than Humans, none can doubt the ingenuity or tenacity of an Empire soldier on the battlefield.



The Emperor's army is large and diverse, including troops from all over the Empire and beyond. To call the Emperor's troops an army is perhaps misleading, as there are really many different armies as well as garrison troops scattered throughout the Empire. Each province and each city state has its own separate army which it recruits, trains, and maintains. These provincial troops form the backbone of the Empire's defence. When invaders appear, the first troops they



will meet will almost certainly be from the provincial army. The quality of these troops varies considerably, and although they are all brave some are better equipped than others.

Every province and city state in the Empire maintains its own armed force of one or more regiments of full-time foot soldiers. These are known as state regiments. In addition the nobility and most of the land owning citizens can be called to arms in times of need. The regiments serve as the town guard, fire watch, and police force, and their duties include patrolling for insurgents, rooting out bandits, and maintaining the peace in their province. In times of war they are ready to march out to battle to defend their province against attack or to join the Imperial army under the command of their count. The part-timers or militia are only called up when they are needed. They include the Knights as well as hardy woodsmen and frontier farmers who are naturally good fighters.

Every state has its own uniform which features a colour or two contrasting colours. These colours may be combined in all kinds of different ways, often changing when troops are issued with fresh uniforms, but the same colours usually form the basis of the design. Occasionally a regiment may be issued with a differently coloured uniform either to distinguish it from other regiments belonging to that state, or because cloth of the usual colour is in short supply. By adopting these colour schemes from each state may be identified on the battlefield.

Each province equips its soldiers from its own armouries. The type and condition of each regiment's weapons and armour therefore varies a great deal, with the wealthiest provinces providing the best equipped troops. State regiments are almost always provided with some sort of body armour. It is unusual for every trooper to be armoured in exactly the same way. In most regiments some soldiers have breastplates, others mail armour, and a few leather tunics or even no armour at all. The favoured weapons are halberds with



poorer provinces providing spearmen instead. In addition most provinces maintain small bodies of specialist troops such as hand gunners and swordsmen.

The Empire is not alone in using gunpowder weapons, but it is probably able to field more hand gunners and cannons than any other nation. This is partly due to the influence of Dwarf weaponsmiths, many of whom live in the cities of the Empire. Largely thanks to the skills and technology brought into the Empire by Dwarfs, great advances have been made in the armouries and workshops leading to the manufacture of reliable firearms and fine cannons. The communities of Dwarfs in the Empire are now so well established that they form a significant part of the citizen body, having adopted many of the social customs, styles of dress, and manners of the humans around them. Some of these Dwarfs even fight on behalf of their adopted nation.

### The Grand Musters of the Empire

Though the armies of the Empire harbour a dizzying profusion of warriors and specialists of different stripes, the heart of every army is the mass of brightly uniformed infantry at its centre. These are professional soldiers employed by the province or city-state as a standing army, drilled in the bloody craft of battle. Disciplined ranks of Spearmen and grim Halberdiers march into battle alongside companies of flamboyant Swordsmen to defend their homelands, each warrior clad in his regiment's distinct colours and adorned with feathers, skulls, parchments or protective charms. These regiments and their detachments are highly trained in the fluid execution of complex battlefield manoeuvres. Accompanying these infantry blocks upon the field of battle are teams of Handgunners, Archers

and Crossbowmen providing supporting fire to whittle down the advancing foes, each able to bullseye an Orc at a hundred paces. Countless thousands of these loyal soldiers stand ready to defend their realm against the ravening hordes that invade or raid through the Empire's lands. The footsoldiery is further complemented by plate-clad Greatswords, veteran soldiers that wield personalised zweihanders, and mounted cavalymen known as Pistoliers and Outriders, specialists in black powder weaponry and the art of hit-and-run attacks.

Over generations, the Men of the Empire have learned at great cost that to survive they must work together as large, coordinated regiments. Discipline is the key, for while a Man lacks the speed and grace of an Elf, the brutal strength of an Orc or the tough predisposition a Dwarf, they do possess a tenacious demeanour and are recipients of a backbreaking training regime that makes them an implacable force when arrayed for battle. Drilled night and day by the constant barking of ferocious sergeants, state troops operate on the battlefield like a well-greased machine.

On the battlefield the state regiments have evolved a very effective method of fighting. Each regiment can fight as a totally independent unit under its own commander just like any other unit in any army. Alternatively, some of the regiment's troops can be detached and armed in a different manner to the main body, forming smaller units which can fight in support of the larger ones. The main regiment forms up as normal and a detachment forms up near one or both flanks. Detachments often consist of hand gunners or swordsmen, and they help the main regiment by shooting at approaching enemy or by rushing out and chasing away small units of enemy troops. This is especially useful if the regiment is being harassed by enemy skirmishers, as a detachment of swordsmen can rush out and chase the skirmishers away leaving the main body free to advance at a steadier pace. Detachments also form useful reserves, and once their parent regiment is committed they can pile into the enemy's flanks or move off to another part of the battlefield to lend a hand elsewhere. This method of fighting is so effective that most states raise bodies of troops which can be used in this way, and a state will usually send a regiment supported by one or two detachments to serve in the Imperial Army.





### The Ingenious Machines

The various institutions of the Empire have flourished under Karl Franz's rule, and the Imperial School of Engineers is no exception. Experts in the craft of war, the Engineers continue to devise ever more deadly and elaborately named machineries of destruction. From their soot-blackened halls come the Helblaster Volley Guns and Helstorm Rocket Batteries to complement the more traditional Great Cannons and Mortars produced by the Gunnery School of Nuln. The eccentric Engineers who create such marvels happily go to war to see their effects first hand, often armed with the latest and most experimental devices: repeater handguns, grenade launching blunderblusses, Herstel-Wenckler pigeon bombs, and clockwork cavalry. Every year new mechanical experiments clank and stomp out of the School's strange and frightening laboratories, some exploding almost as soon as they are deployed, some field tested to great effect. The malfunctions and disasters of the Engineers fraternity are usually overlooked by the Imperial court - even the Greater Altdorf Sootstorm of 2502 was quickly forgotten after the first good downpour. After all, their machineries of war are often powerful enough to flatten an entire enemy flank, and Karl Franz is well aware that desperate times call for drastic solutions.

The Emperor's armies can also call upon the expertise of the Imperial Gunnery School, whose mighty cannons and mortars blast the foe from afar before they even come close to the Empire troops, and the experimental creations of the Imperial Engineers School, inventors of some of the most unpredictable, and occasionally deadly, tools of war in an Empire army. Of particular note is the Steam Tank, which is both destructive and difficult to destroy, and the War Wagon, which carries a varied load of experimental weaponry such as the Hochland Long Rifle and Repeater Hand Gun. The Repeater Hand Gun is also used from horseback by gallant Imperial Engineers who find it a devastating if temperamental device.

Cannons and mortars are difficult and expensive to produce and so it is the Emperor's job to make sure the Empire has enough artillery. Individual provinces can produce cannons if they like, but none are capable of making any but the smallest calibre weapons. Cannons

are therefore made by the Imperial Ordnance and presented to counts throughout the Empire. These cannons are intended to be used to defend cities and towns against attack. Of course, counts sometimes end up using these weapons against each other, but technically at least they remain the property of the Emperor and can be moved or replaced at any time. When a count is called upon to bring his troops to war he also brings along any artillery that has been loaned to him.

The Empire is especially well equipped with cannons including impressive multiple barrelled weapons called organ guns or volley guns. The Empire's skills are derived from Dwarfs fleeing from their mountain homes and settling in the cities of the Empire. Many of the Dwarfs bring unique talents, including the manufacture of gunpowder weapons and even steam powered machines (although the Dwarf Engineers Guild regards these inventions as an affront to their ancient traditions). Thanks to the Empire's massive centralised wealth and the Dwarfs' special skills the Empire has become the home to new technical innovation and experiment, which in turn has attracted Dwarf and human inventors from all over the Old World.

### The Knightly Orders

The Knightly Orders of the Empire are another powerful tool in Karl Franz's military arsenal. Each Order has a proud heritage and history, and many of them are fierce rivals, but all are fiercely devoted to the Crown. It is the Knightly Orders who provide the heavy cavalry of the Empire, tall and proud warriors all, rider and mount alike armoured in the finest lacquered steel. When war calls, the Grand Masters of the Knightly Orders lead their men forth, galloping towards the foe in precisely judged charges as they drive their lances and sabres deep into the heart of the enemy battleline. It is not only warhorses that the Knightly Orders ride to war - the Knights of the Vengeful Sun have several units of highly-trained Demigryph riders trained and ready for battle.



## Fire, Fury and Faith

Those most mysterious of Imperial institutions, the Colleges of Magic, also wax strong under Karl Franz's rule. Founded by Magnus the Pious and mentored by the Elven archmage Teclis of Ulthuan, the Colleges of Magic teach those with sorcery in their blood how to harness and shape their spells until they become fully fledged Battle Wizards. Though the diverse Colleges wield powers taken from the eight different Winds of Magic, all are devastating to witness upon the field of battle. Some send searing bolts of mercury into the ranks of the foe, some bring down the wrath of the heavens, others transform into gigantic beasts and rampage deep into the enemy's battleline. Regardless of their abilities, all wizards and mages risk not only their bodies but also their souls in pursuit of their eldritch arts, for those who seek to bind otherworldly powers can meet very sticky ends indeed. Though wizards are mistrusted by the superstitious folk of the Empire, their arcane weapons make them an essential tool on the field of war.

The realm of the supernatural is not the sole province of the Battle Wizards. The Sigmarite creed is alive and well in the armies of Karl Franz, its practitioners dealing out righteous retribution with flame and hammer to the manifold evils of the world. The fiery Warrior Priests of Sigmar are formidable combatants as well as workers of battlefield miracles, leading by example at the front lines or, in the case of the Arch-Lectors themselves, riding to battle upon a towering War Altar of Sigmar. Beside these brave men march disillusioned bands of Flagellants and grim Witch Hunters tasked with dealing out righteous retribution to the manifold evils of the world.



## An Army United

The armies of the Empire are a riotous mix of infantry and cavalry, war machines and monsters, wizards and priests. The regiments are often drawn from right across the Empire, as shown by the many different bold colours of their uniforms indicating which province they call home. There is also commonly a combination of loyal, well-drilled soldiers, and poorly trained, but determined militia, pressed into service for the battle, as well as ruthless mercenaries hired with coin. On occasion, there are members of other races fighting as part of an army, including hulking Ogres, or even the diminutive Halflings.

Ogre mercenaries, known alarmingly as Maneaters, are an occasional sight in Empire armies. Halflings too are sometimes recruited, especially if their lands in the Moot are under threat, and they make excellent bowmen (wielding short bows, of course). Both are unreliable if not well fed, though in very different ways – Halflings are likely to start stealing extra rations or just sneak off back home, while ogres may simply begin eating other members of the army.

Other sellswords come from far off lands – Tilean crossbowmen, for example, are some of the best in the world, a worthy addition to any force. Tileans are renowned as mercenary soldiers throughout the Old World. Bands of professional fighters are always available for hire and many of the states of the Empire are more than happy to employ them. After all, hiring Tileans saves the count paying to recruit and train his own forces, and is much more convenient than maintaining a large body of home-produced troops. Mercenaries can also be dismissed once their job is done, without the danger of creating a mob of unemployed fighting men likely to turn to banditry. Tilean bands are usually provided with state uniforms so that their allegiance can be readily identified, although some bands prefer to wear their own distinctive uniforms or personal individual clothing.

The weapon closely associated with Tileans is the crossbow. The crossbow is not used as a weapon of war in the Empire, so all crossbow-armed troops are Tileans in the employ of one of the provinces. When the provincial army joins with others to form an Empire army these Tileans go with them, providing the Empire army with its excellent crossbowmen.

An outsider might well assume that such a group of disparate combatants could never form a cohesive force on the battlefield, but they would be sorely mistaken. In fact, the military might of the Empire is renowned across the Old World, for its complexity is a strength, not a weakness, that allows Empire armies to overcome any threat, and defeat any foe. Admittedly, the Empire military has a rather labyrinthine structure, at least compared to the simplistic methods of the greenskins, for example. However, this too can act as an advantage, providing a strict chain of command that, for the most part, allows orders to be quickly and clearly communicated.

A wise scholar once noted that the Empire of Man thrives because of its differences, not in spite of them. This has proven to be especially true upon the field of war. Should an invading army manage to weather the fusillades of black powder weaponry, coruscating magic and storm of artillery fire that precede each clash of battlelines, it will find itself trapped and outflanked by disciplined and well-drilled infantry regiments. Should the spears and blades of the state troops not destroy the foe outright, the Knightly Orders will launch their charges, finishing with lance what was started with crossbow bolt and lead shot. In the sides above ride the captains and princelings of the Empire upon their fantastical beasts, hunting down and slaying the leaders of the enemy army, and all the while doomsaying Flagellants give their lives gladly to ensure the opposition is utterly destroyed. The armies of the Empire are as deadly as they are diverse, and with the wit and will of the finest generals behind them, there is no manner of threat that they cannot overcome.

### AN EMPIRE UNDER SIEGE


The armies of the Empire are committed to defending its borders and rarely mount lengthy campaigns beyond them. A long standing alliance between the Emperor and the Tzars of Kislev has occasionally taken armies far to the north to fight against intrusions of Chaos. Such armies do not always return. The chief enemies of the Empire lay within its own borders – for the land is sparsely settled and much of the forest and mountain is little more than wilderness infested with greenskins and beastmen. The mountains to the south and east are also home to subterranean living Goblins as well as to

Skaven. Those states that adjoin these borderlands maintain large mobile armies to see off the inevitable raiding parties that issue from the mountain passes every spring.



Over the centuries, the Empire has suffered brutal invasions, rampant plagues, bloody civil wars, and the predations of foul monsters too numerous to mention. Now, during the reign of Emperor Karl Franz, the Empire has never faced greater threats. All of its ancient foes have regrouped and are preparing their next barrage of devastating attacks. Orcs gather in the mountains, Skaven lurk beneath the great cities, while foul Chaos cults hide within their walls. Whatever foul and insidious form it takes, and from whichever direction the first strike comes – the doom of the realm seemingly draws near. In such war-torn times, the armies of the Emperor must hold the line against these unrelenting dangers. They must not waver and cannot fail, for if the Empire falls, the civilised world will be drowned in a tide of blood and death.





# LESSONS OF THE EMPIRE

Excerpt from a lecture to Konrad Ludenhof by his preceptor, Erasmus von Nuln

"Young man, one day you will succeed your father as Count of Hochland and it is therefore of primary importance that you learn about the military and political structure of our great land. From your court here in Hergig, you will reign over the Province of Hochland. You can see the borders on this map. Always remember, your first duty is to govern and protect your people. Furthermore, you are already aware that your full title will be that of Elector Count, a title which brings with it an even greater responsibility. You will sit in the Imperial Council, together with the other fourteen Electors. Do you remember who these important people are?"

"The Counts of Averland, Middenland, Nordland, Ostland, Ostermark, Reikland, Stirland, Talabecland and Wissenland," repeated the young noble in one breath. "Together with the Grand Theognist of Sigmar, the two Arch-lectors of Sigmar, the High Priest of Ulric and..." the boy stopped, embarrassed.

"And the Elder of the Moot," concluded the old man. "Don't you forget him again, his vote counts as much as yours and we don't want to cause a diplomatic incident, do we!"

The Council has the difficult task of electing a new Emperor when our ruler, Karl Franz of Reikland, departs this world and joins the almighty Sigmar.

This election is a delicate game of diplomacy, politics and intrigue. It can be as dangerous as any battlefield and you need years of experience before you can even think to take part in it. At present, though the power seems to be solidly in the hands of the Counts of Reikland, who can rely on the decisive support of the Sigmarite votes. It is no coincidence that the Temple of Sigmar in Altdorf grows richer and more splendid with every passing year. I am no seer, but my educated guess is that the next Emperor will still have his court in Altdorf. Always remember that the Emperor is your lord and you owe him allegiance. This means that if he calls for help during a military campaign, you must send a contingent of troops as requested. Failure to do so would be considered high treason and that would be the undoing of your family.

Since we are on the subject, let us examine the structure of the Army of Hochland which, if it is not fighting under the Emperor, will have you as its supreme commander."

"Sorry to interrupt you sir, but why would we need to fight if the Emperor does not call us?" asked the boy.

"Well, you are lucky because you grew up in an exceptionally peaceful period for our province. Can you remember when, eight years ago, your father led his army against a horde of foul Beastmen which emerged from the woods on the foothills of the Middle Mountains?" asked the preceptor.

"Hardly sir, I was only four at the time," smiled the heir.

"Mmh... I see... Anyway, our land has many enemies," continued the old man. "You may have to fight the tribes of greenskins and the creatures of Chaos that live hidden in the vast forests and high mountains of your domain, or even some more civilised opponent, if the Count of Ostland pretends once again to have a strange understanding of where our border should lie.

Now, as I was saying, you are the supreme commander of the army of Hochland, but you can delegate command of smaller forces to any officer who you consider to be a valid leader of men. You will

always have at your disposal the regiments of our state army, what we call 'regular troops'. These are the professional soldiers who you see training every day on the drill grounds. They are armed and equipped at your expense and are ready to fight at any time. Mostly they consist of infantry regiments, distinguished by the weapons they carry, such as halberdiers, spearmen, swordsmen and handgunners. The sons of the nobility form our most modern and deadly cavalry, the Pistolier Corps, where you too will serve for some time in order to gain some invaluable experience of warfare."

"With pride, sir. And what about the Greatswords?" asked the boy with enthusiasm, "And the cannons!"

"I was getting there," retorted the old man. "the Greatswords form your bodyguard and the garrison of your castle. They are your best soldiers, stern veterans who have sworn to give their lives to protect you. They are equipped with the best weapons and armour we can afford, specially commissioned from the Guild of Dwarf Smiths.

The Count's artillery train, on the other hand, comes from my home town of Nuln and can field many cannons and quite a few of the new mortars that the Engineers have developed.

You can also rely on the Engineers' School to try their experimental weapons on the field. I've heard they are quite effective, if they don't blow up the first time they're fired.

If your state troops are seriously outnumbered, you can resort to militia or 'irregular troops'. The bulk of these is normally made of the riff-raff regiments known as 'Free Companies': a collection of adventures, cut-throats and scum who lack discipline but have respectable fighting skills. Furthermore, trappers from the northern woods make splendid scouts and there are always Tilean crossbowmen looking for employment.

If you are looking for a more reliable force, you can summon the Knights for help. The closest Order, just a few days north of Hergig, are the Knights of the Silver Mountain, who have come to the aid of our House many times in the past. If the Knights join your forces, you can count on a formidable ally, but you must be prepared at times to share the command of your forces with their Grand Master.


A more esoteric kind of help can be had from wizards and priests of Sigmar. At your father's court, old Hermann Feuer and his two apprentices represent the College of Fire and they can contact their brethren in Altdorf to recruit more magicians. It is more difficult to get the priests to come to your aid, as they respond only to their superiors in the clergy of Sigmar. The most zealous and radical ones tend to defy even the centralised control of the Temple of Sigmar and let the voice of their god decide their course of action. However, you can be sure of having them on your side every time you are fighting Chaos in any of its guises.

Finally, do not underestimate the bands of desperate religious fanatics who travel through the Empire chastising themselves and announcing the end of the world. People call them 'Flagellants' and they are a strange lot. Their presence is probably not too good for the morale of your troops, but in battle they fight with the strength and ferocity of madmen.

That is all for now, and I sincerely hope that you will not have to use the knowledge which I have taught you today too soon. Now go. It is time for your fencing lesson."







# HISTORY OF THE EMPIRE

Today the Empire is the strongest, wealthiest and most famous of the realms in the Old World, but it was not always so. The nation that would grow to become the Empire took its first fledgling steps two and a half thousand years before the reign of the present Emperor Karl Franz, and most of what is known from the earliest days of the Empire comes from Dwarf records. Much has been forgotten or lost in the intervening time. War, fire, flood, and even conspiracy have helped to hide or erase forever much of the historical record, whether written down in books and scrolls, or preserved in artefacts. Scholars dig and research to find the truth, but the gaps are many and often their conclusions are utterly wrong.

Some secrets, too, are best left buried, lest their revelation cause panic or doubt among a previously docile population. And it is not just the effect of uncovering the horrible truth that one has to fear, but also those who would rather keep the information buried, or take it for their own advantage. In the Empire, the student of History had better keep his sword handy.

## THE TRIBES OF MAN

In a time before the Empire, before the taming of the land, the tribes of Man survived in the wilderness. No one knows when Humanity first entered the Old World, though ancient records of the Dwarfs record the steady movement of people over the World's Edge Mountains over a period of several centuries, sometimes fleeing more powerful Human tribes, other times fleeing the Greenskins. The earliest known of these migrant tribes are mentioned in the Chronicles of Nurn Shieldbreaker, King of Karaz-a-Karak. The gold leaves of this folio, stamped in the ancient Dwarf runes no outsider is allowed to see, record a pastoral Human tribe who worshipped the Earth itself. Timid around the martial Dwarfs and persecuted in their home territories, they vanished into the forests of what would become the Empire and faded from view. Dwarf scholars who have lectured on early history estimate that this occurred around 1500 years before the crowning of Sigmar.

Perhaps some five hundred years later Khazalid inscriptions on the walls of Blackfire Pass mark the passing of a large confederation of tribal peoples from the future lands of the Border Princes and the steppes beyond the World's Edge. Dwarfen historical lays from this time also speak of this movement: "Great danger there was in the East, in the lands of our enemies, and the clans of the Manlings fled west. Ignorant of the arts of steel and warcraft, they had no weapons that could stand before the Goblins and their allies. They gave us gold, cattle, and salt, and we let them pass, protected by our shields." Scholars have noted that many of the tribes listed bear names very similar to those that founded the Empire: Hünberokin, Tutoknin, Merokin, and Jutonik among them.

Unlike the peaceful agriculturalist tribes that came to the Old World before them, the newcomers were aggressive and had a culture based on raiding each other for cattle and women. While they could not stand up to the Greenskins' iron weapons, their bronze blades and chariots were more than a match for the obsidian and flint of existing tribes. Within a century, the ancestors of the Teutogen, the Unberogen, and other founding tribes had displaced the older peoples and taken the best lands for themselves.

The men of the west were scattered across vast tracts of forested land and divided into bitterly warring tribes. Men slew one another without reason or remorse, all the while cowering from the darkness of the forest eaves. Beastmen and other, nameless things ruled the shadows while orcs and goblins descended from the mountains to enslave and slaughter at will. A tribe without a strong ruler could not stand against such dire threats. Before the coming of Sigmar, the race of men stood ever upon the brink of extinction.

The peoples of each province are the descendants of the ancient tribesmen united by Sigmar. Most tribes existed for untold generations before the birth of the Empire and fought numerous, bitter wars over that time. They had their own traditions and heroes, and all tribes claimed a blood-right to the territories that sustained them. Most men spoke a common tongue, but each tribe had its own accent and often its own dialect, so that two men from different tribes could scarcely understand one another in conversation. Two and a half




### BATTLE OF THREE TOWERS

*"I remember well the day when the armies of the Empire mustered to defend their land against the Lords of Ulthuan. I marched to battle amongst the ranks of the Stirland halberdiers, and fought against the Elves, hand-to-hand, from dawn till dusk.*

*We know not whether the foe came for plunder or the secrets of the bygone ages. But they were upon us in an instant, an army of spearmen in glittering mail coats, cohorts of keen-eyed Elven archers and silver-helmed knights, and even two great serpentine dragons like which the world has not seen in many ages.*

*See the great skull of a Dragon Araugnir now stands here in the Hall of Trophies. The great Wyrn was slain by the Nuln battery of Great Cannons. Their captain was decorated for their bravery with the Laurels of Victory after the battle.*

*The blade you see before you was a trophy from the duel between Grand Master Heydrich and the Elven prince commanding the enemy. The Lord of Templars vanquished the Elven Lord and it was this decisive fight which finally broke the spirit of our foes and made them retreat from the field leaderless."*



millennia later, the same still holds true, especially among the more isolated provincials. These folk cleave to the old ways almost as if the Empire had never risen to unite the warring tribes.

In the years preceding the birth of the Empire, the land was ruled by about a dozen main tribal groupings with numerous vassal tribes beneath them. Some harboured bitter resentments towards one another, while others were staunch allies. Though all claimed ownership of vast areas of land, such title was notional at best, as some would say is still true today. In reality, most men lived behind crude wooden palisades and earthworks, and those who dared work the land did so with one eye ever watchful for savage beastmen and greenskins emerging from the forests. If the alarm was raised in time, they might escape to the nearest hill fort; otherwise, they were likely to suffer a hideous death at the hands of the vile beasts that truly ruled the lands.

In the northernmost reaches of the land now called the Empire lived the Udose and Roppsmenn tribes. The latter were driven into the cold lands of Kislev when they aided the savage Norsii against Sigmar's army and in so doing forfeited their place in the nascent Empire. The Norsii themselves were driven across the Sea of Claws where their descendants still live today, warring with one another and their neighbours and venerating cruel gods whose names civilised men do not speak.

In the east lived the Ostagoths, a hardy people whose lands were shadowed by the towering World's Edge Mountains. The descendants of the Ostagoths established the province of Ostermark. South of the lands of the Ostagoths were those of the Asoborns, the Brigundians, the Merogens, and Menogoths, and the provinces that stand today in those territories are known as Stirland, Averland and Wissenland. For centuries, the province of Solland existed here too, before the mighty orc warlord Gorbad Ironclaw slew its Elector Count, seized the trappings of his power, and razed much of the land to ashes.

In the shadow of the Grey Mountains on the Empire's southern borders lived the Unberogens and the Endals. The former claimed the region now occupied by the province of Reikland, while the Endals' lands comprised the southern portion of the region known as the Wasteland. Further west still were the Bretonii, a tribe that refused to submit to Sigmar's rule and was driven over the Grey Mountains to settle the lands now known as Bretonnia.

The northern portion of the Wasteland was claimed by the Jutone tribe, a proud and independently minded people whose leader Marius swore allegiance to Sigmar only in the aftermath of his great victory at Black Fire Pass.

To the east of the Jutones' lands were the Teutogens, who were absorbed into the Unberogens when Sigmar slew their ruler Artur, as well as the Thuringians and the Taleutens.

Most of the land claimed by these peoples was, as it remains today, dense, dark forest. Even today, comparatively few roads cross the region, for the woodland is voracious and will reclaim any path hewn through it within a short space of time. In those distant days, the only metalled roads in existence were those built by races older still than man – the elves and the dwarfs, who had abandoned much on the Old World over the centuries. The Old Dwarf Road, leading from Black Fire Pass to the west, was one of the few passable routes, the remainder being little more than hunters' paths that existed only so long as they were used. Most people did not travel far afield themselves, for to do so was simply too dangerous. Occasionally, a caravan of dwarf merchants would emerge from the mountains, and it was by the teachings of these master craftsmen that men learned to work metal. When travel was called for, many men utilised small coracles to navigate the rivers, though to do so during times of flood was all but suicidal.

For centuries afterwards, the tribes alternately traded and made war on each other, uniting to face an external threat, then squabbling and turning on each other when the threat had passed. The shield of the Dwarfholds provided some protection, but as their power declined, more and more Orc and Goblin warbands found their way through. They made their hideouts deep in the woods or among the rugged hills and raided nearby tribes. Worse creatures would find their way through the passes, too – Chaos warriors looking for glory for their foul gods and Mutant creatures looking for food.

The growing threats led to the development of the first towns and villages in the pre-Empire. In the west, the Unberogens founded a walled village at the confluence of the Reik and Talabec rivers, naming it Reikdorf. In the south, Tilean merchants from Miragliano built a fortified trading post on the ruins of a High Elf settlement that quickly became a rallying point for local tribes in times of trouble. This grew over time and became the city of Nuln.

In the north, the Teutogens searched long for a safe place, until a vision from their patron god, Ulric, Lord of Winter and Wolves, led them to a flat-topped mountain that stood like a fortified island amidst the surrounding forest. Here they built their chief settlement, Middenheim, and named the mountain Fauschlag, though it is now more commonly known as the Ulricsberg. Similarly, other tribes built fortified villages to protect themselves, such as Carroburg, founded by the Merogens, who would become the rulers of Drakwald. This continued for nearly a thousand years, until the coming of Sigmar and the crisis of the Great Orc Invasion.

The long wars between the Dwarfs and Elves had ended; the Dwarfs retreated to their mountain holds in the World's Edge Mountains and the High Elves abandoned their colonies, crossing the sea back to Ulthuan. Though the Dwarfs remained, their influence was much weakened, for many of their most powerful

kings were dead and their holds overrun. These ancient times had been a period of great disorder, and exact historical detail is scarce, but it is known that when the mountains of the east erupted in flames and were riven by mighty earthquakes, the power of the Dwarfs was finally broken and a new power was to rise in strength and ambition – Orcs and Goblins.

Hordes of greenskins poured across the Worlds Edge Mountains, through passes previously guarded by Dwarf fortresses, to ravage the lands west of the mountains. These violent brutes were ancient enemies of the Dwarfs, and with the paths to the west open, they fell upon the shattered holds and the lands beyond with deadly fervour. As the Dwarf realms reeled from the never-ending attacks, many of the tribes of Man began migrating southward. Fighting in common cause against the greenskins, it is certain that both Dwarfs and Men quickly recognised great potential in the other. The Dwarfs saw allies who could help them win back their lost empire, and Men were eager to learn the secrets of metalworking and the means of forging strong weapons of iron. These primitive tribes were a far cry from the civilised men of the Empire today; uncouth barbarians clad in rough furs, they dwelt in mud huts and carried crude weapons of stone or bronze. However, the Dwarf records tell that these men were courageous and hardy, recounting how they

battled against the brutal Orcs and Goblins for possession of the dark forests.

Somewhere, somehow, the Dwarfs and the humans forged an alliance that was to prove mutually beneficial over the next several hundred years. Many Dwarfs fled westwards, away from the ruins of the Worlds Edge Mountains, and some founded holds in the Grey Mountains to the south. Perhaps it was the Dwarf merchants trading for fur, charcoal and mineral ore who were the first to deal with the tribes of Men on a regular basis. In any case, it is certain that when they fought in common cause against the greenskin hordes, both Dwarfs and Men recognised potential in each other. The races of Dwarfs and men recognised a common cause and banded together in the face of this new menace. The humans looked upon the weapons and armaments of the Dwarfs with envious wonder, for their ever-sharp axes and machines of war smote greenskins by the dozen. The Dwarfs in turn saw a great vitality and spirit in the hearts of men. The Dwarfs saw in them new allies who could help them win back their lost mountain empire, and Men were eager to learn the secrets of metalworking and the means of forging strong weapons of iron. The human tribes had never marched beneath one banner, but the Dwarfs were able to broker allegiances and truces that brought thousands of fierce, well-armed warriors eastwards.





With a kick of his spurs, Schwarzhelm swung his steed around to renew the charge. Kraus fell in alongside him. Fresh lances were brought up, and the assault was marshalled anew.

The Orc leader saw the danger. Like of all its cursed race, it showed no fear. With a low growl, it stamped on the earth, rousing its followers into a frenzy of defiance.

Schwarzhelm rode straight for it. He lowered his lance, watching the steel tip swing into position over the approaching Orc's eyes. He could sense Kraus riding hard at his shoulder, feel the momentum of the charge all around him. The Orcs could see it too. Despite their bravado, despite their dogged willingness to stay and face the onslaught, their roars of defiance were less pronounced than usual. They feared the cavalry.

The gap closed in seconds, and then they were among them. The Orc leader, a head bigger than its nearest rival, swung a spiked club in a wide circle, aiming to take out the horse's legs as it thundered towards him. Schwarzhelm pulled the reins and the beast swerved comfortably to avoid the swipe. Then he was on top of it, hooves kicking out. The Orc leapt

to the ground, rolling across the grass before springing up with surprising agility. Schwarzhelm's lance missed it by inches. His steed careered onwards before he could pull it round for the return run.

The evidence of the charge's devastation was all around him. Kraus and the other knights had carved straight through the heart of the Orc horde, and the surviving warriors were in disarray. In the gap opened up by their assault, Averlander footsoldiers were hurrying to catch up and consolidate the won ground.

But the monster, the guiding force behind the Orcs' movements, still lived. Schwarzhelm kicked his horse back towards the huge figure of the greenskin commander, watching carefully as the creature prepared itself for the next pass.

In a split second, he determined his tactics. He was too close for another full charge. At such a range the lance would be more of a hindrance than a weapon. As the powerful horse lurched forward, he let the long shaft fall to the ground and drew the Sword of Justice. The Orc saw the change of strategy and braced itself, hurling insults at the oncoming Schwarzhelm in its dark and obscene tongue.



They came together again. The Orc reared, scything its spiked weapon, once again aiming at the horse. This had been expected. The warhorse had been trained for combat, and was more than lust a mere mount. As it closed on the Orc, Schwarzhelm pulled sharply up on the reins. The charger reared, kicking its front hooves out viciously before they fell back down to earth. One of them connected with the Orc's face, knocking one of its tusks out and cracking bone. The warband leader staggered back, roaring in pain.

Then Schwarzhelm was on it. He brought the *Rechtstahl* down in a sudden plunge, burying the tip of the steel deep into the Orc's hide. The warrior howled, twisting to escape the agony of the blade. Like all of its kind, it was strong, nearly wresting the sword from Schwarzhelm's hands.

But Schwarzhelm was too expert a swordsman for that. He withdrew the blade while pulling the horse round, keeping it close to the stricken creature below. The Orc tried to match the move, turning on its squat legs clumsily and raising its club more in defence than attack.

Schwarzhelm ignored the threat, watching for the opening. It came soon enough. He spun the sword rapidly in his grip, switching so the blade pointed down from his clenched right fist. As it whirled into position, the sunlight blazed from the holy steel.

Mustering all the power in his arm, Schwarzhelm stabbed the *Rechtstahl* down. The tip of the sword punctured the Orc's flesh between shoulder and neck, and kept going.

# THE AGE OF SIGMAR

## THE HELDENHAMMER

Not surprisingly for a man who founded an empire and then became a god, the origins of Sigmar are shrouded in myth – although the cult itself insists that all the stories are accurate and accepted dogma, even those that contradict.

The legend of the birth of Sigmar is the legend of the birth of the Empire itself. There are numerous variants of the tale, each with countless twists and turns according to local tradition. The only contemporary accounts recorded at the time were those set down by the dwarfs, for men were far more concerned with simple survival than maintaining written histories. Most accounts agree that all manner of portents were witnessed prior to Sigmar's birth, most of them foretelling that the son of the Unberogen chieftain Bjorn and his wife Griselda would grow up to be a man of great significance. The legend states that Sigmar was born upon the field of battle and that his mother died during his birth. At the very moment Sigmar came into the world he would have such effect upon, a twin-tailed comet crossed the sky, perhaps the most portentous sign of destiny and fate in the Old World.

It was a dangerous time, with frequent conflict with the Merogens and Teutogens, as well as the ever-present Greenskin threat. Cult legends say that a twin-tailed comet raced across the heavens on the night of his birth, a sign of the gods' blessings. Young Sigmar grew to be a powerful warrior even as a youth, and his kinsmen marvelled at his ferocity and prowess. Sigmar was a respected warrior of great nobility, courage and strength, and legend says that by his fifteenth year he had already led the terrifying Unberogens into battle against the Orc hordes dozens of times. Any who looked upon him could see that Sigmar was marked for greatness, though none suspected that, ultimately, he would transcend mortality entirely.

In his fifteenth summer, Sigmar and his most trusted warriors were hunting somewhere south of Reikdorf – the exact place is lost, but some think it is near Kemperbad – when he heard a band of Orcs stomping through the underbrush. The Orc warband, led by the Black Orc Warboss Vagrax Headstomper, had ambushed a Dwarf trading convoy from Karaz-a-Karak and was returning to camp with spoils and prisoners. Sigmar waylaid the Orcs and slew them all in an epic battle beneath the boughs of the forest before they could escape. Sigmar slew many Orcs that day, burning their foul corpses on a huge pyre after freeing the Dwarf captives.

Recovering his breath after the fight, Sigmar learned he had saved the life of Kurgan Ironbeard, King of Karaz-a-Karak, who had been captured by Vagrax Headstomper along with several of his kinsmen as he

made his way to the Grey Mountains. In gratitude for his release, King Kurgan presented Sigmar with a magical heirloom of his family – a magnificent rune-forged warhammer named Ghal Maraz, which means 'Skull Splitter' in the ancient Dwarf tongue. Sigmar accepted the king's generous gift and the two warriors pledged to aid one another in the wars against the rampaging greenskins. The two became fast friends, and Dwarf and Man often fought side by side against the growing tide of Orcs and Goblins. Sigmar wielded Ghal Maraz in battle after bloody battle like a thunderbolt of destruction, wading into living seas of greenskins and smiting all about him with prodigious fury. The weapon would become one with the warrior and the Empire, as much his sign as the twin-tailed comet that marked his birth. At the Battle of Astofen Bridge, Sigmar truly earned the right to bear Ghal-maraz in battle, defeating a large band of Orcs besieging an isolated settlement. This earned him the nickname 'Heldenhammer' – the Hammer of Goblins.

Over the next few years the bond between the two races became ever stronger. The lightning charges of the human cavalry and the unbound ferocity of their barbarian footsoldiers were in stark contrast to the methodical advance of the warrior Dwarfs, but in





conjunction the two forces were more formidable than ever before. Knowledge flowed from the Dwarf realms into the tribes of men; new battle doctrines were perfected and secrets of the forge brought to light. Soon the human tribes were armed with true steel and burnished alloy, their axes as bright as the gleam in their eyes. The wars against the Orcs and Goblins continued for many years and the bond between Men and Dwarfs became stronger as the threat from the east grew.

Seven years later, upon the death of his father who fell in battle against the savage Norsii, Sigmar became chieftain of the Unberogens and set about uniting the human tribes of the west through a combination of conquest and cooperation. Sigmar was a powerful and charismatic leader, but above all, he had a vision: a land united under his rule, free of Orcs and Goblins, governed by fair laws and protected by a strong, disciplined army. Through a combination of guile, diplomacy, bribery, and war, he brought the various tribes into his confederation, with him as its acknowledged leader. So it was that the seeds of the Empire were sown.

Still, some would not join him, viewing his vision of unity as a means of crowning one man above all others, and many battles were fought against those who opposed Sigmar and his allies. The Teutogens were their main human competitors in war, and these fought long and hard against the Unberogens, until finally acknowledging their rule when their chief Artur was defeated in single combat by Sigmar in the latter's throne room. Though the Unberogens and Teutogens were the greatest of the tribes, the legends mention many others as well: Thuringians, axe wielding men of the mountains, Cherusens, the master hunters, and Merogens with their long spears which were said to be the terror of Orc warriors.

After years of bloody war and diplomacy, twelve of the great tribes of Men had sworn mighty oaths to follow Sigmar and, together with his Dwarf allies, he drove the greenskin scourge from the lands west of the Worlds Edge Mountains. The few human tribes who still opposed Sigmar, mostly ancient enemies of the Unberogens, were driven south into the inhospitable Grey Mountains or, like the Norsii, north beyond the Middle Mountains, leaving Sigmar the undisputed ruler



of the lands between the Worlds Edge Mountains and the Great Ocean. And just in time, for the nascent Empire was to face the greatest challenge of its as-yet brief existence, one matched few times in its subsequent history.

Thus, when the Dwarfs were once again threatened by hordes of Orcs and Goblins, King Kurgan dispatched the Runesmith, Alaric the Mad, to seek aid from Sigmar and the race of Men. As soon as he heard of the danger to the Dwarfs', Sigmar called a gathering of chieftains and ordered them to muster their warriors. An alliance was made and Sigmar's army marched east to the beleaguered hold of Zhufbar. The Dwarf Hold was saved and Alaric kindled the ancient forges and refilled the Black Water, the huge lake whose waters powered the workshops of the Runesmiths.


## THE BATTLE OF BLACK FIRE PASS

The great crisis came when the Dwarfs brought word to Sigmar's camp near Nuln that a huge Orc army, the largest seen in centuries, was trying to break through Blackfire Pass, the only route by which an army could hope to cross the Black Mountains. A great tide of Orcs and Goblins were marching upon Kurgan's ancestral home, an army ten times the size of any that had gone before. Their winged beasts of war darkened the skies, the cave-creatures they had bound to their service lumbered through the valleys. The Dwarfs were hard-pressed to defend it, and King Kurgan invoked their old friendship, "for if we fail here, both our peoples are lost!"

Sigmar wasted no time. According to legend, he summoned the tribes to a great moot in the lands of the eastern Brigundians and laid his case before them. He recounted all the outrages committed against them by the Greenskins: the burned steadings and murdered family, the stolen cattle and fouled wells. He told them of the danger looming in the mountains, of the huge Orc horde the Dwarfs were struggling to hold back. Sigmar implored the gathered tribes not to meet the Orcs and Goblins as they had in the past, standing apart from each other, refusing to lend help and combine forces when needed – that would only lead to their defeat. His voice rising with a rage that was felt throughout the gathering, he called on all the tribes to unite and make their stand with the Dwarfs, calling it the crucible of a new nation. As recorded in the *Book of Origins*, Sigmar's final shout of "To war!" was answered with a cheer so loud that the Dwarfs themselves heard it in Black Fire Pass.

History records that Sigmar's army arrived just in time, as the Orcs finally breached the wall King Kurgan had built across the pass. The vastly outnumbered armies of Men and Dwarfs stood side by side against the greenskins as they poured up the valley. Though the hordes' ranks were holstered by foul Trolls and lumbering Giants, Sigmar and King Kurgan had chosen the field of battle with great cunning. Their armies were drawn up where the pass was at its narrowest, where the overwhelming numbers of Orcs and Goblins could be faced on an equal footing. The battle lasted for many brutal hours, with the howling green tide





breaking time and time again against an unbending line of splintered shields and bloodied blades that stood firm against them. The air was filled with countless arrows and quarrels, but still the orcs came on. Sigmar commanded his forces as no man ever had before, directing the defence, and retiring spent warbands while committing fresh ones as the enemy came on relentlessly. In places the line wavered, but Sigmar and Kurgan shouted words of courage and resolve, and smote down any greenskin that came near. Though horribly outnumbered, the men and Dwarfs under Sigmar and Kurgan held firm. Where the fighting grew desperate, Sigmar intervened, Ghal-maraz rising and falling countless times and turning the rocky ground of Black Fire Pass dark with greenskin blood.

Leading the charge from the chariot of Siggurd, chief of the Brigundians, Sigmar fell upon the Greenskins as if he were Ulric himself, and no foe could stand against him. Orcs and Goblins were slain by the score and even terrifying Wyverns fell to the Heldenhammer's wrath. As well as Sigmar, great heroes such as Ulfdar the Berserker, Marbad of the Endals and Queen Freya of the Asoborns made their names that grim day, their deeds becoming the stuff of legends for generations to come. The force of the Human assault stopped the Orc and Goblin advance, then began pushing it back. Following a furious counterattack by the elite veterans of the Unberogen tribe, the Orc battle line fell hack in disarray for the final time. With howls of victory, Sigmar and his fellow chieftains cut a swathe through the fleeing greenskins and slaughtered them without mercy. The Dwarfs saw this as their opportunity and charged from their forts and towers and fell upon the enemy flanks.



Fear beset the Greenskins, and they began to break and flee. Their chief, a powerful old Orc nicknamed "Bloodstorm", tried to rally his troops and return to the attack. Charging, he and his warband came face to face with Sigmar. Sigmar and the Orc warlord entered into single combat, whilst Siggurd and his elite warriors battled Bloodstorm's guards. Hammer clashed with great cleaver as the two struggled for advantage. At last, Sigmar killed the Orc chief with a mighty double blow, first breaking the hand that held the cleaver, then smashing Bloodstorm's skull on the return stroke.

The death of their leader was also the death of the Orc army, which broke and ran in utter panic. The slaughter that followed was terrible to behold as the armies of Man and Dwarf fell upon their hated foe. It is said there has never been a greater concentration of crows in all the world, than that which gathered to feast on the unburied Greenskins. So many died that day that it would be over a thousand years before Orcs and Goblins could again raise such an army. Many battles have since been fought at this strategic crossing point, but this was the first, the greatest and the most hard fought.



## THE FOUNDING OF THE EMPIRE

After the battle, the Humans returned to their lands, but not their old ways. All the tribal chiefs recognised that they were safer united than divided, and they knew who alone among them could make that unity a reality. Thus it was, at Reikdorf one year after the Battle of Blackfire Pass, that the High Priest of Ulric proclaimed Sigmar Emperor of all the lands between the Grey Mountains in the south and the Middle Mountains in the north, in recognition of his incredible victory. Before him knelt the tribal chiefs, who swore brotherhood to each other and fealty to Emperor Sigmar and the newly born Empire. King Kurgan presented Sigmar with a magnificent Dwarf-forged crown of gold and ivory, and the Emperor and the Dwarf High King swore oaths of eternal friendship to one another. In gratitude for their aid in saving the Dwarf realms, Kurgan commanded Alaric the Mad to begin the long process of creating twelve magical swords, known as Runefangs, for each of the tribal chieftains of the new Emperor's realm.

Sigmar's coronation marks the beginning of the Imperial Calendar and the first day of the Empire. He ruled justly and courageously from his capital, Reikdorf (later to be renamed Altdorf). For all the talk of unity, Sigmar knew his people and knew that the attachments to the old tribes were too strong to erase. He also acknowledged that the lands of the Empire, from the Grey Mountains to the World's Edge and from the Sea of Claws to the Vaults, were simply too big to govern centrally. He therefore made the best of the situation and granting land to the twelve tribal

chieftains who had sworn allegiance to him and aided him in his many wars against the greenskins. These divisions were based upon the old tribal territories, but they also absorbed the lands and peoples of many smaller tribes, as well as those that had previously belonged to the enemies of the Unberogens. The chieftains of these twelve provinces each took the title of Count and they were bound to Sigmar by oaths of loyalty. Each would be sovereign in his own lands, subject only to the laws and edicts the Emperor made for the Empire as a whole. How each king ruled his tribe, or as time went by, each Elector Count ruled his province, was his business and his alone. In return, they and their heirs were to rule in his name. The tribal lands became the original twelve Great Provinces of the Empire.



The years of Sigmar's reign were a time of peace and internal growth for the Empire. Villages became towns, towns became cities, and Sigmar decreed the building of two great roads, the first from Altdorf to Middenheim, and the second from Altdorf to Nuln along the banks of the Reik, and thence to join the Old Dwarf Road in Averland. The Emperor hoped that the roads and rivers together would serve as ties to bind the tribes to each other, and inhibit their tendencies to fly apart.

Peace and good weather brought regular crops and, in time, a booming population. The new Imperials cleared land and laid the foundations for new towns and cities, sometimes over the remains of their fortified camps, other times in virgin land. The Taleutens discovered a vast crater dead in the midst of the Great Forest, within which they built their chief city, Talabheim. The Brigundians founded both Averheim and Streissen as fortified trading posts, and eventually at Averheim the Counts of Averland built their great fortress, which has never fallen. Middenheim grew wealthy as the religious capital of the Empire, for, as Ulric was Sigmar's favoured deity, many tried to curry favour by making donations to his chief temple.


In the south, Nuln prospered as trade along the rivers to and from the Dwarfholds expanded after the coming of peace. The city grew so powerful and wealthy compared to the rest of the province (then known as "Uissenctland") that the Counts of Wissenland moved their seat of government there from Pfeildorf.

Sigmar led his people through many more trials and crises, most notably defeating Nagash, the First Necromancer and Lord of the Undead, at the gates of Reiksdorf itself.

## THE PASSING OF SIGMAR

Sigmar ruled the Empire for another fifty years and during wise and strong rule, the Empire prospered. Rough villages blossomed into small towns, towns grew into cities, the people multiplied, and many new settlements were founded. With the aid of the dwarfs, the Empire's skills of craftsmanship and construction grew every year – some say far faster than many of the older dwarfs deemed wise or proper. Of course, there were still enemies to fight. Marauding Goblins continued to cross over the Worlds Edge Mountains, and there were plenty of savage Human tribes that raided the fledgling Empire from the northern forests beyond the Middle Mountains. Little else is known of Sigmar's reign, for the Dwarf annals are concerned chiefly with their own affairs and Sigmar's part in them.

Fifty years after taking the throne, Sigmar announced his abdication to the assembled counts and the high priests of the various cults. "My work here is done," he told the shocked crowd. "The Empire is prosperous and united, and in your good hands it will continue to be so. But I have work I must finish, a task left undone." With that, the First Emperor placed his crown on the table,




left Ghal Maraz on his throne, picked up a rucksack, and walked out the door to an unknown fate. All that is known for certain is that Sigmar journeyed eastwards, supposedly to Karaz-a-Karak to meet his old friend Kurgan Ironbeard. If he ever arrived at that most famous of Dwarf holds the records do not tell, but he was never seen by his people again.

The gathered Counts were faced with a crisis: Sigmar had never married and, as far as anyone knew, had never produced an heir. Nor had he left a will designating who should succeed him. Indeed, never in the 50 years of his reign had anyone considered the question of succession. Who would rise to claim the Imperial throne? Would the counts now war amongst themselves to establish the strongest?

Several among the Counts claimed the throne, some on the basis of being the most skilled in war or politics, others claiming the favour of the gods or even a secret promise from Sigmar himself. The whole future of the fledgling Empire must have seemed in grave doubt. The arguments in the Reikhaus grew acrimonious and the threat of civil war loomed large, when a priestess of Rhya who was in the retinue of the Count of Stirland suggested an election. Let them all renew their vows of brotherhood and then let each state why he or she should take the crown. The first to get a majority of votes would become Emperor.

Grasping at straws to prevent disunity and civil conflict, the Counts agreed and retired to the Great Hall of the Reikhaus to deliberate. After three days passed (and many promises, threats, and much gold changed hands), the Ar-Ulric came forth to announce the new Emperor: Fulk of Wissenland. As part of the agreement, the counts determined that each new Emperor should be chosen from among them, and that the person so chosen could move the capital to his chief city. They also elevated a powerful noble of the Reikland to become the new Count of that province. In recognition of their role in choosing the Emperor, the Counts changed their titles to "Elector Counts."



#### THE OLD ALLIANCE

*In the history of the world, there has never been a greater alliance than that struck between the ancient tribes of Men and the Dwarfs. When one considers the sceptical nature of Dwarfs, it is a miracle that any common ground could be found at all, but in Sigmar they found an ally worthy of their respect and trust. Over and again Sigmar proved that Dwarfen faith was not misplaced; raising the siege of Zhufbar, fighting beside Bori Knarlhelm in the Blood-axe Deeps, holding Black Fire Pass and many more. Dwarfs have long memories and they have not forgotten Sigmar's deeds, nor the pledge of friendship they made with the barbarian king. Thus, while the Dwarfs must occasionally put the Men of the Empire in their place, they will always march in defence of the old alliance – for in a world infested by savage enemies, true friends are hard to find.*

Thus the Empire's system of elected Emperors was established. This system was to continue in some form right up until the present day, through wars and periods-of anarchy, even surviving long periods where powerful Emperors manipulated the elective body in the interests of their own family.

#### THE CULT OF SIGMAR

Less than 25 years after Sigmar's disappearance, during the reign of Emperor Henest in Nuln, a mendicant friar named Johan Helstrum appeared in Altdorf telling of a new god – the Emperor Sigmar himself. With a wild gleam of enthusiasm in his eyes and the strength of conviction in his voice, he preached the word of Sigmar Divine to all who would listen, even gaining acolytes from among the priests of other cults.


Not all welcomed his words. Many of the clergy of the other gods dismissed Helstrum as a madman, his visions a sign that he had been eating mouldy bread. What he said verged on blasphemy, for he claimed to have seen in a vision that Ulric himself placed a crown upon Sigmar's head, anointing him a god and making him their chief. Some wanted him killed, but others were more tolerant. Helstrum's new cult preached the unity of the Empire and obedience to the Emperor and the Elector Counts, and so this small cult gained permission to build a temple in Sigmar's favoured city, Altdorf, with Johan Helstrum as the first Grand Theogonist.

As the centuries passed, the cult would grow wealthy and powerful. Sigmar's worship became so popular in Reikland and Stirland that it practically supplanted the cult of Ulric in those areas, much to the latter cult's irritation. Money from gifts and rents flowed into its coffers, until the Grand Theogonists rivalled the wealth and power of the Elector Counts, and the cult began to clamour for an electoral vote.

The time of Sigmar had passed and the first ruler of the Empire became a legend, a heroic forebear of his people. Temples and shrines were set up to his memory and soon a cult grew up around Sigmar's mythic deeds, with tales of how he would return to his people in their time of need, and his coming would be heralded by the arrival of a fiery twin-tailed comet.

The worship of Sigmar was soon to change from the hero worship of a legend to something much greater when a mysterious hermit arrived at the gates of Reikdorf – the town that would grow to become Altdorf – claiming to have had a vision of Sigmar surrounded by the other gods. A fine temple was built in the heart of the city and such was the power of Sigmar's legend that within a generation he was worshipped as a god.

In due course his cult developed a priesthood, headed by the first Grand Theogonist, Johann Helsturm. The rise of the Cult of Sigmar was swift, and soon it had thousands upon thousands of adherents and Helsturm



became one of the most powerful men in all of the Empire.

The power of Sigmar's church grew with each passing year, with its organization becoming more structured and unified as time went by. The Cult of Sigmar became one of the most powerful faiths in the land with many thousands of loyal followers, and the hero of Black Fire Pass took his place alongside the pantheon of the old gods of the Empire. Sigmar became the patron of the Empire and its inhabitants – who call themselves Sigmar's People. This is true throughout the Empire, even in places where Ulric, Taal and other gods are the most actively worshipped. All Empire folk are Sigmar's People, the Sons of Sigmar, and the Emperor is the Heir of Sigmar regardless of his ancestry.

## EXPANSION AND APOGEE

Emperor Fulk moved his capital to Nuln, where it stayed for several centuries as his heirs succeeded in having themselves elected time after time. It was an era of growth and vigour for the Empire, as the expanding population looked for outlets for their energy. Not satisfied with merely filling in the lands they already had, the Elector Counts looked to expand their provinces—and their power relative to one another. From the Fifth to the Tenth centuries, a period historians call "the Drive to the Frontiers," the Counts and Emperors moved to extend the Empire to what they felt were her natural borders.

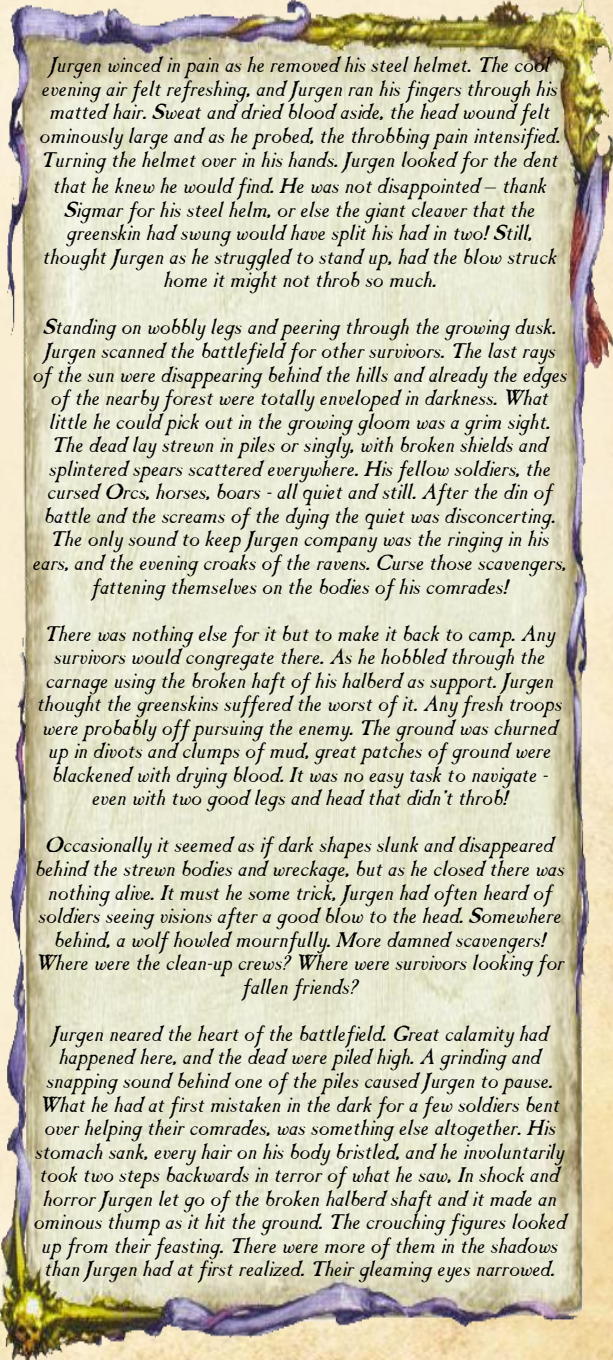
The Counts of Ostland and Talabecland aggressively colonised and expanded into the lands of what is now Kislev, claiming all the land to the mountains and the river Lynsk, but their settlements were rarely successful. More fortunate were Talabecland's efforts to expand into the land in its southeast. Originally ruled by the heirs of Adelhard of the Ostagoths, the towns of Ostermark became Talabecland's "East March" later regaining their independence as the League of Ostermark.

Stirland and Averland, meanwhile, aggressively expanded into the less fertile eastern regions of their provinces, pressing into the foothills the Dwarfs claimed as their own and leading to occasional clashes. In the process they incorporated lesser tribes and small kingdoms of related peoples that had never joined Sigmar's confederation, particularly the Fennones, whose lands became the province of Sylvania under Stirland.

The Emperor most associated with this period is the Sixth century's Sigismund the Conqueror, who not only defeated the Juton King and added the Jutonsryk land to the province of Westerland, but also crossed the Grey Mountains to create the West Mark on the Bretonnian side and invaded the lands of the Border Princes (then a wild, tribal region) to found the province of Lichtenberg and build a series of castles to protect the Empire's flank. One area eluded all the

conquerors and acquirers of territory, however: the Wood Elf realm of Laurelorn. Claimed by the Elector Counts of Drakwald, Middenland, and Westerland, the Wood Elves acknowledged no overlord and defeated all attempts to conquer them by force. They won their most spectacular victory in 897 IC, when they overwhelmed the army of the Drakwalder Count, whom history remembers only as "the Unlucky." The defeat was so crushing that it set the stage for Drakwald's later degeneracy and eventual disappearance.

By the Tenth century, the Empire had reached the pinnacle of its size and achievement. No power in the Old World could match it, and there was talk amongst its rulers of one day governing the whole of the Old World. Blind with hubris, they could not see the cracks that would one day bring the whole structure crashing down.



*Jurgen winced in pain as he removed his steel helmet. The cool evening air felt refreshing, and Jurgen ran his fingers through his matted hair. Sweat and dried blood aside, the head wound felt ominously large and as he probed, the throbbing pain intensified. Turning the helmet over in his hands, Jurgen looked for the dent that he knew he would find. He was not disappointed – thank Sigmar for his steel helm, or else the giant cleaver that the greenskin had swung would have split his had in two! Still, thought Jurgen as he struggled to stand up, had the blow struck home it might not throb so much.*

*Standing on wobbly legs and peering through the growing dusk, Jurgen scanned the battlefield for other survivors. The last rays of the sun were disappearing behind the hills and already the edges of the nearby forest were totally enveloped in darkness. What little he could pick out in the growing gloom was a grim sight. The dead lay strewn in piles or singly, with broken shields and splintered spears scattered everywhere. His fellow soldiers, the cursed Orcs, horses, boars – all quiet and still. After the din of battle and the screams of the dying the quiet was disconcerting. The only sound to keep Jurgen company was the ringing in his ears, and the evening croaks of the ravens. Curse those scavengers, fattening themselves on the bodies of his comrades!*

*There was nothing else for it but to make it back to camp. Any survivors would congregate there. As he hobbled through the carnage using the broken haft of his halberd as support, Jurgen thought the greenskins suffered the worst of it. Any fresh troops were probably off pursuing the enemy. The ground was churned up in divots and clumps of mud, great patches of ground were blackened with drying blood. It was no easy task to navigate – even with two good legs and head that didn't throb!*

*Occasionally it seemed as if dark shapes slunk and disappeared behind the strewn bodies and wreckage, but as he closed there was nothing alive. It must be some trick, Jurgen had often heard of soldiers seeing visions after a good blow to the head. Somewhere behind, a wolf howled mournfully. More damned scavengers! Where were the clean-up crews? Where were survivors looking for fallen friends?*

*Jurgen neared the heart of the battlefield. Great calamity had happened here, and the dead were piled high. A grinding and snapping sound behind one of the piles caused Jurgen to pause. What he had at first mistaken in the dark for a few soldiers bent over helping their comrades, was something else altogether. His stomach sank, every hair on his body bristled, and he involuntarily took two steps backwards in terror of what he saw. In shock and horror Jurgen let go of the broken halberd shaft and it made an ominous thump as it hit the ground. The crouching figures looked up from their feasting. There were more of them in the shadows than Jurgen had at first realized. Their gleaming eyes narrowed.*

# BLOOD IN THE SNOW

This was madness, thought Lars Holt as he trudged through the knee-deep snow. There is a very good reason that armies didn't march during the winter, and Lars couldn't fathom why he and his lads had been called to arms and led off into the winter snows. They were Talabeclanders! They weren't a bunch of raucous, brawling Middenlanders, whose penchant for shaggy hair and beards would've been far better suited to such conditions. He had heard some old farmhand say that Ulric protects his own, and he was starting to wonder if he should ask the god of wolves and winter what he could do about his current predicament.

They had been trudging south-west through the snow for days now, marching across the Barren Hills and off towards Unterbaum. A bunch of peasants had gotten themselves killed there, the selfish bastards. It was Beastmen apparently, and Lars hated Beastmen. Not that he cared at this point in time. Right now, he would quite happily trade in his own mother-in-law for a flask of brandy to warm his belly. In fact, he'd probably do it for a single swig.

Lars wasn't sure, but he could swear that the storm was deteriorating. As much as his toes felt like they could drop off any moment and he could barely hold onto his halberd, he could just about put up with the snow. But this? Sigmar's bones, it was getting worse! The blizzard had been gradually condensing, and the sharp sleet pouring down in sheets was starting to lacerate his exposed skin. If it wasn't for the fact that he would be left on his own, and in the middle of nowhere, he would've almost considered desertion. Oh well, Lars thought with a resigned shrug. Maybe the weather will turn.

It didn't. In fact, the weather had gotten even worse. Lightning now wracked the sky and the wind was blowing something fierce. As if that hadn't been enough, General Tulwitz had only gone and led them straight into an ambush, despite scouting ahead from atop his Griffon. A Beastmen warherd. Lars should've known; it was the only way things could've gotten even more damnable. The Talabeclanders marched five-hundred strong, yet they were still outnumbered a good three times over. The cannons had been overrun before they had even been unlimbered from their horses. Oh well, thought Lars with a wry smile as he hefted his halberd. Maybe his luck will turn.

It didn't. In fact, his luck had pretty much run out. If he wasn't destined to die at the end of a Beastman's blade, or get trampled to bits by a rampaging Ghorgon, Lars was pretty sure that the weather was going to finish the job instead. As it was, General Tulwitz had already been blasted clean out of the sky by a stray lightning bolt. How the mighty had quite literally fallen. He didn't mind that the pompous old fool was dead, but the Griffon he rode around on was a vicious critter, and would be pretty damned useful right about now. So much for that.

Lars and his lads were busy sticking it to some horn-headed freaks at the moment, though these were only the runts of the litter. Ungors, the woodsmen called them. Not much of a challenge for his hardy lads. Lars had trained them well.

The true test would come when their larger cousins finished chopping up Randall's gunners. If only they had spent more time practicing with their blades than they had polishing their fancy handguns, they might not be faring so badly. But who was he kidding? They were facing Minotaurs – ten-foot tall amalgams of steely sinew and mindless rage. Lars could only wince as he saw Randall picked up by one of the monstrous beasts and torn bloodily in half above its head. Evidently not sated by the crimson shower that splashed its face, the minotaur held Randall's rent torso over its open maw and drank greedily as his innards spilled forth into its mouth.

Lars was so appalled by the minotaur's gory display of greed that he retched what little food he had eaten for lunch all down his breastplate. It was all he could do to avoid being skewered by an Ungor's spear as he did so, twisting to take its rusty point in the shoulder instead of his chest. Roaring in pain, Lars tore himself free and brought his halberd slamming down, bifurcating the insolent creature's head in a spray of blood, splintered skull and grey matter.



The Ungors had evidently had enough by now, turning tail and fleeing into the storm. Lars wasn't going to let them off that easy. They had lost plenty of good men to their stabbing spears. He and his halberdiers gave chase, chopping down the cowardly beasts as they ran. It was at that point that they faced the minotaurs. Damn, but they were huge. Lars and his lads were no pushover when it came to a good fight, but he had no illusion as to what was about to happen. But then, over the din of the storm, Lars heard a roaring noise. It definitely wasn't the Minotaurs. And the sky was getting even darker. The wind was really beginning to pick up too. Lars cursed to himself, 'Oh, holy Sigmar, no! Not that!'

A violently rotating column of air had spiralled its way towards the ground in the distance and was starting to head their way. The cyclone was a swirling mass of brooding cloud as black as coal, its funnel wreathed in lightning that spat and coursed from its howling core. It was a darkstorm tornado – Lars had heard tell of them, but never in his worst nightmares did he expect to encounter one, let alone be fighting for his life when he did so.

Lost to their blood frenzy, the Minotaurs hadn't noticed the danger steadily creeping up behind them. They were only interested in their next meal and bellowed in mindless fury as they thundered forwards. Lars was a canny one, though, and wasn't going to hang about. He could see that the darkstorm was going to reach them before the Minotaurs did and had no intention of staying there to welcome death from either of them. The last thing Lars heard as he legged it for cover was the low braying of the Minotaurs turn into howls of bestial panic as they were swept up by the murderous winds and lost to the storm.



# AGE OF ANARCHY

The early years of the Empire's history are not well recorded. Some of the early Emperors built tombs and temples which survive in part, and whose intricate carvings can still be made out. A few of the better examples are of superior Dwarf workmanship, and on these can be read Dwarf runes which tell something of the history of the Emperors and their times. Later chroniclers attempted to compile this information into histories of the Empire, and some ventured to make lists of reigning Emperors. Even these compilations are incredibly ancient, and not always consistent or reliable themselves.

As a consequence, very little is known about the first thousand years of Imperial history. That the Empire grew in power is certain, but there were civil wars, periods where there was no Emperor and where rival Emperors warred against each other. Rampaging Orc and Goblin warbands swept down from the mountains relentlessly, and in their wake, the battlefields would be stained red with the blood of men. Beastmen rampaged through the dark forests destroying whole settlements and glutting on the flesh of the slaughtered. Skaven, a race of loathsome ratmen, erupted from beneath the sewers of ever-growing cities to drown the surface dwellers in a tide of mangy fur and rusty blades, and shambling corpses rose from their graves to wreak destruction upon the living. These and other horrors assailed the Empire every year, but under the leadership of the Elector Counts, the armies of the Empire fought their enemies with courage and ingenuity, and the land remained more or less united despite interludes of disarray.

## DISINTEGRATION AND COLLAPSE

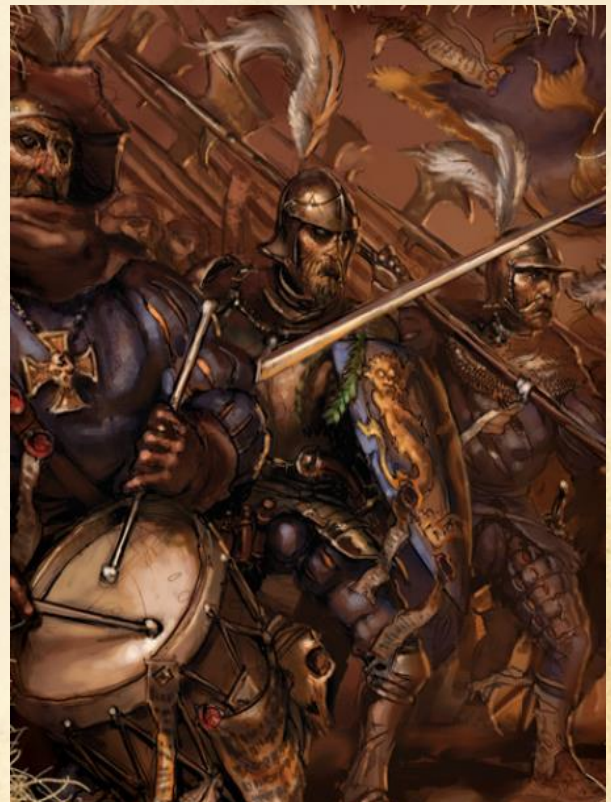
The turn of the millennium heralded a decay in the fortunes of the Empire. It was later known as a time of sybaritic pleasures, poor leadership, and internal strife. The Drakwald Counts had become Emperors not long before, bribing their way into office to use its power to preserve their failing position. The defeat at the hands of the Wood Elves and a series of disasters had weakened the province so much that there was fear it would be absorbed by another. They moved the capital to Carroburg and began a reign so corrupt that "Drakwalder" to this day is a byword for a greedy, grasping person. Under their dubious stewardship the Empire would begin to rot from within.

### The Reek of Decadence

For over a hundred years, Emperor after Emperor continued the venal ways of the Drakwald line, looking for any way to enrich themselves and caring more for the pleasures of the senses than the prosperity of the Empire. Fragmentary annals of the time give lurid hints of debaucheries and orgies at the Imperial Court—and of other, even more obscene events.

Two events of note took place early in the 11th century, both under the reign of Emperor Ludwig II Hohenbach, known as "der Grosse" on his coins, but remembered by history as "the Fat." Both a gourmand and an avid sensualist, Ludwig was infamous for the torture and execution of chefs who offended his culinary tastes. Finally, he ordered his Halfling valet to create a "meal worthy of his greatness." The resulting butter-laden feast was so successful that Ludwig not only made his valet the Imperial Chef, but elevated him to Elector Count, tearing the fertile farmlands of the Halflings away from Stirland and Averland to create the Mootland. This appealed to Ludwig not only because he had enjoyed a fine meal, but it also gave him vengeance against the rulers of those two provinces, whose daughters had spurned his attentions.

Seeing the success of these tactics, the Cult of Sigmar began to slowly woo the rotund Emperor. Invited to a ceaseless round of feasts, banquets, and "private suppers," the Emperor slowly began to see the cult in a positive light. Folk began to whisper that the High Priest of the cult would sit at Ludwig's right hand, constantly filling his plate with fine food, and his cup with wine. Indeed, the cult gifted the Emperor with a Palace in Altdorf, rumoured to be fitted out with extensive kitchens, dining halls, and exceedingly well-appointed privies. Eventually, the Emperor signed a charter granting the cult an Electoral vote. The Grand Theonist of the time is said to have died in bed a short while later – smothered to death by his own neck fat.







### Fashion and Folly

With the rise of the Drakwald Emperors, the arts see an explosion in noble patronage. In their quest for self-aggrandisement, the decadent rulers commission flattering portraiture, fawning literature and pompous musical scores. The nobility follow suit, and soon everyone of note has artists in their service.

Referred to as the 'naturalistic' movement, artwork ceases to be a literal record of history as it is. Many families seize the chance to have their history recorded in huge tomes. Outrageous claims, tall battlefield tales and simpering portrayal of forefathers become the norm for such books, leading to some extraordinary cases of one upmanship.

Similarly, many chose to have 'favourable' portraits created thus, for example, the infamous drooling Duke of Leicheburg is depicted as a striking, martially capable man, with not one trace of a hump-back and an entirely normal number of eyes. Some go as far as having their faces painted or woven into famous scenes from the history of the Empire, such as the Battle of Blackfire pass.

Dismissed by common folk as nonsense, this flowering of the arts saw some improvements that were to their benefit as well. The Cult of Sigmar was one of the first to seize upon the idea of illuminated books, commissioning lavish tomes after the style of Noble histories. Focussed around the Life of Sigmar, these works were frequently treated as objects of homage with some temples dedicating thousands of crowns to their creation. The completion of the Cathedral of Sigmar in Altdorf occasioned the commissioning of eight such books, each bound in beaten gold dug from the mountains by the descendants of Kurgan Ironbeard himself. Completed in 1012 these eight tomes were

paraded with great ceremony throughout the Empire before being returned to a vault deep beneath the Cathedral.

Within the dye trade, the creation of so many works of art caused great leaps forward in colouring and fixatives. Not only were tinted inks much in demand, so too were fine shades of cloth and paint. Certain families began to specialise in hugely expensive pigments for noble portraiture, experimenting with all manner of ingredients in the quest to find the truest blue and the brightest gold. This short lived but highly lucrative trade reached its peak in 1023 when Baroness Auerbach of Hochland was reputed to have paid 120,000 crowns for a pearl based paint exactly matched to the yellow-white of her teeth.

This brief blossoming of art was not to survive long however. Forthcoming disasters would end the decadence of the Drakwald line for good.

### THE SKAVEN WARS

As the centuries passed and the Empire continued to grow in power, Emperors came and went; some good, some bad, but none of such infamy as the hated Boris Goldgather. The year 1053 saw the accession of this last and worst of the Drakwald emperors, Boris Hohenbach, known forever as Boris "Goldgather" and Boris "the Incompetent." Devoted solely to money and its acquisition, he let the Elector Counts rule as they would as long as he received appropriate "gifts." New titles and offices were invented and sold, so now Elector Counts vied with each other to acquire ever more grandiose titles, such as "Grand Prince" or "Grand Duchess Palatine." A quick bribe would see a troublesome freetown's charter revoked by the Emperor, the first news of which would come when soldiers of the local noble would seize control and hang the burgomeister. Others joined the game as the cults began selling ecclesiastical offices. The Emperor himself would even sell to commoners the right to spend the night in the imperial palace, renting out the chambers of a 9th century emperor, Jürgen the Opulent.

During his grossly incompetent rule, the Empire struggled under the burden of excessive taxation and corrupt officials. People starved, state armies were neglected and border forts were left virtually unmanned. In this weakened, dispirited condition, the Empire was in no state to weather the greatest catastrophe ever to strike the Old World – the Black Plague of 1111. The plague erupted in several cities at once in the east, spreading inexorably to the west. The easternmost lands of Talabecland and Ostland, what would later become Kislev, were denuded of even animal life and had to be abandoned. The crowded towns and cities were hardest hit, and desperate authorities would set fires to burn whole neighbourhoods at the first sign of plague. Travellers even suspected of carrying the plague were hung and their corpses burned by desperate roadwardens. Prayers to the gods went unanswered, priests dying at their

altars, while nobles and the wealthy abandoned the urban areas for the relative safety of their rural estates.

The Emperor himself could not have cared less. Boris secluded himself at a palace miles from Carroburg and allowed only the wealthiest and most beautiful of his subjects to join him there. There, thoughts of plague and pustulated peasants were far away. They would laugh and drink and wait for the plague to finally die down. In the summer 1115 IC, there was an especially virulent eruption of plague. The Emperor, most of the Elector Counts, and their immediate families and retainers had gathered at the Carroburg palace to hold court and wait for it to die down. One hot summer evening during a ball, they instead died themselves.

As the Emperor gorged himself on roast goose and the courtiers danced under the stars, none noticed the figures in ragged robes gathering upwind of them. They were the censer carriers of Clan Pestilens, and this was the beginning of the Skaven's final assault on the Empire.

The winds carried the many plagues of the Skaven throughout the palace grounds. Hundreds of the Empire's leaders died that night, buboes sprouting from their bodies and pustules bursting. As he lay dying, Boris the Incompetent listened as the Skaven leader told him of their grand plan, how armies of his kin were this night marching all over the Empire, carriers of its downfall.

Many towns and cities fell to the Skaven on that night and those that followed. Even if they were not captured, the damage was tremendous as libraries, temples, universities, and whole districts burned. The

only good thing to come of the plague was that it claimed the life of Emperor Goldgather, who had died in his castle surrounded by fretting apothecaries (none of whom, it is believed, tried too hard to save him), and news of his death helped to raise morale amongst the oppressed populace. The Empire's forces tried to put up resistance, but they were disorganised and but a shadow of their former power. To make matters worse, hordes of Skaven scurried out of their hidden underground tunnels beneath the Empire's cities, preying wherever the Black Plague had done its work. They looted and destroyed the disease-ravaged settlements, slaughtering thousands and enslaving thousands more, many of whom were led in chains down into the tunnels, never to be heard from again. Great cities like Nuln and Mordheim became islands in a sea of Skavenruled territory. Eventually, they were all sure to fall. From behind their walls, the Empire's few remaining leaders were sure they saw Sigmar's dream dying. Without an Emperor, even one as incompetent as Boris Goldgather, the Empire was at its most vulnerable.

Many thousands died over that winter; entire towns and villages were wiped out as the virulent disease spread with unnatural rapidity. Tens of thousands died choking on their own blood, wiping whole villages and towns from the map. Great pyres and mass graves became a daily sight. Snaking columns of refugees attempted to flee their fate, but only succeeded in spreading the infection still further. The dead quickly outnumbered the living, and by the time the plague began to subside, fully three quarters of the Empire's population were rotting in open mass graves.

#### THE LOSS OF DRAKWALD

*It is during the Skaven Wars that the province of Drakwald was lost – almost the entire population, including the ruling Count and his heir, wiped out either by the plague or by jagged skaven blades. Later, rulership of the land was nominally split between the Counts of Nordland and Middenland, but the area has never really been reclaimed. The abandoned villages, farms and towns were never resettled, and were soon swallowed up by the encroaching forest.*

*Should anyone now be foolish enough to travel into the forest for any length of time, he might just stumble across a few fallen timbers and stones, moss-covered and overgrown with tree roots, all that remains of what was once a thriving settlement. The true rulers of the Drakwald are now the beastmen that stalk its twisted remains, and a man would be wise to travel with a large, armed force, lest he become the next meal of those hate-filled creatures.*



Emperor Boris's extravagant tomb being carried to Mordheim

However, there were some who resisted. Those who remained able to fight rallied under the command of the Elector Count of Middenheim, Graf Mandred von Zelt, who broke the Skaven siege of Middenheim and, gathering what forces he could, fought them to a standstill along the lines of the Talabec and the Reik. For the next nine years, Mandred rallied the surviving Empire's people and, in battle after battle, pushed the Ratmen back into their underworld. Though cowardly in small numbers, large forces of skaven were vicious and driven. Besides, the devious leaders of the ratmen were not about to abandon their prize easily. They were finally scattered and driven back underground at the Battle of the Howling Hills near Averheim in 1124. Mandred beheaded the verminous Warlord at the head of the Skaven army with one stroke of his Runefang and sent them fleeing in terror. There on the field of battle, the remaining Electors acclaimed him Emperor Mandred I "Ratslayer." Following the battle, Count Mandred had the Warlord's skull fashioned into a helmet of terrifying aspect that would forever live in the darkest nightmares of the ratmen.

Mandred faced a tremendous rebuilding task. Thanks to the plagues and other depredations of the Skaven, they say of every ten souls in the Empire, roughly three survived, and vast tracts of land were laid to waste, much of which reverted to wilderness. Mandred's first act upon coming to the throne, however, was to exact punishment for the foolishness that had led to the disaster. By Imperial decree, he stripped the house of Hohenbach of any honours and declared the Grand Province of Drakwald dissolved, its lands merged with



Middenland and Nordland. Its Runefang sword was placed into the vaults of the Cathedral of Ulric at Middenheim.

Emperor Mandred ruled for over 25 years, and in that time gained a reputation for strength and as a stern but fair ruler. Rebuilding began on the cities and towns, but much knowledge was lost in the Skaven war that could never be recovered. Mandred ruled as a strong Emperor, and the Elector Counts deferred to his wishes in all things. After a few years, people began to forget the horrors of 1115-1124, but the Skaven did not forget.

Strangely, despite the terrible events of this time, the Skaven Wars are now largely unheard of, or at least dismissed as a fictional tale. Relics, evidence and accounts of those events have all disappeared over the years, apparently stolen or accidentally destroyed, while any scholar or historian claiming the truth of the stories tends to meet with an untimely demise. As such, the majority of Empire citizens discount the existence of the Skaven, at least as any kind of organised threat, as nothing more than an old wives' tale.

#### THE BATTLE OF MAUSTADT

*"And now gentlemen, we come to one of the finest exhibits in our museum. In this case you can see a collection of very interesting items. An ancient text, conserved in our library section, describes how a survivor of the Battle of Maustadt apparently brought these items back. According to the text, this battle was fought by imperial troops to repel an invasion of "Skaven", a race of rat-men infesting the underground of the entire Old World.*

*At the back you can see one of the fagged banners carried to battle by these rat-men, inscribed with their evil runes. The damaged mask on the left belongs to a creature that is referred to in the text as a "Poison Wind Grenadier" and is still stained by the caustic fumes this race supposedly uses with great efficacy in their vicious tunnel-fights against Dwarfs, Goblins and other subterranean races.*

*In front of the mask we have the sword, which is obviously Imperial in its symbols and has allegedly been enchanted to bring death to these evil denizens of the underworld. The text informs us that a great hero, whose name has been lost in time, used it to slay the Grey Sorcerer who was leading the Skaven horde. Sadly he too was mortally wounded by the dying wizard's last spell.*

*This brings us to the central piece, the magically scaled jar that contains one of the eyes of that very same Grey Sorcerer. It still emits a faint green radiance, clearly visible in the dark, as a memory of its former sinister powers.*

*The incredible amount of resources devoted to create all this paraphernalia is amazing to the modern historian and is a clear example of the extent of lies and legends that have been mixed with facts in the past. It is our responsibility today to denounce as false all this nonsense. Our extensive researchers have found no other record of this Battle of Maustadt, and no other credible traces of the existence of these "Skaven". Now, moving on to the next room...*

## AN EMPIRE DIVIDED

The Empire recovered rapidly from the Skaven wars, largely thanks to the death of Boris Goldgather and the dynamic leadership of the newly elected Emperor Mandred. His respected generalship and charismatic personality held the Empire together, but with its population virtually wiped out, many villages were simply abandoned, and much of the Empire was left deserted. Tragically, Emperor Mandred's life – and with it the Empire's recovery – was ended upon the envenomed blade of a Skaven assassin, who somehow bypassed every guard and locked gate. Taking their revenge, the Skaven Clan Eshin assassinated Emperor Mandred in his bedchamber on the night of Geheimnisnacht, 1152, leaving over a dozen daggers in his body and carving out his heart. Like Sigmar before him, he had left no heir.

In the years following this calamity, the electoral system of the Empire began to fall apart. Personal rivalries, conflicting ambitions and simple jealousy divided the Elector Counts and they failed to reach a decision as to who should become the new Emperor. Blood was shed in the Grand Throne Room of the Graf of Middenheim when these squabbles turned violent and the counts returned to their lands with anger in their hearts.

The Electoral Council chose a weakling as Emperor, Otto of Solland, a pattern that would hold for centuries; the office of Emperor had become a toy to be traded amongst them. It did not matter to the Elector Counts, who wanted the freedom to engage in internecine wars without restraint. So common were these, in fact, that this period became known as the "Age of Wars." Yet, the throne was an important symbol of unity, until finally one decided she did not wish to share it.

In 1359, the Grand Duke of Stirland was elected Emperor in Nuln, but Grand Duchess Otilia of Talabecland felt it was hers by right. In 1360, she declared herself Empress without election and banned the cult of Sigmar from Talabecland, in retaliation for the Stirlander Count's taxes on the cult of Ulric. She



declared war upon her rival, the Elector Count of Stirland, and open hostilities broke out between the two provinces.

From here on the private wars of the Empire took a religious tone, with Sigmarite provinces clashing with Ulrican ones as the two thrones struggled for power, though it was not uncommon for other provinces to side with their ostensible enemies for short-term gain. In the years that followed, the Imperial crown passed between the Elector Counts as the Empire broke apart into separate warring states.

The next few centuries saw a succession of Emperors, as one pretender after another launched a bloody coup to claim to the throne. The Empire was riven by internecine fighting that soon turned to openly declared civil war. There was even an era when there were two Emperors at the same time – one was the elected Emperor and the other was the Elector Count of Talabecland, who continued to claim a hereditary position as Emperor following the self-appointed reign of Otilia. In effect, Talabecland had seceded from the Empire, and was joined at various times by other provinces that were dissatisfied with the current elected Emperor. The Court at Talabheim, the capital of Talabecland, was a natural refuge for enemies of the Elector Count of Stirland.

The situation grew worse in 1547 IC, when the Ulrican Elector Count of Middenland, Grand Duke Heinrich, felt he had the votes to become Emperor by election and unify the country once again. Others disagreed, however, and made their points quite clear – the points of crossbow bolts aimed at Heinrich's chest. The Grand Duke stormed off in a rage back to Middenheim and issued a proclamation declaring himself Emperor, issuing coins and edicts to that effect. Now the Empire had three Emperors – one elected, two self-chosen – and the disintegration accelerated. This audacious proclamation marked the beginning of the Time of Three Emperors, with each claimant soliciting allies and supporters amongst the others.

This was an age of bitter internecine strife as the three claimants to the throne warred with each other and sought the backing of the remaining Counts – both their political support and their military might. Bribes, blackmail, and threats flew back and forth, while armies marched to do battle with their neighbours, razing border forts, pushing border lines, or even attempting to depose a rival Count.

For all intents and purposes the Empire had ceased to exist, and the divided factions were ripe for attack by outside enemies. The provinces of the Empire had now become more or less ungovernable, and for the next century and a half; the Elector Counts fought rivals and rebellions within their own lands as well as the numerous enemies and monstrous foes that assailed them from without.

Emperor Heinrich declared war on Frederik V, the "Otilian Emperor" based in Talabheim. Meanwhile, Frederik made war on the Nuln Emperor, whose name has been lost to history but was apparently a tool of the Grand Theogonist. Even lesser provinces asserted their autonomy: western Middenland in 1550 declared its independence from Middenheim under the leadership of the von Bildhofen family and received the Runefang of Drakwald in return for supporting the Nuln Emperor. (Although no clear record exists of how this sword disappeared from the vaults in Middenheim and appeared in Nuln, religious lore of the Cult of Ranald refers to it as "The Great Caper.") Sylvania gained its independence from Stirland in the chaotic aftermath of the Night of the Restless Dead in 1681, while the towns of Ostermark rebelled against Talabecland with the help of the Ostland Grand Princes, forming the League of Ostermark in 1905.

Outside invasion played a role also, with the destruction of Solland and its absorption by Wissenland in the wake of Gorbad Ironclaw's Orc invasion of 1707. Before they would accede to this, the other Electors demanded separation of Nuln and Wissenland.

Talabheim, too, gained a short-lived independence from Talabecland when the Talabecland Emperor Horst the Cautious refused to attack an invading army in 1750 IC, leading the city to revolt and enthrone their own Emperor, Helmut II. The collapse was complete with the election of Grand Countess Margaritha of Nuln in 1979, via a "rump council" of electors. None outside of Wissenland, Stirland, and Averland recognised her rule, and the Grand Theogonist of Sigmar himself refused to acknowledge the appointment and declared the office vacant. The Imperial system was effectively ended. For the next almost 400 years, the "Empire" was nothing more than a fading idea in peoples' minds.

As the power of the Elector Counts continued to decline, the Empire's cities looked more to their own affairs, and those that were not destroyed by war became prosperous under the leadership of



Burgomeisters – leaders elected from the mercantile classes and other wealthy citizens. Many of the larger cities began to construct fortifications and recruit their own standing armies – in effect becoming independent military, economic and political states from their surrounding provinces. With Sigmar's people divided into squabbling fiefdoms, the Empire was easy prey and its enemies gathered at the borders like carrion eaters around a corpse. The most brutal of these enemies would see the Empire lose an entire province to war and destruction.

## THE CRUSADE AGAINST ARABY

Though the majority of Knightly Orders are sworn to the protection of the Empire and its people, there are still times when they find themselves bound for war in far-off foreign lands.

In the year 1448 Sultan Jaffar, the despotic ruler of Araby invaded Estalia with a massive army. Despite heavy resistance, the Estalians were soon overcome and Jaffar enslaved thousands of Estalian captives, sending them back to Araby. Those that survived the perilous crossing would be sold at the slave markets of Lashiek into a life of hard toil under the unbearable heat of the Araby sun. At the news of the invasion, panic spread throughout the Old World. King Louis the Righteous of Bretonnia immediately sent emissaries to Altdorf. The Elector Counts called for council and, even though a state of civil war was running rife through the provinces, for a short while all hostilities ceased. Each Count voted to lend a small number of their own standing army to the cause, and many Empire Knightly Orders pledged themselves to this



noble cause, seeking to prove their valour in wars beyond the civil strife engulfing the Empire. Together, a vast army of Knights was raised to repel the invaders and they rode through Bretonnia where they joined up with King Louis's force at Brionne. As the huge allied force entered Estalia, the Sultan realised he stood no chance against the combined might of two great nations and fled back to Araby. Only a rebel Sheikh who went by the name of Emir the Cruel dared to face the wrath of the mighty force, fortifying his position in the capital of Magritta.

As the crusading Knights pursued the Sultan they came across the burning remains of entire villages that had been put to the torch by Jaffar's retreating army. Few had been spared the spiteful wrath of the Sultan, and the sight of the murdered innocents horrified the Knights. Those survivors they found begged the Knights to pursue Jaffar and free their loved ones from the torment of a life spent in shackles. The Empire Knights swore an oath to deliver Sigmar's vengeance against every single man responsible for these crimes. They would visit Sultan Jaffar's own cruelty upon his people, they would carry their swords to Araby itself.

A small force of Knights stayed in Estalia and rode to Magritta. In a siege that would eventually last for eight long years, the Knights finally defeated Emir and freed Estalia. The allied force continued to chase down the Sultan who had by this time sailed back to Araby. They amassed a fleet and set sail across the Great Ocean in close pursuit. The crusaders landed at the famous spice port of Copher, but unprepared for the cruel heat the army made slow progress and Jaffar was able to retreat to his city of El-Haikk. For one long year the crusade marched to El-Haikk, but during this time many of Jaffar's tribesmen became disillusioned with his

tyrannical rule and deserted him. In a great battle on the desert plains outside of the city, the crusading army defeated the force of Sultan Jaffar. The sand was stained red with the blood of the dead and Jaffar himself was slain, a Bretonnian lance piercing him through the back as he fled the battlefield. With the defeat of the Sultan the Bretonnians were content to return to their Kingdom, their honour intact.

But the Empire Knights had vowed to hunt down every one of the murderous dogs and free the slaves, as well as gather plunder. The knights were filled with merciless zeal and they tore down the Sultan's decadent palaces, burned thousands of tomes in his library and cast down the idols from his temples. Many of the Sultan's defeated force had fled into the mountain ranges close to the city of Martek. A small band of Empire Knights remained in Araby to hunt down the bandits. As they pursued the Arabians into the rugged terrain they stumbled across all manner of strange beasts. Reports tell of vultures of monstrous proportions that would swoop down from the mountain peaks and carry away a fully armoured Knight and his steed. Ferocious wild cats attacked any lone Knights that fell behind the main group and the Knights deemed it a great feat of bravery to slay one of the great cats in single-handed combat. They would take the animals pelt as a trophy of their prowess and wear it as a cloak.

It is said that the Order of Knights pursued and tracked down the remnants of Jaffar's army to a man. They showed them no mercy for they had shown themselves to be sadistic killers. The people of the region grew to fear the Knights and named them the Knights Panther and Jaguar due to the skins of the great cats they wore atop their armour as trophies of their strength.

The mountains in which they hunted down Jaffar's outlaws became known as The Eye of The Panther. To this day the nomads and tribesfolk still talk in awe of the legendary order. By the time they had finished their quest and returned home, tales of their valour and the great riches they had found had already spread throughout the Empire. They were recognised as an official order by the Elector Counts and granted the freedom of the realm. To this day the Knights Panther remain one of the most honoured, and wealthiest, Orders within the Empire.



### THE INVENTION OF GUNPOWDER

*Gunpowder weapons, so prevalent in the armies of Karl Franz today, were all developed at great cost from their Dwarf counterparts, a benefit of the long-standing alliance between the men of the Empire and the Dwarfs. The first handguns and cannons in the Empire were built by Dwarf Engineers in very small numbers for rich nobles, as show weapons and curios. They slowly grew in popularity, with fashionable nobles equipping their personal retinues with primitive hand guns for display and drill.*

*The first recorded use of a cannon made in the Empire by human engineers was in 1650. It was used in battle by the eccentric Graf Igor Hobenstaf III. The cannon exploded, routing the Graf's cavalry. Cannons did not catch on for another hundred years, with the Gunnery School at Nuln being founded in 1800. Innovations such as mortars and the Helblaster Volley Gun followed much later.*

### THE DESTRUCTION OF SOLLAND

While greenskins in general are quite incompetent, Gorbad Ironclaw is often spoken of as the greatest orc warlord in history. He seized control of the Ironclaw Orc tribe and went on to conquer dozens of other tribes of both orcs and goblins inhabiting the Badlands to the south. As his rampage progressed northwards, dealing savage defeats to the Dwarfs on the way, many more greenskin tribes flocked to his banner, lured by the promise of war and slaughter.

By the time he marched through Black Fire Pass, Gorbad's horde was truly enormous, perhaps even greater than that defeated by Sigmar in the first days of the Empire. However, this time there were no Dwarfs to stand in their way, and no united Empire army, for the Elector Counts were unable or unwilling to call on each other for aid.

In 1707, Gorbad's invasion spilled into the provinces of Averland and Solland, devastating everything and everyone in its path. Count Eldred of Solland mustered his soldiers, though he knew that the force opposing him was so large as to defy belief. Eldred's scouts reported that the Orc army was following the Old Dwarf Road to Averheim, and the Count marched his forces to the banks of the River Aver, where he commanded the crossing beyond Averheim. Gorbad's army plunged into the river and attacked the defenders on the opposite bank. Though the greenskin horde lost thousands of warriors crossing the river, many swept away by the fierce currents or cut down by merciless volleys of bow fire, the Orcs relentlessly advanced and they eventually succeeded in gaining a foothold on the opposite riverbank.

This was a grim turn and the beginning of the end for the defenders, for their only hope had been to hold the Orcs on the far side. As more and more Greenskins managed to cross the river, the Imperial army found itself becoming encircled and Eldred desperately

sought to quit the field of battle before his men were slaughtered. But Eldred's decision came too late, for Gorbad, displaying a cunning hitherto unseen in Orcish forces, had earlier despatched his cavalry to attack the Halfling realm of the Moot further east and they now circled around to head off the retreating Empire army. Though the Halflings had fought the invaders as best they could, they were no match for the snapping packs of wolves and thunderous charges of razor-tusked boars.

As Eldred's personal bodyguard battled to protect their lord, the fast moving greenskins from the north rode over the horizon to flank the Empire army, turning an orderly retreat into carnage. Those regiments positioned on the Empire left were overrun, breaking and fleeing before the terrifying charge of the mounted Orcs and Goblins. Within moments, a disciplined withdrawal had turned into a rout and, knowing that the day was lost, Eldred led his Greatswords into the swirling melee in a final gambit to slay the Orc leader. Resplendent in his long silver cloak and glittering crown, the last Elector Count of Solland faced the terrifying form of Gorbad Ironclaw in single combat. The challenge was brave but futile, for Gorbad was monstrously huge, and even armed with a mighty Runefang, Eldred was no match for the warlord and was brutally cut down. The Elector Count's body was dismembered and hung upon the Orc warlord's trophy racks. Gorbad captured Eldred's Runefang and took his crown as the spoils of war, and continued unopposed into the heart of the Empire. This battle became known by the few scattered survivors as the Battle of Solland's Crown.

### The Empire in Flames

After the defeat of Eldred's army, Gorbad advanced towards Nuln, laying waste to the realm of Solland and utterly destroying it forever. Nuln, famous for its iron cannons, was able to withstand Gorbad's siege for several weeks before its walls were cast down and the green horde poured within. The carnage was terrifying to behold and fewer than a tenth of the city's population was able to flee northwards to Altdorf. Buildings that had stood for over a thousand years were cast down,





many repositories of knowledge containing irreplaceable works were put to the torch and much ancient lore that is lost, never to be known again, was destroyed in Gorbard's unthinking savagery.

The Prince of Altdorf, Sigismund, had not been idle during this time, rallying as many of the Counts as he could for war and strengthening the defences of Altdorf for the siege he knew must follow. Having seen the fate of Solland, the Counts knew that they faced annihilation at the hands of the Orcs and gathered their warriors as the rapacious horde of Gorbard marched along the Reik to Altdorf. Despite their new-found unity in the face of death, the Counts were divided upon the best course of action, many believing that Gorbard's army should be met on the field of battle, while others counselled that the warlord be allowed to break his army against the walls of the Reikland capital. They argued that the defences of the city were as strong as they had ever been; there was a plentiful supply of shot and powder for the cannon, storehouses groaned under the weight of grain and salted meat, engineers were able to field many of their newly-invented black powder weapons and every soldier stood ready to defend their homeland. Altdorf prepared itself to resist the coming Orc attack, but the city needed time to gather in supplies, bolster its garrisons and build new defenses.

But the Counts of Wissenland and Averland, whose lands had been razed by the Orcs, were in no mood to let the enemy come to them. Sigismund agreed to send

a fast moving force, led by the Reiksmarshall, to intercept the advancing Orc horde. Their mission would be to use their speed to harry the Orc's advance, slowing them down and buying Altdorf more time. The Elector Count of Wissenland, Erich Adolphus, was the Reiksmarshall at the time. He was the finest general in the Empire and the victor of several battles against a pretender to the Imperial throne five years earlier. His army was composed of the cream of the Empire's soldiery, all of whom had volunteered for the dangerous task. He would be vastly outnumbered. As the army rode out from Altdorf there was little hope for any of these brave men, but they would sell their lives dearly for the greater cause. In light of the devastation wreaked upon their lands, it is perhaps understandable that these fiery warriors acted so impetuously, but as courageous as their decision to face the Orcs blade-to-blade was, there was no doubting the outcome of the battle.

### The Battle of Grunberg

With Kislev Horse Archers as their scouts, the army made rapid progress following the river Reik south. The column of march then turned west following the north bank of the fast flowing River Teufel, searching for a fording point. Kislev Scouts reported running battles with Goblin Wolf Riders operating in the Hagercrybs, a range of hills to the north of the Reikswald forest. Adolphus pushed on. Little did he suspect that the Goblin Wolf Riders had already fled south to report to their Warlord. The advantage of surprise had gone.



Gorbad Ironclaw welcomed the news that the humans were on the march, his Boyz would relish a battle. He gathered his own fastest troops, Boar Boyz, Wolf Riders, Spider Riders and Chariots, and formed them into a vanguard. He would surprise the puny humans by racing to meet them, leaving the bulk of his force to follow on behind.

Meanwhile, Adolphus had decided to make the risky crossing of the river Teufel. His cavalry were vulnerable to ambushes this deep in the forests, he needed open ground. Forging the deep river took all day, but by nightfall his entire column, supply wagons and all, were safely across the raging torrent. He turned back east, making for the fortified town of Grunberg, where he could rest briefly and re-supply for the expected journey south.

It took Gorbad less than a day to reach Grunberg, but without his siege equipment and massive hordes of Boyz he could not assault the town. He camped outside the town walls and waited for his Wolf Riders to report back. By morning they had. The humans had crossed the river and were moving towards Grunberg. Leaving a force there to keep the garrison occupied and prevent them sallying forth, he raced to meet the humans, swinging south in order to trap them against the river.

That day the Kislevites and the Wolf Riders resumed their running battle in the forests as the two armies closed. The Empire force camped that night on the river bank, their pickets keeping watch deep in the

forest. As they began their march towards the safety of Grunberg the large Orc army rushed from the tree line.

Adolphus quickly organised his men. He was trapped against the uncrossable river Teufel, outmanoeuvred by the Orc's fast moving force. He set up a command post in a nearby abandoned homestead, long since looted by Goblins. Here he also hid his baggage train full of vital supplies for the coming campaign. Out of the tree line galloped the Orcs and Goblins, banners flying and war drums beating, raucously chanting of their coming victory. Gorbad Ironclaw himself led the way, riding in a chariot pulled by three giant wolves, the Crown of Solland on his head, the mighty axe Morgor the Mangler raised high in his clenched fist.

First came a screen of swift Wolf Riders, their arrows sending the skirmishing Kislevite Horse Archers fleeing towards the river. Desperate to escape the oncoming horde, many attempted to swim the fast flowing river and were drowned. Lacking room to manoeuvre, Adolphus ordered the advance. He would attempt to smash the Orcs aside with an almighty charge. The Reiksguard in the centre brushed aside the lightly armed Wolf Rider screen, as the Knights of the White Wolf plunged forward in support calling upon Ulnc to grant them victory. Gorbad responded in kind. Savage Orc Boar Boyz charged forward, as more Wolf Riders appeared from the forests on the Orcs' left flank, galloping quickly to outflank the advancing Empire cavalry. In the centre a massive melee of flailing horses, lances, swords and clubs swirled out of control.



A volley of short ranged fire from the Pistoliers ordered to intercept the outflankers sent the Wolf Riders fleeing, only for the Pistoliers to be massacred by Forest Goblin Spider Riders. Seeing battle swinging his way Gorbard ordered his Chanots forward. Racing down from a hillock on the Orcs' right this second wave sent the Empire cavalry reeling, as the glorious Knights of the Blazing Sun where cut down beneath the wheel scythes of the charging Goblin Wolf Chariots. Adolphus was forced to commit his reserves. Leading the Knights Panther personally, the Elector Count made directly for Gorbard Ironclaw. Killing the Warlord would send the rest of the Orcs running. But his advance left his valuable supply train vulnerable. The few brave defenders of the baggage train where slaughtered to a man by Orc Boar Boyz, and the supplies were looted.

Meanwhile the Elector Count, brandishing his Runefang, charged into the melee, seeking Gorbard. The Orc Warlord had seen Adolphus' advance and spurred his Wolf Chariot directly towards the Elector Count. Before his irresistible charge many Knights Panther fell to the Chariot's wheel scythes. The three great wolves, directed by Gorbard, leapt at Adolphus, but with one mighty swing of his Runefang Adolphus decapitated all three of the slaving beasts. The Chariot came crashing to a halt, flinging Gorbard to the ground at Adolphus' feet. Leaping from his saddle and clasping his bloody Runefang in both hands, the Elector Count thrust the blade deep into the Orc's chest. Roaring with pain, the mighty Orc lashed out with Morgor the Mangler. The blow sent the Elector Count reeling in pain, his helmet buckled on his head, the crown of Wissenland cleaved in two. The remaining Knights Panther rushed to their injured commander's aid, as did the Orc Boar Boyz. In the maelstrom of carnage that followed, somehow the two commanders were dragged apart. The battle raged on bloodily until sundown.

As night fell the remaining Knights withdrew back along the river Teufel. Pursued by Wolf Riders they made their way to the ford, carrying the badly wounded Adolphus with them. Without the leadership of Gorbard, the Goblins' pursuit was disorganised and most survivors escaped across the river, eventually making their way back to Altdorf, telling tales of an invincible army that destroyed all before it. The battle was lost, but not in vain. With their leader terribly wounded and many of their fastest troops destroyed or fleeing, the Orc's advance was slowed. Grunberg eventually fell, but Altdorf was well prepared for the Orc's subsequent siege.

### Altdorf Besieged

A week later, Gorbard's horde had reached the walls of Altdorf and surrounded the last bastion of the Empire in a seething green sea. Here, Gorbard's army met its most serious challenge. Thicker and higher than the walls of NuIn, the capital's defences resisted his every effort to breach them. Sallies from knightly orders destroyed siege engines and the contraptions of the

engineers killed Orcs by the hundred at every turn. Though casualties among the Men of the Empire were horrendous, the Orcs suffered even more so. The siege dragged on for many months, with Gorbard's wound paining him ever more as summer turned to autumn and the onset of winter could be felt on the westerly winds.

The city almost fell on the ninth day of Brauzzeit when Sigismund was carried from the walls by a pack of terrifying Wyverns. Unable to save him, the defenders of Altdorf watched in horror as the flying monsters tore him to pieces, fighting to devour his carcass. A palpable wave of despair descended upon the Imperial forces, and in several places the Orc attackers gained decisive footholds upon the bloody ramparts. Only the timely intervention of the Count of Wissenland, who took up the fallen Ghal Maraz and rallied the dispirited Imperial soldiers, saved the day, and he and the survivors of Grunberg drove the enemy from the walls.

At the start of the siege. Gorbard had personally led every attack, but as the first snows fell, he led his warriors less and less, the wound from the Runefang plaguing him ever more and sapping his strength with each passing day. As the ferocity and frequency of the Orc attacks began to fade, the Imperial defenders took heart and led more and more sallies beyond the walls to attack the Greenskins. As winter closed in on the Empire, hundreds of Orcs and Goblins were starving to death every day and, at last, the Orcish horde began to break up. In small warbands at first, then in greater and greater numbers Gorbard's strength of leadership





weakened along with his physical strength, the warlord's army began to disintegrate until the Orcish army was no more. Of Gorbad there was no sign, though many assumed that he either perished from his wound or was slain soon after by a more powerful Orc.

### The Empire Survives

With the dissolution of the Orcish army, the threat to the Empire from Gorbad Ironclaw was ended, though his name still strikes fear into the hearts of men. Though the invasion was defeated, the province of Solland was utterly destroyed and its lord's Runefang lost. Its people had been slaughtered or taken into slavery and its once fertile soil had been reduced to an arid wasteland. The surviving Solland nobles fled to Averland, while rules of the devastated areas of land it had once encompassed were subsumed into the province of Wissenland and its name and history passed into memory. Although there are some proud nobles who refuse to acknowledge the rights of the Wissenland count, referring to the region as Sudenland instead, its status as an independent province ceased from that day. And with Orcish threat defeated, old rivalries and bitterness between the Counts resurfaced and the unity they had forged in the face of destruction was soon forgotten.

### The Solland Runefang

Though many attempts to locate the Solland Runefang were attempted over the centuries that followed Gorbad's invasion, none were successful and it was feared that the legendary sword of Alaric the Mad was

lost forever. Treasure maps declaring the location of the Runefang became commonplace, and there was no shortage of adventurer bands willing to risk their lives in attempts to recover the blade. None were successful and the blade's final resting place remained a mystery for centuries, the prospect of its eventual return all but lost.

Though the Runefang was lost, the Dwarfs – who had recorded its theft by Gorbad in the Zhufbar Book of Grudges – did not forget it. Periodically, warriors from this most ancient of holds would set off on quests to rediscover the blade and return it to its rightful owners. On occasion, human adventurers would accompany these ventures and most of these perilous expeditions were never seen again. One such party, led by the Dwarf Thane Ergrim Stonehammer and an outcast Knight in 2378, set out to slay a beast that had been terrorising the villages and towns of the Moot, carrying off victims and treasure to its mountain lair.

The warrior band climbed high into the forbidding peaks of the Worlds Edge Mountains, following the Blue Reach towards beast's lair at Black Water. Many of the band had died along the way, fighting against marauding bands of Orcs and Skaven or killed in unnatural rockslides. When the warrior band discovered the lair of the beast, they discovered a creature so mutated by the warping powers that it defied any classification of form; a chimera with a leonine head, powerful, clawed limbs and feathered wings. The beast attacked the brave adventurers and many were slain in ways too gruesome to describe. The adventurers were fighting at the very limits of courage, when the knight's sword snapped and he was cast to the ground amid a pile of silver coins. But as fate would have it, the golden hilt of a sword protruded from the piles of treasure, and as the foul creature of Chaos loomed above him, the knight seized the sword and struck off its head with a single blow. In the aftermath of the battle, Stonehammer immediately recognised the weapon for what it was – the lost Solland Runefang.



Together, with as much treasure as they could carry, the few survivors of the warrior band returned to Altdorf and presented the Runefang to the Emperor. Though Solland no longer existed, the return of the Runefang was greeted with great celebration and those who had rediscovered it were rewarded with lands and title. The outcast knight went on to found the Order of the Shining Sword, though Stonehammer journeyed north to Karak Kadrin and (for unknown reasons) became a Slayer. Without an Elector Count of Solland to wield the newly-returned Runefang, the Emperor kept the sword in the Imperial Treasury to be presented to the greatest of heroes and brought to the field of battle in the direst of emergencies only. Today, the Runefangs remain as they have always been: symbols of the glory of the Empire and magical weapons of terrifying power.

## THE WARS OF THE VAMPIRE COUNTS

As the Time of Three Emperors dragged on with no sign of any of the claimants achieving superiority, a dreadful threat was stirring in the cold shadow of the Worlds Edge Mountains. On the Eastern border of Stirland, under the cold shadow of the World's Edge Mountains, lies Sylvania, the most ill-regarded place in the whole Empire – some would say all of the Old World. It is a rugged, infertile land covered with barren hills, blasted wastes and fog-swathed forests. It is shunned by all who have no dire reason to go there. Only a lunatic would venture forth into Sylvania after dark and not even the bravest Questing Knight of Bretonnia, nor the most fatigued ask for shelter within the brooding castles that tower over the land. By night, the half-decaying villages are secured against the darkness, their ill-bred inhabitants lock and bar their doors, and hang bundles of witchbane and daemonsroot across the windows, in the belief that such things will protect them from those who haunt the night.

Wizards claim that the Winds of Magic blow darkly across all of Sylvania, and that the keeps of the nobility are all built over particularly ill-omened and darkly historic sites. Even the notoriously brutal and remorseless tax-collectors of the Elector Count of Stirland wear amulets blessed by the Priests of Morr and Sigmar, and go about in companies fifty strong

### BATTLE OF NEBELHEIM

*This battle is often held up as an example of a true pitched battle, by scholars of the Empire. In this battle the army of the Empire, led by Konrad, Elector count of Ostland, engaged a large horde of Orcs, led by Warlord Gorkfang. Knowing that the Orcs would press on regardless of losses and seek to overwhelm the Empire army by force of numbers alone, Konrad chose his ground carefully and devised a cunning plan. Then he deployed his army in the path of the invading Orc horde, forming up his carefully considered battle line in open, rolling terrain that formed a natural arena for the battle. Konrad then deliberately positioned thin lines of missile troops in the centre and big blocks of solid troops on the flanks.*

*The Orcs approached and seeing the apparently thin and weak centre, went into a headlong and ill-considered advance. Of course Konrad's centre gave way and the Orcs surged onward oblivious to the approaching doom. It was now time for Konrad, relying on the immense discipline of his men, to close the trap. The massive and resistant Empire formations on both flanks, swung inwards and hammered the Orc army from both sides. It is said that the Orcs were jammed together so closely in the melee that they were unable to use their weapons and so fell readily and in great heaps to the massed halberds of the Ostlanders.*

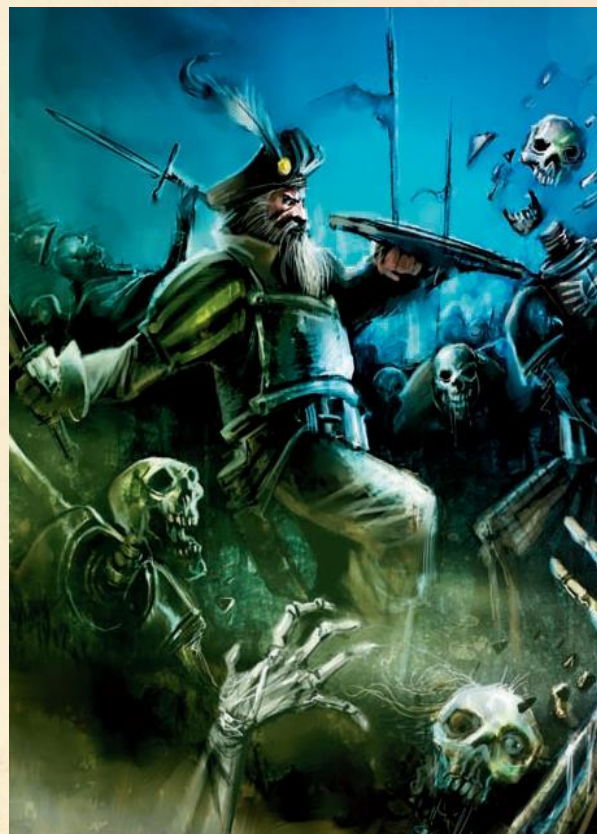
*Gorkfang, himself fell, and his horde was annihilated. It was a famous victory.*

when their lord compels them to seek his due there. For centuries, Sylvania was the lair of Necromancers and other vile men. However, it was not until the dark times of the Vampire Wars that the true evil dwelling within the shadows was revealed.

### Vlad von Carstein

Its infamy truly began when a vampire named Vlad von Carstein had wrested control of the region from its previous ruler, Otto von Drak through a combination of deception, sorcery and bloody murder. Many noble families objected to the thought of having an outsider rule them, but these dissidents were quickly silenced. Under Vlad's iron grip, Sylvania grew strong, and the taint of vampirism spread. So, for over two hundred years, Vlad ruled over Sylvania under the guise of different identities to prevent anyone from becoming aware of his undying nature. The Elector Counts looked on with indifference at these changes, too caught up in their own petty power struggles to care about such a backward corner of the Empire.

On Geheimnisnacht in the year 2010 after the birth of Sigmar, the nightmarish truth about Vlad von Carstein, ruler of Sylvania, was revealed as he stood on the battlements of Drakenhof Keep and intoned a terrible incantation from the pages of the Nine Books of Nagash. Across the land the Undead stirred. Skeletons clawed their way through the soft Sylvanian soil, zombies stirred in their crypts, and ghouls raced to greet their new master. Von Carstein had thrown down the gauntlet to the Three Emperors. Judging the Empire to be at its weakest, Vlad launched his bid to become the immortal Vampire Emperor. The Wars of the Vampire Counts had begun.



Marching at the head of a host of Undead, Vlad laid waste to the other regions of Stirland and invaded Ostermark before turning his attention to the heart of the Empire. Every man killed by the rotting, deathless army was raised up by Vlad to swell the ranks still further, so the terrified defenders were forced to fight the corpses of their erstwhile comrades.

The Sylvanian armies marched northwest, shrouded by storm clouds during the day, ceaselessly advancing through the nights, driving for Talabecland. Peasant militias marched alongside the unliving skeletons and zombies controlled by their vampiric lords, as happy to serve their unnatural masters as they would any other noble. The army of Talabecland countered the advance at the Battle of Essen Ford, but was crushed by the Undead host. Before the battle, von Carstein had sent word that he would spare his foes if they turned away, but would show them no mercy if they opposed him. The bodies of the dead joined his host that same night.

Vlad's followers captured Hans Schliffen, general of the army, but on seeing the unholy slaughter, Schliffen flew into a maddened rage and broke free. Snatching up a sword from one of his guards he struck off the head of Vlad before being torn to pieces by the slain Count's followers. As the other Vampires squabbled for control of the army, Vlad returned to them, whole and unharmed, not for the first time.

As Vlad set his Undead host marching from Sylvania, the Elector Count of Middenheim was preparing to attack the province. The two armies surprised each other, clashing a few miles inside the borders of Sylvania in the Battle of Swartzhafen. Even though the Middenheim army was engaging the Undead on very unfavourable ground, among ruins, cairns and the dark forest, the Middenheimers responded more rapidly, fought hard and won the day. Vlad was slain again by Jerek Kruger, Grand Master of the Knights of the White Wolf, and the Army of Sylvania was destroyed by the forces of the Graf of Middenheim. Within a year, however, Kruger's battered, bloodless corpse was found at the foot of the Ulricsberg, and Vlad's army was on the march again. At Bluthof, Vlad was cut down by the Count of Ostland's Runefang, having been transfixing with no less than five lances, and yet three days later he proudly officiated at a mass crucifixion of prisoners outside the gates of the town. At Bogenhafen Bridge a lucky cannon shot took von Carstein's head off. Within the hour the cannon crew were dead and the village was being overrun. The soldiers of the Empire were gripped with terror in the face of so seemingly invincible a foe.

In the winter of 2051 the von Carsteins besieged Altdorf itself. The Reik itself had been redirected into stake-filled ditches that surrounded the city walls, hoping that this would keep the Vampires at bay, but to





no avail. Vlad once more demanded that the city gates be opened and the people inside to serve him in life, or he would see them all slain and they would serve him beyond death. It was only the Grand Theogonist Wilhelm III who rallied the people of the city, including Ludwig, Prince of Altdorf and claimant to the Emperor's throne, as there were many who wished to accede to Vlad's demands. Wilhelm spent three days fasting and praying within the Great Cathedral of Sigmar before he emerged and told the people that Sigmar had shown him the way to victory.



That day a thief named Felix Mann stole into von Carstein's camp. Greatest thief of the city, Mann had been offered a pardon in return for stealing Vlad's golden ring. As the Sylvanian aristocrats lay sleeping in their open coffins, unguarded such was their vanity, Mann slipped the ring from Vlad's finger and fled.

Vlad von Carstein was incensed on awakening and discovering the theft. Upon his immediate command great siege-towers of bone were pushed to the walls by

lines of unfeeling dead, while on the walls of Altdorf, the defenders stood ready.

The Grand Theogonist clashed with the Vampire Count at the heart of the fighting, high on the tallest tower of the wall. Wilhelm knew he could never outlast his immortal foe. When he felt his strength fading, he grasped Vlad closely and threw himself from the wall. Vlad was impaled on a wooden spike at the wall's foot when Wilhelm crashed down onto him – the point bursting up through his chest. With a piercing screech, the Count truly died, bereft of the magical power of his ring.

With Vlad gone, his Vampire lieutenants retreated and much of the Undead army began to disintegrate. Prince Ludwig marshalled his forces to give pursuit, but fearful that the victory would give his bid for the throne more credence, his rivals united against him, and the Vampires of Sylvania were given time to regroup and regain their strength.

Years later, Konrad von Carstein emerged as Vlad's successor and launched another invasion of the Empire. So great was his insane viciousness that the three claimants to the Imperial throne were forced to ally against him, and he too was defeated, cut down by Grufbad, a Dwarf hero, and Helmar, the soon-to-be Baron of Marienburg, at the Battle of Grim Moor in 2121.

*What did this vile usurper hope to achieve? It was a question that taxed Arch Lector Voltan von Khrest as he watched the soldiers form their battleline. It had taken the best part of the day for the vanguard regiments to make their way across the small, rickety bridge that crossed the river. If Vlad von Carstein sought a crossing here, he would be hard-pressed to achieve victory. The waters were fast-flowing and the bridge easy to defend. As a last resort, black powder from the cannons and mortars had been used as a makeshift bomb on the bridge so that, should things go ill for the army of the Empire, the crossing could be destroyed. It would be impossible for the Undead legion to invade here.*

*As the devoted follower of Sigmar gazed across the river, he saw the dead horde approach. The sky blackened with storm clouds and a chill filled the air as dark magic wretched and coiled across the river.*

*Wispy tendrils of malice wrapped around the timbers of the old bridge and plunged into the frothing waters below. Horrified, Leistrass watched as the river began to churn, spewing noxious vapour, while the bridge rotted and warped, turning from wood to bone. A mountain of skulls heaved from the silt of the river, bound with filth and muscle, enveloping the bridge. A hideous construction of bone and death now spanned the river, wide enough for an army to cross. For a moment, the Arch Lector's courage faltered. Regaining his nerve, he ordered his men to stand ready for the attack.*

## Mannfred von Carstein

The last and most dangerous of the Vampire Counts was Manfred, a subtle, devious and treacherous being who some say was awake when the von Carstein ring was stolen, and who laid a glamour on the sentries to prevent them noticing it. He allowed the various contenders for the Imperial throne to think that with Konrad's death, the Undead threat was truly over, waiting for them to fall upon one another again. While the powerful men and women of the Empire once more returned to fighting over the crown of the Emperor, Manfred bided his time, studying the dark arts and mustering his power.

When the Empire was once more wracked by civil war, Manfred attacked. His skeletal legions marched unhindered through the snows upon Altdorf in 2132 and defeated the hastily assembled armies sent to stop him during the Winter War. Manfred's force reached Altdorf in late winter and he arrived to find the city undefended. Triumph filled Manfred until the Grand Theogonist, Kurt III, appeared on the battlements and began to recite the Great Spell of Unbinding. From the Liber Mortis – a powerful enchantment that caused many of the Vampire's Undead followers to crumble into dust, and Manfred ordered a hasty retreat as his army crumbled around him. After an abortive attack on Marienburg, the Vampire Lord was driven back to Sylvania, where the Imperial nobles put aside their differences and joined forces to end the threat of the Vampires once and for all.

Confronted by this threat, the rulers of the Empire managed to put aside their differences for long enough to push back Manfred to Sylvania, and to march upon Drakenhof Castle itself. Back in Sylvania, Manfred raised an army estimated by some to be in excess of one hundred thousand, comprised of freshly raised corpses, ghouls, wights, zombies, and even the cowering mortal peasants of Sylvania that remained in the thrall of the Von Carsteins.

Elector Count Martin of Stirland – a man with good reason to hate Manfred – gave chase to the Vampire Lord. His province, which neighboured blighted Sylvania, had suffered grievously at the hands of the Von Carsteins. However, when he arrived at Hel Fenn in the midst of Sylvania, Stirland's forces were hopelessly outnumbered.

No one in the Empire thought that Manfred could have raised such a powerful force so quickly. In fact, many scouts originally thought Manfred's army had to be the trees moving at the edge of the plain at Hel Fenn, not a colossal throng of necrotic flesh. The Elector's first move was one that would ultimately prove to be of great consequence. With the forest to his rear, Martin deployed his troops to secure a defensive position between an abandoned fort and walled farm, keeping most of his forces behind a fog-ridden ridge, out of sight of the advancing horde. This decision would have great consequences on the outcome of the battle.





Mannfred took the bait and advanced relentlessly, for although he sensed that the dwarf allies of Stirland were still to arrive, he could not see the hidden Imperial troops. He planned to crush the humans quickly, so each army could be dealt with individually.

The Vampire Count ordered charge after charge at the flanks of the army, but the skeletal troops were crushed by a lethal combination of Black Guard with their massive greatswords and handgunners massed on the ramparts of the fort and behind the walls of the farm. Martin also had several artillery pieces that churned through thousands of undead bodies, but they did little to dent the immeasurable regiments rushing forwards.

Mannfred pushed the Imperial halberdiers and swordsmen back slowly but did not realize that this was Martin's intention. The hidden troops suddenly emerged from behind the ridge and flanked the undead while the Knights of the Divine Sword, led by the

#### MARTIN OF STIRLAND

*Martin of Stirland was an unremarkable warrior, but he was nonetheless a magnificent leader and tactical genius. His campaign at Hel Fenn is taught to all young officers, such was his strategic brilliance. He steered the Imperial ranks against the foe despite the overwhelming numbers they faced, kept his army tightly in formation, and filled his men with pride and courage; an impressive feat given that his men would face the lifeless corpses of former comrades. His well-planned and perfectly executed envelopment of Mannfred was the perfect counter to the hammer blows of the undead horde.*

Grand Theogonist himself, crashed into the rearmost troops, which had already suffered devastating losses from mortar fire. By this time, the dwarf reinforcements also managed to break out of the forest and join the battle, cleaving through the rotten flesh and brittle bones of the opposition.

Mannfred realised he had been lured into a trap and made to escape across the sodden marshlands at the edge of the battlefield to return to his desolate lands. Martin himself gave chase and decapitated the Vampire Count, whose spirit was already broken by the effort of supporting such a vast army. Mannfred's body was lost at the very edge of the great swamp. As Mannfred's body collapsed, it melted into the muddy ooze, never to be recovered. The War of the Vampire Counts was won, and the threat posed by them was apparently ended.

For his heroic feat, Prince Martin claimed all of Sylvania for himself as the spoils of victory, and added it to his domains. No one objected. However, the threat of the Vampire Counts' return ensures that none dare forget the dread of this shadow-haunted land. Though ostensibly part of Stirland, Sylvania is, in reality, an abandoned province where the dead are easily stirred from their slumber and the dark forests are still haunted by all manner of revenants and unspeakable horrors that prowl the lands. At night, the peasants cower in their hovels while cannibal ghouls roam the land and those foolish enough to venture out are preyed on by the vampiric lords who still rule this area. Dark tales still abound of the restless dead and their blood-hungry master; and Witch hunters still venture into Sylvania to bring fire and stake to the Undead creatures within.







The plain was filled with battle between the black armoured knights of Chaos and the bright knights of the Empire. The mass swayed first one way and then the other as each side strove for mastery. It was a hard and bloody fight and as the day wore on the piles of dead grew higher on each side. From a hill top overlooking the fray Count Borst watched the battle unfold.

"The battle hangs in the balance still... he growled more to himself than to those about

"Shall I bring the knights of Kislev to battle sire?" It was Maximilian, the son of old Elector Torban who spoke these words. He had waited amongst the General's entourage for almost three hours. Waited whilst the battle raged far below. Waited for the command that would commit the last of the Empire's reserves to the fight.

Count Borst turned to look at the young commander. How tall he was, even for a northlander and how like a boy he seemed amongst that company of old and bitter warriors. He wondered how long it had been since his own eyes shone with hank-fire as Maximilian's eyes shone now. Too many years to remember. Too many battles to name. Unconsciously his gnarled hand traced the path of the massive scar that ran in a crevice from his brow to his chin.

"Patience Maximilian," he said gently. "The knights are the last of our strength and are not to be thrown idly into battle." At this the young lord bowed his head but could scarcely conceal his impatience. He might have dared more, but at that moment a cry went up from one of the attendants. The battle had turned at last.

Down on the plain the black lines were advancing unchecked. Of the gallant knights of the Empire there was nothing to be seen but individual riders running hither and thither pursued by dark horsemen. As the enemy's army drew near the Count could hear the harsh cries of black armoured warriors. Now he must make a decision. He must weigh his chances of success, or judge the battle lost and make good his escape with the remnants of the army. In a moment it would be too late and the black host would overtake them all. He turned and gave the command.

"Now Maximilian Torban – unleash the knights of Kislev upon their flank and may Sigmar guide your lances."

"Yes my Lord!" exclaimed the young commander and within a moment he had leapt upon his horse and was galloping to where the knights of Kislev stood in serried ranks waiting for the order that would bring them to battle.

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The old Elector listened silently as the story of the great battle unfolded. No stranger to war in his day, he readily pictured the shining knights of the Empire and the dark knights of Chaos as they struggled for mastery of the plain.

"All seemed lost then. The army of darkness had driven us from the field. Soon the enemy would engulf the regiments of foot that parried our last path of retreat. Our cannons stood silent their powder gone. The crossbowmen had shot their last and faced the foe with nought but their long daggers."

He paused a moment recalling once more the din and confusion that had overtaken the Empire army, the smell of blood and sulphur, the scream of horses and the cries of the fallen. Panic and loss. The sound of thundering hooves.

"As the enemy fell into disarray the knights of Kislev found them. The foe had thought the battle won and, in their heedless lust for slaughter left themselves open to a deadly blow. The last of the day's sun caught the tips of the Kislevites, lances and their banners shone red and white amongst the drifting smoke. Our gallant knights drove into the heart of the enemy's force until they reached the Lord of all that host, a great black-armoured devil riding upon a vile, mutated and horned beast."

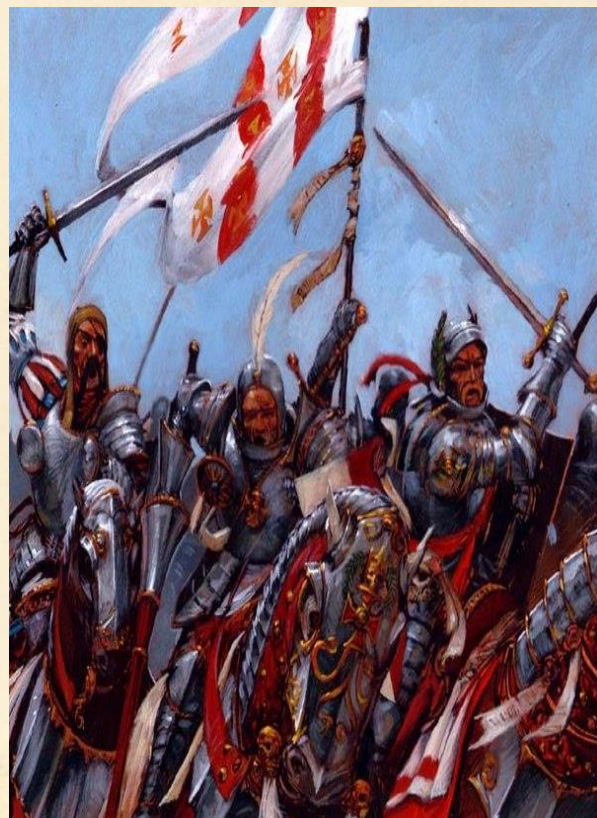
As he spoke the sun of a new day shone through the rippled glaring of the window and he found himself in a pool of dappled light in which mores of dust swirled about his blood-stained cloak and soiled boots.

"When the Dark Lord fell a great tormented cry went up from the enemy's ranks. So terrible a noise did assail us that all about dropped their weapons to cover their ears and gave up all thought of fighting. Only when the shrill cry faded to a pitiful sigh did we look up to see the enemy in full flight. Long into the evening we chased them front the field and many were slain in the marshes and woods before nightfall."

The old Elector sat silently, his eyes closed and his hands clasped together as if in prayer. At last he opened his eyes and quietly murmured.

"Then at least his death was not in vain."

"Maximilian died a hero," said the Count, and his gnarled hand unconsciously traced the path of the massive scar that ran in a crevice from his brow to his chin.





The first sense to come back to Friedl was taste; the taste of blood. His own blood, he realised, spitting the crimson fluid from his mouth as he forced his eyes to open. He was looking at a bloodied patch of heather, his halberd lying close at hand. Friedl's ears rang dully and he could smell smoke and burning flesh. He reached up to his cheek. The right side of his face was a crimson mask from a gash above his eye and Friedl winced as his inquisitive fingers probed the deep wound.

He felt a hand on his shoulder, and rolled over. Standing over Friedl was a broad man with a bushy beard, his uniform blue – the colours of Middenland. The soldier's lips were moving but Friedl couldn't make out a word. The black feather in his helmet marked him out as a sergeant. The Middenlander stuck his spear into the ground and helped Friedl to his feet.

With a rush, sound returned and Friedl felt dizzy for a moment. There were hoarse shouts, bellowed roars and the constant ringing of metal clashing with metal. Screams and explosions filled the air, and Friedl wanted to be sick.

"Where's your regiment?" the Middenlander was demanding, retrieving his spear. He shook his head at Friedl's dumb silence and stomped back towards his men.

Friedl glanced around, looking for the green and red of Hochland and the dragon standard of the Third Regiment of Foote. He caught a glance of green to his right, beyond the stamping horses of a squadron of Knights Panther, the armour of the riders covered in blood and dirt, the panther pelts over the knights' shoulders matted with gore. He snatched up his halberd and began to walk towards them.

As he stumbled back towards the rest of his regiment, Friedl looked around groggily. All around, the line of the Empire army battled against the Beastmen. A few dozen paces to Friedl's left, a regiment of spearmen, the Middenlanders,



braced themselves to receive a charge as a dozen bull-headed Minotaurs ploughed towards them. There was an almighty crash of snapping wood and shouts as the Minotaurs hit home, and the Middenlanders reeled backwards under the impact. Yet they held and pushed back against the gigantic Beastmen, some slipping in the mud, defiant shouts on the lips of others. A moment later, the regiment's detachment of swordsmen, their shields held before them, flanked the Minotaurs, their monstrous opponents towering above them.

Friedl was deafened again as a thunderous blast rolled over the battlefield from the artillery battery sited on the hill behind him. A hail of swirling rockets screamed overhead while cannonballs and mortar shells roared past. A ripple of explosions tore into the approaching Beastmen warbands, tossing mud, gore and limbs into the air. The barrage was accompanied by a fiery blast of magical energy, as a Battle Wizard of the Bright College stalked amongst the Empire regiments hurling flaming death. The snap of handguns firing joined the crackle of burning fires.



The Knights Panther had broken off and were circling right, to the east. Now Friedl could see his regiment clearly, by their somewhat relaxed-look they were awaiting orders from the Count. There were a lot fewer of them than had started the battle, and Friedl caught sight of patches of green or red cloth lying in the long grass, the corpses they covered thankfully hidden from view. Ahead of Friedl's regiment, loincloth-clad Beastmen rushed forwards, their near-naked bodies covered with crude war paint, their weapons nothing more than clubs of wood and stone. Over the heads of the Hochlanders, Friedl spied a gleaming figure atop a rock. It was the Count, resplendent in his armour and lionskin cloak, his Runefang glowing with power as he held it over his head, signalling the countercharge.

Friedl broke into a shuffling run, his head pounding with pain, and he shouted out. From the back ranks of the Third Regiment of Foote, a few faces turned towards him and they called out encouragement. Friedl heard the order to march barked out by the sergeant even as he reached the regiment, drawn into their ranks with pats on the back and grins.

Friedl made his way back to his place in the second rank, and caught the glance of Sergeant Pols as he looked over his shoulder.

"Thought you were dead," the sergeant said with a smile.

"Still time for that," Friedl replied grimly, looking up at the Beastmen hurtling towards the Hochlanders. The sergeant looked to the front and bellowed out an order. As one, the halberdiers halted. Another command and they raised their weapons, taking up a fighting stance. The weapon felt heavy in Friedl's tired arms and he fought hard not to tremble with fatigue. He fixed his attention on the approaching Beastmen as blood caked on his face.

The battle for Erstedorf would go on.

# THE GREAT WAR AGAINST CHAOS

Over the two millennia since the disappearance of Sigmar, secret covens and cults sprang up across the Empire. In the dark of night in almost every city and major town, members practiced both their own dangerous forms of spellcraft, the rites of summoning Dark Magic, and Daemonology. In those days, it took little more than the mere mention of witchcraft to bring down the wrath of the Witch Hunters and their burning torches and vicious warhounds.

In the dark centuries before the turn of the second millennium after Sigmar, the Empire teetered on the edge of extinction. Centuries of bitter civil war had torn the heart the nation, and the once proud realm of the Emperors fell into anarchy and misrule. Four of the provincial Elector Counts declared themselves the rightful Emperor, each as resolute in his claim as the next, and the armies of Marienburg, Talabecland, Middenheim, and the Reikland marched their endless wars, leaving only destruction, poverty, and famine in their wake.

As bloody as the Age of Anarchy had been, the Empire's greatest test was yet to come. As the Elector Counts and so-called Emperors continued their power struggles and bickering, an even greater threat was growing in the far north, one that would eclipse all that had come before. Of all the wars and trials that have plagued the Empire, one stands above all others in its grievousness and horror – the Great War Against Chaos, or as it is sometimes called, the Great Chaos Incursion, fought and won by the stout-hearted men of the Empire and their allies against the Daemon-worshipping hordes of Asavar Kul.

## THE REALM OF CHAOS

As the land of Sigmar was riven with invasions and destructive, internecine wars, the power of the dark gods was growing stronger in the Chaos Wastes of the far north. Most years, bands of barbaric marauders came south to pillage and raid in Kislev and the northern provinces of the Empire, but 2301 was very different.

The power of Chaos lies in the far north of the Warhammer World far beyond the borders of the Empire. It centres upon the roughly circular territory around the north pole, directly below the ancient collapsed warp gate which pours magic energy into the world. This region is known as the Realm of Chaos; a black zone of unreality where time and space have no meaning.

The Realm of Chaos is inhabited by Chaos Gods and daemons who are able to exist within the magic-saturated atmosphere. The whole area around the Realm of Chaos is polluted with magic. It is a desert of stone and shifting sands, where periods of increased magical activity have overwhelmed the land, leaving

behind twisted rocks and a barren landscape as the magic subsided. This desolation is known as the Chaos Wastes or the Northern Wastes, and is surrounded in turn by only slightly less corrupted lands of distorted trees and broken rocks called the Troll Country. All these lands lie to the north of the Empire, beyond the land of Kislev. The wastelands are inhabited by all kinds of monstrous creatures and it is here that the armies of Chaos gather their strength.

The Realm of Chaos is a place polluted with evil sorcery. It is a nightmarish landscape of raw magical energy inhabited by all manner of diabolical creatures and bloodthirsty tribes that worship the vile gods of Chaos. From here, hordes of bloodthirsty marauders, iron-clad champions, mutant monsters and vile Daemons launch their attacks upon the world. This war-racked land lies far to the north of the Empire. When the tides of magic flow strongly from the broken warp gate the Realm of Chaos expands, the Northern Wastes are swallowed up, and the armies of Chaos pour down through the Troll Country into Kislev and the Empire. The success of these Chaos armies further strengthens the tides of magic, and the Realm of Chaos grows even larger, threatening to overwhelm the north. The furthest the Realm of Chaos has ever expanded since Sigmar's time was during the Great War Against Chaos which began in the year 2302.

## THE WINDS OF MAGIC

Blowing from the north came the Winds of Magic, growing with intensity in the days leading up to the third century of the second millennium, saturating all the land with the raw power of Aethyr. The power of Chaos had been growing for some years. Throughout the Old World, the many creatures of Chaos multiplied and became bolder, emerging from the deep forests and descending from the mountaintops, raiding and burning towns and villages. Beastmen prowled the forests and





many of the more outlying human settlements had to be abandoned. The deep division within the provinces of the former Empire meant that no-one had sufficient forces to root out the Beastmen. These raids might easily have been stopped at their beginning, if only the provincial Electors had allied to drive them back. But in their arrogance and distrust of each other, they did not. And so the Chaos raids grew into wars and the provinces of Ostland and Ostermark were laid to waste. Warriors of Chaos, human outcasts from the wars, flocked to join the Beastmen and other creatures of Chaos. As the power of Chaos grew the warp gates began to spew out dark magic and the Realm of Chaos expanded quickly.

Warriors from the lands of Norsca and beyond, driven south by the rising tide of Chaos in their own realms, ravaged the coasts of the Empire and Bretonnia, and marauding bands of the black-armoured Chosen of Chaos were seen as far south as Hochland and Middenland. To make matters worse, the disunity and foolishness of the Imperial Lords of those dark and terrible days allowed fierce hordes of Orcs and Goblins to plunder along the Empire's borders completely unopposed, having been driven west by the growing power of Chaos.

Events culminated in the summer of the Imperial year 2301. Dire omens of disaster were observed all across the Empire, terrifying nightmares afflicted the populace, and half-mad soothsayers ranted about the end of the world. They had good reason, for the power

of Chaos was waxing strong. Wells that had previously served towns for generations were said to have suddenly dried or overflowed with noxious slime. Mysterious blights or plagues of insects wreaked havoc among the crops. Cattle and other livestock succumbed to disease or gave birth to screaming monsters. It is even said that fish grew wings and flew from their rivers, and pigs were observed to stand upon their hind legs and walk like men. The land was gripped with fear and hysteria.

Caught in the middle of so much horror and bloodshed, it seemed to the ordinary folk of the Empire that the end of the world was at hand. Many fervently turned to the Gods as a last hope for salvation, and the Empire's cults, particularly the Cult of Sigmar, grew increasingly powerful as the terrified populace flooded into its temples. Yet even as these countless thousands flocked into the arms of the Gods, many others—the despairing and the outcast—found comfort in the embrace of older and darker Gods. Despite the edict forbidding the practice of sorcery, more and more magic users were reported to the authorities each passing day. The fires of the Witch Hunters lit the night sky, yet the use of magic persisted.

The insane servants of the Chaos Gods knew their time was nigh, and emerged from their hiding places in all the towns and cities of the Empire, seizing their chance to take control. Against the twisted fanaticism and Daemonic allies of the dark servants, the unprepared militiamen of these ill-fated towns did not stand a chance. Able citizens fled their homes; those who remained were hunted like animals through the streets.

## THE TIDE OF CHAOS

The dawning of the 24th century saw a grave threat in the north. The Lords of Chaos had waxed fat upon the sacrifices of their faithful, and the excesses of the previous years. The hand of the Ruinous Powers began to move across the world once more. Auroras were seen as far south as Nuln, omens in the temples spoke of a time of great danger, and Kislevite scouts reported a vast, horrible army gathering beyond the taiga. The Incursion of Chaos was about to begin.

In the far north, the Chaos Gates bloated outward with irrepressible energies, disgorging the dark shadow of the Aethyr so that it spilled southwards, engulfing the Wastelands and absorbing them into the Realm of Chaos. Before this irresistible tide marched the armies of Chaos, and as they moved ever southward, their numbers grew. The mightiest champions of Chaos and their warbands joined the monsters from the Northern Wastes, bringing with them armies of marauders from the borders of the Troll Country. In the deep forests of the Empire, Mutants and Beastmen gathered together and readied themselves for war.

Having risen to prominence among the northern barbarian tribes over many years, Asavar Kul was the most powerful champion of the Dark Gods to have

ascended in an age. With his nightmarish armies finally united, he moved southwards, fuelled by the growing tide of Chaos. Daemons moved with them, sustained by fresh tides of life-giving magic, and herds of Beastmen rampaged unchecked through the forests. In the heartlands of the Empire, evil sorcerers and worshippers of the Chaos Gods emerged from their secret conclaves to attack human society from within. As the winter of 2301 engulfed the Old World, the Chaos armies struck southwards, fuelled by the growing darkness of Chaos. Daemons moved with them, sustained by the fresh tides of life-giving magic, and everywhere the agents of Chaos became powerful.

Between the Middle Mountains and the High Pass, many leagues to the north of Praag, emerged an unholy horde of the Chaos Gods. Marauders marched forth in their thousands, among them those blessed by the Dark Gods, the armour-clad Chaos Warriors. Bounding, screeching and growling alongside them came daemons – hideous and strange, fed strong with the billowing Winds of Magic. It is said to have been the largest army to ever wage war on the Old World. Some numbered it as a hundred thousand strong. Others put the figure two or three times higher. This dread army marched southward and ruination followed at its heels.

As autumn approached, even the greatest capitals of the Empire fell into anarchy. Outlying farms, villages, and towns were abandoned to the marauding servants of Chaos, and a constant stream of refugees flocked into the already overcrowded cities. Even in the prosperous region of the Reikland around Nuln and Altdorf, things

were not well. Monsters roamed the Reikwald forest, and ships were attacked and burned as they travelled along the province's great river. In the streets of every city, fanatics and prophets of doom preached their unpleasant brand of redemption. Many desperate citizens listened and, believing their world was ending, joined these bands of Flagellants and world-weary doomsayers.

In the heartlands of the Empire Chaos Sorcerers and worshippers of the Chaos Gods emerged from their secret conclaves to attack human society from within. In Nuln, a powerful coven of Tzeentchian Sorcerers emerged from hiding and led bands of howling cultists and Daemons against the forces of weary authorities. Some men, those driven to the edge of madness by starvation and fear, submitted to what they saw as the inevitable rule of Chaos and threw in their lot with the sorcerers, turning against their own brothers and sisters. Witch hunters and preachers did their best to rally the people against these followers of the Old Dark, and there was open warfare in the streets.

Spring of 2302 was noted as the coldest for centuries but nothing, it seemed, could stop Kul's murderous advance. This vast horde poured south into the lands of Kislev, whose northern lands were quickly overwhelmed. The men of that desolate realm were fierce warriors, and their army included many mounted archers and the famous feather-adorned winged lancers. An army of Kislevites and Ostlanders mustered to face Kul and his unholy allies at the bridges of the River Lynsk north of Praag. However,



despite a fierce battle, they were massacred by the might of the Chaos Warriors, the unnatural ferocity of the daemons, and the sheer numbers of marauders. Kul's forces crossed the last barrier between them and Praag.

## A SIGN IN THE SKY

Huddled in sewers and burnt-out houses, the terrified people of the Empire prayed for salvation, prayed for a sign that they did not stand alone against the gathering darkness. Almost exactly two thousand three hundred years after the death of Sigmar Heldenhammer, the prayers of the people seemed to have been answered. A sign appeared in the night sky – a twin-tailed comet, the ancient symbol of the Empire's divine founding father, arched across the heavens in fiery glory. But what could this sign mean?

The answer came in the form of a fiery young man intended for the seminary of the Cult of Sigmar from the city of Nuln. His name was Magnus von Bildhofen of Nuln, the youngest son of a noble family. He would later become known as Magnus the Pious because of his unflinching devotion to the Cult of Sigmar and to the ideals of nationhood that Sigmar still signified in the divided Empire. Magnus was a magnificent orator whose rousing speeches raised a massive following among the common folk of the Empire. With his great foresight, passionate speeches, strength of arm, and unshakable faith, he gathered to himself an army of followers and led them to victory over the worshippers of the Dark Gods, shattering the might of the Sorcerers' coven and purging every trace of them from his city.

## THE SIEGE OF PRAAG

Elsewhere, however, the forces of Humanity were not victorious. The Chaos horde laid waste to the northern part of Kislev before moving southwards along the foothills of the World's Edge Mountains, heading relentlessly towards the heartland of Kislev and the thriving city of Praag where the terrified citizens prepared for war. Thousands flooded into the city walls from the surrounding countryside, bringing with them what little livestock and grain had survived the near constant plagues that had overwhelmed the land. But it was not enough. Soon Praag's brave peoples were starving, and in their weakened condition, many succumbed to the heinous visitations of Father Nurgle.

As the horrific incursion reached Praag, Asavar Kul laid siege to the city. Marauders assaulted the walls daily, while tireless daemons attacked at night. The Siege of Praag lasted until late 2302, with the city's brave defenders hurling back their attackers time and again with desperate heroics and stalwart bravery. The desperate defenders held on for as long as they could, but as winter set in once more and the year drew to a close, eventually the gates were smashed asunder, and the hordes of Chaos ran amok through the streets bringing a waking nightmare to the screaming inhabitants. As the city fell, the Realm of Chaos swept over the city and engulfed it entirely, mutating and



merging the defenders and the buildings themselves into a hideous parody of their former existence. Praag was changed forever, its stone walls and building melding into hellish and inhuman shapes. Those citizens unlucky enough to still be alive were swept into the Realm of Chaos, their living bodies melted into the walls of the city itself, so that it was no longer possible to tell man from stone. Distorted faces peered from walls, agonised limbs writhed from the pavements, and pillars of stone groaned with voices that came from once human lips. Praag had become a living nightmare and a taste of the horrifying insanity that would come to pass over the world if the incursion could not be stopped and the Chaos armies conquered the rest of the land.

Remnants of the defeated Kislevite army fled south, spreading the word of their defeat. The Tzar sent messages to each of the Electors' courts, begging for help, but the response was confused and bordered on panic. No leader was chosen, for none trusted the others enough to cede authority to him or her: the High Priests of Sigmar and Ulric squabbled with each other over who should take overall command, whilst many of the nobility refused to send help for fear their neighbours would attack their lands in their absence. Some even felt the cause was lost and openly began to worship the Dark Gods, hoping for mercy after the Empire's defeat.

## MAGNUS THE PIOUS

Yet rumour reached the embattled Kislevites of a heroic warleader from the south. A man called Magnus who was bringing an army north to their salvation. Indeed, over the passing weeks and months, the flock of Magnus of Nuln had grown ever stronger. He had gathered to him an army of all kinds of men: loyal devotees of Sigmar and various other cults, mad-eyed zealots, ordinary citizens, and professional soldiers from the armies of the provinces.

Magnus travelled the southern and western Empire gathering through sheer force of will and belief an army of like-minded warriors to come to the aid of Kislev. His rousing speeches struck a chord with the common folk and soon he had assembled a huge



following that marched with him from city to city as he progressed northwards. He addressed the people in the market places, gathering about him an army the likes of which had not been seen for centuries. In Middenheim, the Ar-Ulric denounced him as a fraud, but a miracle appeared to give him Ulric's blessing, and Middenheim fell in line. The Elector Counts and Burgomeisters were shrewd politicians and recognised Magnus as a powerful leader, quickly realising that they could gain much prestige and political power by supporting him. Recognising in Magnus a leader they could all follow, or indeed realising that in such dangerous times they had no choice but to follow him, the Elector Counts of the Empire pledged him their unconditional support and led their troops to join him. Soon, the soldiers of the Elector Counts and the noble warriors of the Empire's Knightly Orders marched alongside Magnus' citizen militia, and by the time the army left Middenheim, it was the single largest force that had ever been assembled in the history of the Empire. Magnus was forced to divide his troops into two armies, as no single territory could provide enough food and water to support all of them.

The first army, consisting mostly of vengeful Kislevite lancers and glory-hungry knights, rode with all speed to Praag hoping to arrive in time to relieve the siege. Despite their hard ride they arrived too late – the Chaos army had moved on, leaving the city as a disturbing vision of hell. Horrified and enraged, the cavalry force turned south filled with a thirst for vengeance. Mustering their courage, they turned south to wreak their vengeance upon the Chaos horde's rearguard.

The second army, led by Magnus himself, marched to the city of Kislev, hoping to resupply at the capital before continuing onwards.

## THE DESPERATION OF MAGNUS

But still, hope was a rare commodity in those unpleasant days, and despite his great faith in Sigmar's Might and the strength of Imperial unity, desperation



crept into Magnus' heart. Every day he read reports carried to him by outriders or untied from the legs of messenger pigeons. Each of these reports told tales of horror and described the sheer scale of the nightmare forces arrayed against him. He wrote in his war journal (now held in the Emperor's private library at the Imperial Palace), that although he knew to the core of his being that the good men and women of the Empire could eventually prevail over any mortal foe, could they do so against the monsters and Daemons of Chaos...?

Magnus knew he needed allies – allies that offered something his own armies lacked. After countless centuries of avoiding the Old World, in the two thousandth and first year since Sigmar's death, almost exactly three hundred and one years before the Chaos Incursion, the Elves of Ulthuan had returned to the lands of Men, opening relations with the Empire. Over the previous three centuries, the higher ranks of Imperial society came to learn that many of the legends concerning the supposedly mythical Elves were actually true. Amongst them were the stories concerning the magical nature of this elder race. Magnus wrote in his journal that though he was reluctant to do so, he felt he had no choice but to ask the people of Ulthuan for aid.

He kept his doubts secret to all but his oldest friend and closest confidante, Pieter Lazlo, and bade him sail the trade route to Lothorn in Ulthuan, the one city to which the Elves had allowed Humans access. Lazlo was to carry a letter from Magnus informing the Ulthuan's Phoenix King of the dire situation facing the Old World and pleading for aid. Lazlo set sail from Marienburg with a handpicked crew on the ship Sigmar's Hope (called by its own crew the Forlorn Hope). The ship was imperiled from the outset. The weather was the worst in living memory, and the Marienburg harbourmaster pleaded with them not to set sail, afraid that they would sink before they even reached the sea. But Lazlo and his crew knew if they did not risk death now on the high seas, they would surely die a far more terrible death later when the forces of Chaos overran the Empire. They departed.

Savage storms lashed their vessel as it crossed the Sea of Claws and on into the ominously named Sea of Chaos. Here, a wave as high as the walls of Altdorf fractured their main mast, and while they struggled to repair it, their ship was blown leagues off course. It was a sad, battered ship that eventually limped into Lothorn's harbour, the crew weak with malnutrition and scurvy. The sight that met their eyes did little to lift their flagging spirits. They sailed past the great lighthouse of the Glittering Tower, seeing that the massive white structure had been blackened by smoke with many of its thousand lamps shattered. The Lothorn Straits were crowded with the shattered wreckages of once elegant ships and the bloated bodies of the drowned. The Elven pilot that came on board to guide them through the mightily fortified Emerald Gates told Lazlo that Lothorn had survived a great

siege, broken but days before. The Dark Elves, said the grim-faced pilot, had returned to Ulthuan once more and their armies and Daemonic allies even now ravaged the towns and countryside further inland.

At this news, Lazlo's heart filled with despair. Would the Phoenix King offer aid to the Empire when his own people were under siege? As his ship arrived at Lothorn's mighty docks, he could see Ulthuan's armies gathering to march north. As an official representative from the Empire, Lazlo was escorted to meet with the emissaries of Ulthuan's monarch. He told them all he could of the situation in the Old World and gave them the sealed letter entrusted to him by Magnus. The emissaries took the news and Lazlo's letter to Finubar, the Phoenix King, as he discussed strategy in his war room with the Archmage Teclis and his brother Tyrion, the Everqueen's champion.

## A PLEA ANSWERED

Though King Finubar knew the dangers that would face Ulthuan if the Old World fell to the Powers and Dominions of Chaos, he knew he could not spare any troops to send back with Lazlo. The Dark Elves had almost overrun Ulthuan, and if they were not expelled, his people would fall. Hearing the call of destiny, Teclis volunteered himself to go to the Old World with Lazlo and offer what aid he could to Humankind. He knew that should the lands of men fall to the Chaos Gods, then Ulthuan would inevitably follow. So it was that Teclis answered Lazlo's plea, and two of his brother mages, the Loremasters Yrtle and Finreir, threw in their lot with Magnus and the armies of the Humans.

Lazlo took the Archmages to the Imperial city-state of Talabheim where Magnus gathered more troops to his cause. Teclis' centuries of experience and sage advice made him invaluable to Magnus from the start. Although Magnus was disappointed that Lazlo had not succeeded in bringing a military force back with him, Teclis explained that strength of arm alone would never be enough to halt the advance of Chaos. Teclis and his brother Loremasters explained to Magnus the need for Humans to learn how to use magic safely in order to combat the Aethyric enemies they would be facing in the coming weeks and months.

A devout Sigmarite, Magnus was filled with doubt at the Archmages' words, but he trusted his instincts and believed that there was no evil in the Elves that stood before him. More than this, they had lived for centuries longer than he, and wisdom almost seemed to exude from them as a tangible aura. If they said they could teach those Humans sensitive to magic to use it to defeat the minions of the Dark Gods, then he could not dismiss such an invaluable power, not facing what he faced.

So Magnus agreed. He made the Loremasters promise that should any of their Human proteges begin to show even a glimmer of corruption, the Archmages would

destroy them. In a tone that sent chills through all present, Teclis stated that heedless of such a promise, any tainted creature that came near the Loremasters would be obliterated more completely than any Human could ever truly understand. Magnus did not doubt his words. So it was that the influence of the Archmages changed the course of the Old World's war against Chaos.

## THE GIFT OF SPELLCRAFT

With the authority and permission of Magnus and the more grudging support of those subordinate to him, the first and perhaps most profound deed of Teclis and his brother mages was to offer amnesty to the hedge wizards and petty magic users that existed in the Empire at that time and to seek out as many as possible. Word was sent by galloping outriders to every part of the Empire they could reach, offering a full pardon and training to any and all that knew or suspected they had an affinity or ability with magic. For some, they experienced strange dreams, compulsions to journey to Altdorf as if some force compelled them. There, if they submitted themselves to Teclis' judgment and training and agreed to fight in the coming war, they would not be harmed by any of the Empire's other powers or agents. They would be under Teclis' protection and the protection of the Great Uniter, Magnus of Nuln.

The Elven mages' incredible skills and profound sensitivity to movements of the Aethyr enabled them to sense even the smallest conjurations by the pettiest Human spellcasters for leagues around them, thus allowing them to find potential magic users by themselves. Using their arcane knowledge, the Elves could traverse the lands of the Empire with supernatural speed and uncover many of the primitive or misguided magic users who were forced to live in secrecy. Yet there were others who made their way to Talabheim of their own accord, handing themselves over to Magnus' authority in desperate hope. With barely a pause, Teclis and his two companions eradicated any witches and warlocks corrupted beyond any hope of redemption.





Teclis left alone the priests and clerics of the Empire's cults, despite his sensing a great aptitude for magic in many. The holy men and women of the Empire were adamant that they had no power or wish to manipulate magic, insisting any miracles their prayers might bring came directly from the deity they worshipped. It is said Loremasters Yrtle and Finreir were amused by these claims, but Teclis merely nodded and allowed the issue to drop. The priests he had approached could already work magic with faith and rituals without learning the arcane spellcraft that Teclis offered. The great archmage saw no reason to inject doubt into their hearts by pressing his point.

Teclis and his brother mages began to instruct their Human students in the ways of spellcraft much to the horror and disapproval of the many templar orders of the Empire, most notably the Witch Hunters. Indeed, many people and longstanding Imperial authorities were aghast that men should be permitted to embrace the sorcerous arts. But Magnus, Voice of Sigmar, Great Uniter of the Empire, and Last Hope against the Chaos Hordes, ordered that it should be so. Magnus had the backing of the Theogonist and Electors, so the witch hunters were held at bay.

So it was the Empire's base magic users and those slightly more refined practitioners of secret and not-too-corrupted arts (learned in distant lands or through private experimentation) that studied the rudiments of the arcane lore Teclis and his fellow mages had to teach. Time was against them, so Teclis, Finreir, and Yrtle taught relatively simple offensive spells – fireballs, lightning bolts, and ear-splitting noises. But he also taught spells of healing to cure the injured on the battlefields and other such skills that would prove useful against the dread legions of the Dark Gods.

Two from amongst the Loremasters' many proteges excelled beyond all others, and their names are remembered to this day with awe and respect: the hot-headed Friedrich von Tarnus, shamed commander of the Corroburg Greatswords and future first Patriarch of the Bright College of Magic, and of course the most powerful and educated of all Teclis' students, the man known to history as Volans. Alongside their Loremaster mentors, these two played a vital role with the other fledgling Imperial spellcasters in defeating the armies of the Dark Gods and scouring the Empire of the taint of Chaos.

## BATTLE AT THE GATES OF KISLEV

Upon reaching Kislev, Magnus and his mass of infantry discovered the city already under bloody siege by Asavar Kul's dark army, with but a few Kislevites and a small but stalwart contingent of Dwarfs from Karaz-a-Karak desperately fighting to defend it. Huge, leather-winged monsters and warp-spawned Daemons swarmed the battlements and giant horned beasts assaulted the city walls beside hordes of iron-clad warriors. Though the walls were yet unbreached, there was no time to lose. Kislev could not hold much longer and Magnus knew that if the city fell, the Empire would surely be next.

Marching amidst the ranks of the common soldiers, Magnus immediately ordered his warriors to hold their banners aloft and charge. Concentrating on the trapped defenders, the Chaos army was ill prepared for this fresh assault, and they were scattered by the sudden attack. Grim-faced regiments of state troops drove a wedge deep within the Chaos host, supported by hails of crossbow bolts and thunderous volleys of handgun

fire. Artillerymen from Nuln, amongst the very first warriors to flock to Magnus' griffon-embazoned banner, deployed in commanding positions overlooking the battlefield and then wreaked a terrible toll on the Chaos forces. Regiments of Chaos Warriors, knights and foul Dragon Ogres were all cut to bloody ribbons by the artillery fire. The battle went well for Magnus initially and victory seemed assured, but Asavar Kul was a mighty leader and rallied his warriors to counter attack. For all the size of Magnus's army, the forces of Chaos numbered many more, and after their initial momentum was spent, the men of the Empire became surrounded still some distance from the city walls. Before long, the greater numbers of the Chaos force began to tell, and Magnus' army was gradually pushed back into a defensive circle. Horrifying Daemons slaughtered entire regiments with razor talons and brazen, spell-forged blades, while evil sorcerers unleashed powerful, ancient magic. Teclis, and a handful of human wizards he had recently trained, fought against the sorcery of Kul's shamans in magical battles that hurried the skies with lethal energies. The Dwarfs inside Kislev attempted to break out to help Magnus, but they were contained and forced back behind the city's walls. Magnus' army was surrounded and it seemed that the fate of the Old World was sealed.

As Kul's warriors fell upon Magnus' army in the final attack, the Kislevite lancers and Imperial knights returning from Praag appeared over the ridge of what would become known as the Hill of Heroes, and they thundered into their enemies with hatred burning in

their hearts. The Dwarfs and remaining defenders charged once more from the city and Magnus seized this last, desperate chance to lead the Men of the Empire forwards in glorious battle. Caught between no less than three armies the Chaos hordes faltered, as they suddenly faced no less than three armies, and began to stampede in every direction, bewildered and confused by this new turn of events. The Kislevites were driven to wild fury by the destruction they had witnessed in Praag and the host of Asavar Kul was slaughtered by the implacable anger of the combined forces. The magic of Teclis and his human apprentices immolated entire regiments of mindless Chaos Spawn and dozens of blood-crazed Chimerae, while frenzied Manticores were struck from the skies by sorcerous thunderbolts. The Elven Archmages and their Human protégés showed their willingness to spill their own blood in the defence of the Empire, and all of them took grave wounds during that terrible war. Loremaster Yrtle himself fell in battle, beheaded by some clawed fiend of Chaos even as he incinerated it with the fire flashing from his hands. He was buried in Ostermark with all honours.

Attacked on three fronts, the hordes of Chaos could not hold their ground and routed from the field, thousands of marauders slain, while many of the daemons suddenly melted out of existence as the Realm of Chaos waned and retreated. The army of Chaos was shattered and thousands of its warriors were hacked down as they turned to flee. As the witches and sorcerers of the Chaos host were cut down, the foul magic binding the Daemons to the mortal realm was



severed and the unholy creatures exploded into mists of blood and clouds of flies. Magnus seized the opportunity and led his troops forward. The Dwarfs and remaining Kislevite defenders burst from the city itself. The Chaos troops fled and many were caught and destroyed as they turned to run.

Kislev, the Empire, and indeed the Old World had been saved, and the Realm of Chaos shrank away to the north once more.

## THE EMPIRE ENDURES

Following the Empire's victory in the final battle of the Great War at the very gates of Kislev, the power of Chaos gradually ebbed away. Daemons began to melt back into the Realm of Chaos, helped along by the vicious spells cast at them by Teclis and his Human students. Once the darkness had withdrawn from the land once more, the city of Praag was levelled and rebuilt, though ever afterwards it has remained a haunted city where the dead are said to rest uneasy in their graves.

Having seen how close they came to ruin, and how popular Magnus was with the masses, the Empire's grandees realised the realm needed an emperor, and a strong one at that. On arrival at Wolfenburg in 2304, the Electoral Council met and formally named Magnus of Nuln as Emperor. If the Elector Counts of the time had any doubts about installing the dark-eyed minor noble and ex-seminarian to the throne of Emperor, they kept their thoughts to themselves. The Elector Counts could not have voted otherwise even if they had wanted; the people demanded it and were not to be denied. Magnus the Pious proved an extremely able Emperor and immediately set about restoring order to the provinces of the Empire, and under him the provinces were united under one rule for the first time in centuries, putting an end, more or less, to the warring of the Elector Counts. The servants of Chaos were hunted down in the forests, and many wild and long-abandoned lands were re-settled. Altdorf, on Magnus' insistence, revised its citizenry laws adding thousands of new taxpayers to their already impressive populace. With victory against the hordes of Chaos, Magnus ushered in a new era of peace and prosperity.

Magnus took steps to increase the defences of the Empire, removing the ban on wizardry. Magnus knew that if the Empire was to survive it needed order and the help of its new allies, and thus one of Magnus' first acts was to ask Teclis to help him create an institution whereby wizards might be properly trained. Though many Elves claimed that the secrets of sorcery were not meant for Men, Teclis realised that the safety of the world rested upon the folk of the Empire, and so he agreed to Magnus' request. Thus were the Colleges of Magic established in the city of Altdorf under the protection of the Prince of that city, and Teclis taught the first Masters and laid down the laws by which they were to study before he returned to the Elven Kingdoms of Ulthuan.



Magnus also recognised the valuable contributions the master gunners of Nuln and the Engineers of Altdorf had made to the defence of the Empire. He granted them formal charter and for ever more both institutions would proudly bear the prefix 'Imperial' and would become integral parts of the Emperor's armies. A new age of intellectual vigour and investigation had begun.

He also recognised the changing balance of power between city and country, granting Nuln the status of a city-state, whilst ratifying the reintegration of Middenland and Middenheim under the Todbringer Grafs of Middenheim. His distant cousins, the Middenland von Bildhofens, had died during the war, but Magnus had no desire to claim the province for himself, and denied his brother's right to do so. Instead, its electoral vote was put into abeyance. He also acceded to the formal reunification of Talabheim and Talabecland, which had occurred for all practical purposes centuries before.

Magnus reigned for 65 years, and many regard these as the happiest in the Empire's history since Sigmar's own rule. General peace reigned throughout the land, and reunification brought increased commerce and prosperity as trade flowed. Magnus died in his sleep in 2369. For his great works, devotion to the Empire, and devotion to Sigmar, a conclave of the Electors voted to give him the title "the Pious" and declare his birthday to be an Empire-wide day of thanks. Even though those

Emperors who would follow were shadows of Magnus, a sense of pride and responsibility spread through the land. Over the next two centuries, "The Great Reconstruction" as it is known, the Empire worked to rebuild itself following ages of civil war and the destruction meted by the Chaos armies.

## INTERLUDE

The Empire could not forever escape its own fractious tendencies, however. The Electors rejected Magnus's brother Gunther as his successor and instead chose Leopold Unfähiger, Elector Count and Grand Count of Stirlant. As happened before under the electoral system, the need to bargain led successful candidates to cede powers and privileges to the Electors, gradually weakening the Emperor's office again.

This problem led the Unfähiger Emperors to seek other sources of revenue to give them leverage against the other Electors. The reign of Dieter IV was extremely unpopular and he was universally loathed by the people of the Empire. Emperor Dieter IV carried it too far, however, when he reputedly accepted large bribes from the burgomeisters of Marienburg to acknowledge their city's independence – many thought that he had accepted the Marienburger's money a little too readily. The scandal of a province breaking away with Imperial connivance was so shocking that an emergency meeting of the Electors was called in the Volkshalle in Altdorf. There in 2429 the Electors deposed Dieter and put in his place Grand Prince Wilhelm of Reikland, the ancestor of the current Emperor. To avoid civil war after the defeat of an Imperial Army outside Marienburg, the new Emperor Wilhelm III recognised

the Wasteland's independence and made Dieter the Grand Duke and Elector Count of Talabecland, from which he detached Talabheim in a manner similar to Nuln.

Perhaps it was a fear of what disunity had almost cost them during the IncurSION of Chaos, but the Imperial Electors, their subordinate nobility, and the priests of the cults all made an effort to keep open conflict from breaking out. Clandestine manoeuvres and conspiracies were another thing, altogether.

Since the accession of Wilhelm in 2429 the crown has remained with the Princes of Altdorf through wars and times of great upheaval all the way to the present Emperor Karl Franz.

### THE UNUSUAL DEMISE OF LORD VETHRIC

*When the grand army of Talabecland mustered to hunt down and destroy the rogue Sorcerer Lord Vethric, they were met with a nasty surprise. Grand Master Odo Copperfinger of the Order of the Crystal Lance had mustered not only his entire order but also ten score regiments of well-drilled state troops, the splendidly-moustached Carroburg Greatswords, and the venerable Steam Tank Ancient Fury, known as Old Rustbucket to the soldiery. The armies cautiously manoeuvred through the forest to surround Lord Vethric's many-towered citadel. Grand Master Copperfinger had barely finished booming his ultimatum to the Chaos-worshipping Vethric when all hell broke loose.*

*With a muffled thunderclap, a stampede of black-tongued Daemons riding atop musclebound crimson bulls burst out from the ether and crashed into the Empire army's flank. From the woods came gigantic blade-legged centipedes and fleshworms the size of wagon trains, catching up Odo's knights with scythe-like mandibles and scissoring them apart. The Empire army counterattacked with gusto, refusing to bow before the Sorcerer's summoned legions. The daemon cavalry met its match in the Carroburg Greatswords, who stood fast even in the face of the most punishing assault, but when a flame-wreathed meteorite of warpstone thundered out of the heavens and obliterated the best part of the Empire army, the struggle seemed hopeless. Then sounded Ancient Fury's twin great cannons, and trundling forward the Steam Tank ploughed headlong into the section of the citadel already weakened by its cannonade before exploding spectacularly. With almost unbearable slowness, the Sorcerer's citadel toppled downward into the battle below, flattening several more regiments but in the process crushing Lord Vethric and silencing his conjurations forever.*

*There was a grand victory feast in Copperfinger's halls that night, but it is rumoured that there were fewer than twenty survivors able to attend it.*



All around was the din of bloody war: the clash of weapons on armour, the screams of the dying and the wounded, the bellowing of war cries and the screeches of inhuman foes. Magnus looked about him and all was in disarray, with no pattern nor plan. The hordes of Chaos mingled with the fierce Humans and Dwarfs in swirling combat, the batik hoes long since merged by the confusion of war.

Finding himself in a pause in the fighting, Magnus looked about, gripping his blood-slicked sword tightly. The battle swayed in the balance, he could feel it in his bows. He could also feel the spirit of Sigmar within himself, guiding his hand as he smote the enemies of the Empire fuelling his sinews with the strength of faith. He started to turn to his men, to rally them for another charge, when a voice, the voice he had heard for months now, told him to wait a moment. Looking back at the Chaos horde he saw why, and for the briefest moment his heart quailed at the sight.

A massive knot of armoured horsemen was thundering across the divide that had opened up this part of the battlefield, and at the front rumbled a gigantic chariot pulled by three immense beasts sprouting tusks and horns from their coal-black hide. Magnus found it difficult to look at the chariot itself, strange runes and symbols hanging horn half a dozen iron banner poles twisted the air and made his eyes water.

This is the one who leads them, the voice told him. This is the beast in human form named Asavar Kul.

Steadying himself, Magnus looked on as the chariot turned towards him, its spiked wheels crushing the bodies of the slain and throwing up plumes of snow and blood. The Knights of Chaos reined in their mounts at a signal from the creature that stood atop the chariot, slowing down and allowing their warlord to approach alone. The snow melted under the fiery tread of the unnatural horses pulling the chariot, which thundered towards Magnus at a terrifying pace. Magnus held his ground calmly as the war engine hurtled towards him, and at the last moment it turned aside, dewing to a stop.

"The gods tell me that you alone stand in my path to greatness!" the warrior bellowed from the back of the chariot. "I shall carve your heart out and then burn the city to the ground."

As Kul stepped down from the chariot, Magnus realised how huge the warrior was, fully half as tall again as the Sigmarite Priest. But Magnus felt no fear. He felt calm and ordered, as if he were simply kneeling at prayer rather than in the middle of a blood soaked battlefield. It seemed as if silence descended as Magnus focussed on the Champion of Chaos, broken only when Kul drew a massive writhing sword from the scabbard across his back, at which a deafening keening filled the air. His armour burst into flames, wreathing the warrior in smoke as he advanced, and the sword seemed to grow in his hand. Magnus remained impassive as the ogre-sized warlord stomped towards him, his shadow engulfing the priest.

With a war cry in a tongue that Magnus could not comprehend, Kul launched himself at the priest, the daemonsword in his hand scything towards the faithful servant of Sigmar with a screech. Magnus took two swift steps to the left, without thinking, and brought up his own sword, which now glowed from within with a blue light. The chaos runeblade struck sparks from Magnus' weapon as he parried the blow, swiftly riposting with a thrust to the armoured gut of Kul. The priest's sword rang harmlessly off the hell-forged armour and numbed Magnus's hand, who threw himself backwards with more urgency than before when Asavar Kul delivered an overhead chop that would have cleaved him from head to groin.

For what seemed like an eternity the two exchanged blows, their swords ringing relentlessly together, one occasionally, scoring a light wound on the other, until both were streaming with blood from a dozen cuts each. Magnus felt no tiredness in his limbs, and it was obvious that Kul had barely even started. The battle would last an eternity more if all remained equal.

But then Kul made his fatal mistake, a plunging thrust with his sword buried the blade two feet into the ground and pulled him off balance. Striking tightly with every ounce of strength, Magnus hacked off the Champion's right arm, the power of the blow sending Kul reeling back. Asavar looked down at the stump and then, as if he had suffered nothing more than a scratch, pulled an axe from where it hung at his belt with his left hand. But now the advantage belonged to Magnus, and he pressed it home, constantly attacking from the beast's right with backhanded cuts until finally his double-handed blows knocked the axe from Kul's hand. Defenceless the warrior stood there and looked down at Magnus, his dark eyes gleaming within his helm.

"The gods promised me glory and conquest if I could defeat you," Kul said, pulling his helmet free and revealing a face criss-crossed with scars and branding marks. "I have failed them, and the victory is yours."

Without hesitation, Magnus swung his sword, and Kul's head flew from his shoulders to land in the snow a dozen feet away.

"It was your gods who failed you," Magnus whispered to himself as he looked up from the corpse of the Chaos Champion. "My god is always with me."







# THE GAUNTLET OF FEAR

It was dawn... the pale sunlight warmed the frozen air and the thin mist which had shrouded the wide valley seeped back into the stagnant pools and bracken ditches. As the cold air cleared the orange glow and smoking phones of a score of watch fires came into view as the two armies reached their weapons and prepared for the coming battle.

To the south, across the crest of a small hill, Empire horsemen blew into their hands and steadied their mounts as the swirls of cold mist drifted past. Once more they were waiting for the word of command: a single order that would send them driving forward towards their foes. How many times had they spurred their horses into a charge and felt the dreadful shock as their dipped lances crashed through sinew and bone? Looking down the line, each one of them wondered how many of their number would not live to see another dawn.

Across the plain the Orcs assembled their army, mustering their numbers to the deafening "Doom-ka-boom, Doom kaboom" of their war drums. Dozens upon dozens of greenskinned warriors pushed and shoved their way into ragged ranks, easily twice the number of the meagre Empire forces. At the head of the host, astride his most vicious-war boar, sat the Orc general Morglum Necksnapper. As he shouted orders to his lieutenants, Goblin wolf riders dashed between the Orc and Goblin regiments, passing orders to commanders who kicked and cuffed their warriors into line and prepared the army for battle. While Morglum impatiently waited for the last of the Goblins to form up their ranks, his ugly face twisted into an even more brutal expression as he smiled at the thought of the bloodshed to come...

Clouds of hot breath misted the air as the Reiksguard knights' warhorses champed their bits and pawed at the frozen ground. The burnished armour of their riders sparkled and glimmered in the weak light of the watery sun which now shone through the heavy clouds on the horizon.

Young Zastrig waited with the rest of the Reiksguard for the sign to advance. It was his first time in battle. He had been unable to eat that morning, but despite the taunts and bawdy jokes of his comrades it felt good to be with these battle-hardened soldiers. He was not frightened really, more apprehensive, not knowing if he would be able to uphold the honour of his family. He had long trained for this day and hoped that he would not let his father down.

He watched the rest of the knights as they made final checks to their battle harness, their armour and their weapons. In imitation, he leant forward in his saddle and petted his own mount, who nuzzled his hand affectionately. In the front rank of the regiment sat the elite of the knights, the cream of the Empire army. To one side was the famous Ludwig Schwarzhelm, the Emperor's Champion, hero of a dozen campaigns, undefeated in countless battles. With Karl Franz at the head of another army in the south, the Emperor's Battle Standard was borne in his stead by this most loyal of his followers. Yes, thought Zastrig, it was good to have this brave knight in the regiment.

Conferring with the experienced Schwarzhelm was another near legendary figure – Reiksmarshall Kurt Helhorg, general of the Empire army. Zastrig couldn't hear exactly, what they were saying but it seemed they were discussing the plan for the battle. He thought that he overheard the name Old Weirde and mention of his "Tacticus", but he must surely have been mistaken. What could a tired old man like that teach great warriors such as these?

Suddenly, the Reiksmarshall finished talking to the other knights and turned to face his army. Standing high in his stirrups, he drew his sword and the dazzling blaze of one of the fabled Runefangs cut the morning haze. All along the Empire line spirits rose as the flash was mirrored by another, the Runefang of the Elector Count of Ostland. From the throats of the Empire army a single cry was heard, "For Sigmar and Karl Franz! For victory!"



# THE REIGN OF KARL FRANZ

Since its founding, the Empire has known many different Emperors. Some have been wise and just, and some corrupt or tainted by madness. The current Emperor is Karl Franz, Prince of Altdorf and Elector Count of Reikland. Under his rule, the Empire has been forged into a well-coordinated and disciplined engine of war.

When Karl Franz, Prince of Altdorf and Count of Reikland was elected to the imperial Throne in 2502, the Empire was enjoying a period of relative peace and stability. However, the new Emperor was well aware that such a situation would not last and that it would take all of his skills as a commander and a statesman to protect the Empire and its people for generations to come. Ruling from Altdorf, he showed more skill and character than his immediate predecessors and held out the promise of strong leadership for the Empire. Electors felt pressured to toe the line, and he skilfully played the cults of Sigmar and Ulric against each other in their attempts to gain his favour.

Though he has yet to face anything like the cataclysmic events of ages gone, there has nevertheless been war aplenty and the situation seems to grow worse every year. In the north, Chaos incursions continue, raiding the coast of Nordland and Ostland. Occasionally these attacks can be met and countered at the shoreline, the

marauding ships holed and sunk with cannon fire. More often, they land unopposed, pillaging and razing towns or even marching south in force to seek a greater prize. The northern towns of Unterhall, Kressle, and Volganof have all seen major battles in recent years that were only narrowly won with the combined forces of the Elector Counts.

Other threats have appeared too. Armies of hulking, ravenous Ogres have left their homelands far in the east, and crossed the mountains intent on battle and food. The Beastmen, an ever-present danger, seem to be multiplying faster than ever – their attacks growing in size and ferocity. Rumours persist of the Skaven menace, though never proven (research indicates a number of accounts where a village or isolated town has been discovered with its entire population missing, vanished without trace. In a few locations, entire settlements – and even the occasional border fort – have sunk inexplicably into the ground, leaving nothing but a gaping hole into the depths of the earth).

Despite all these external threats, it takes all of the Emperor's statesmanship, force of personality and, on occasion, force of arms to ensure that the Elector Counts provide mutual support in times of need, and to prevent them from falling back to bickering and the pursuit of ancient feuds. For as predators on all sides grow bolder and fiercer, never has unity been more important.

## A STATESMAN SUPREME

Karl Franz is a powerful and charismatic leader, renowned across the Old World and beyond as a brilliant statesman, and the current stability and strength of the Empire owes much to his ability to negotiate the treacherous political webs that hold the Empire together. Karl Franz has petitioned the notoriously stubborn Grand Masters of the Knightly Orders for aid, appealing to their fierce warrior pride and sense of honour with the skill of a born diplomat. Ever since, the knights of countless warrior brotherhoods have been seen marching beside the banners of the Emperor's armies in numbers not seen since the time of the Crusades. Likewise, provincial rulers who were at war with their neighbours only a few years ago now stand shoulder to shoulder under the Emperor's banner. Having heeded Karl Franz's counsel, they have put their differences aside for now, and their combined forces repel the hordes of Orcs, Beastmen and Undead that would see the Empire torn asunder.

The fragile alliance between the Empire's different factions and states is held together with but a thread. Karl Franz has no shortage of political rivals who believe they might benefit were he to be removed from the throne. These range from elected city officials and a dizzying array of feudal lords to fanatical religious leaders and disgruntled guild masters, all jockeying for



power and position at court. So does Karl Franz sit in the centre of a web of intrigue, where every leader has his own petty jealousies, entrenched rivalries and unspoken ambitions. It is a complex and sometimes cutthroat world through which only the most astute statesmen can hope to navigate unscathed. Though the Emperor is the ultimate source of power and patronage, he is always just one sip of a poisoned cup away from death. If Karl Franz should fall, the frail bonds that hold the Empire together might falter and, without unity, the Empire would surely not stand for long.

Pundits and scholars claim that Karl Franz is able to maintain order by forcing each faction into deals that are "mutually unacceptable all round." With an excellent understanding of leverage, many of the Emperor's victories have been won by granting a person not what they want, but what they don't want anyone else to have. Using such tactics, he was able to convince the Guilds of Altdorf to sign up to the infamous "Stench Act" of 2506 – committing themselves to large fines and fees, not because they believed in a cleaner Altdorf, but because they thought the cost would destroy rival Guilds. A powerful statesman, aided in no small way by excellent advisors, Karl Franz has managed to steer the fractious Empire through many dangers.

The Empire continued to flourish under the rulership of Karl Franz, though there were ever dangers to face and enemies to fight. When hostilities erupted between Graf Alberich Haupt-Anderssen of Stirland and Helmut Feuerbach of Talabecland, ancestral enemies since the Time of Three Emperors, the other Counts waited expectantly to see which side Karl Franz would back. The Emperor travelled to Talabheim in an attempt to negotiate peace between the two hostile provinces.



The Emperor's skill in debate was put to the ultimate test in resolving the dispute, as was his patience, but in the end both Elector Counts acceded to Karl Franz's wisdom and a potentially bitter civil war was ended before it began. Many other potential conflicts have been resolved through Karl Franz attending such negotiations, not least in part because he is always flanked by the unsmiling figure of Ludwig Schwarzhelm. The sight of the Emperor's personal champion with the Sword of Justice unsheathed has usually been enough to make most Elector Counts settle their differences without recourse to war.

On another memorable occasion, the aggressive Count of Nordland's territorial ambitions against the neighbouring province of Hochland were averted when the Emperor requested the Supreme Patriarch of the Colleges of Magic, Balthasar Gelt, to intervene. Advised by Karl Franz, Gelt travelled to Castle Salzenmund, seat of Theoderic Gausser, Elector Count of Nordland. Though ostensibly there as the Emperor's



ambassador, Gelt secretly transmuted the gold earmarked for the Count's armies and mercenaries into worthless bars of lead. The hired swords refused to fight without payment and the looming threat of civil war was averted. As soon as he discovered what had happened, the enraged Elector Count drew his Runefang and swore he would have Gelt's head, but his murderous ambitions were thwarted, as the Supreme Patriarch had wisely left Nordland in a hurry on the back of his Pegasus.

## A DEFENDER OF THE REALM

The Emperor's military mind is every bit as sharp as his political one, and among his first acts as Emperor was the strengthening of the Empire's borders. He personally led armies to cull tribes of Chaos-worshipping northmen and savage Beastmen warherds that were rampaging in the heart of his realm. On these and countless other battlefields, Karl Franz has brought glory to his people, and through his own scars and blood, he has proved that his courage and dedication to protecting the Empire are beyond reproach.

Shortly into his rule, the Emperor decreed that the state troops receive better pay and more rigorous training than ever before, and after each of Karl Franz's rousing speeches, the infantry barracks swelled with new recruits. However, the Emperor realised that battles are not won with steel alone. Under Karl Franz's reign, the military institutions of the Empire have flourished like never before. The Colleges of Magic have revealed their most destructive magics, the Imperial Engineers School has unveiled its most powerful weapons to date and the forges at the Imperial Gunnery School toil day and night to provide the Empire's armies with the artillery and shot they require.

As the years passed, the Empire continued to grow in power and influence, with the Emperor engaging in many great public works to improve the lot of his people. Through Kurt Helborg, the Emperor enacted his will, despatching the Master of the Reiksguard to lead his armies in battle against numerous foes; the Ogre reavers of Gutlord Breaskus, the Orcs of the Blighted Towers and a rumoured infestation of the foul ratmen in the Howling Hills – the site of Emperor Mandred's famous victory against the underfolk.



## A WARRIOR OF RENOWN

Karl Kranz is not a man to ask others to do what he himself will not, and has taken to the field many times during his reign as Emperor. Such displays of heroism and martial skill have only served to solidify his place, in the eyes of his people, as one of the greatest Emperors in history.

### The Threat From the North

Karl Franz's first great battle came in the very year of his ascension to Emperor. Wishing to establish his reign as one of military strength and to send a message to those outside his borders that he was not a man to be taken lightly, the Emperor decided a show of force would ratify his position.

Since the Great War Against Chaos, the numbers of Beastmen and Chaos worshippers had been growing steadily once more. Karl Franz's advisors told him that in the far north, the Winds of Magic were blowing



strongly again. It might not be for years, even decades, but at some time, the marauders would come again in force, pushed south by the expansion of the Realm of Chaos. Norse raiders, growing bolder in recent years, had reaped a bloody toll on the people dwelling on the coast of the Sea of Claws, slaughtering entire towns and carrying off their livestock and womenfolk. In response, Karl Franz's first act was to march northwards at the head of a mighty host to reinforce the army of Theoderic Gausser, Elector Count of Nordland. Gausser's armies could not know where the Norse would strike in time to defend their people, but the Emperor had brought with him some of the most powerful wizards of the Celestial College, whose members are gifted with the ability to read the future in the heavens.

*It was fitting on his last day alive that rain would fall. Dawn spilled weak light over the Blighted Marshes, and Leopold von Stroheim, former general of the Emperor Karl Franz, knew that his dreams of conquest were over. He no longer thought of himself as an Elector Count; he was now simply a sword for hire. Lord Ravenbrandt had seen to that when he had used his influence at court to have him recalled from the fledgling province of Neuland on Albion. Since then, his political star had plummeted. He was no longer welcome at the court of the Second House of Wilhelm, and his friends and allies had vanished like morning mist. Now the last act of his carter would be played out in this godforsaken marshland in the rain.*

*He stopped to take a drink from his Canteen, enjoying the fiery heat of the Tilean brandy as it burned a path down his gullet. It was early to be drinking, but having heard the reports of his scouts, he knew that it would only go to waste if he did not drink it now. The remnants of the men he had pulled from Prince Lorenzo's army after the disaster at Miragliano huddled, shivering around sputtering fires, casting nervous glances towards the horizon. Less than a hundred had survived the battles following the city's fall, and they had been harried by the ratmen ever since, finally ending up in this bleak moorland on the edge of the Blighted Marshes. The warrior priests passed among the men, offering prayers and hearing confessions. Even they knew that this day was lost.*

*A shout was raised from his pickets and he stoppered his canteen, running for his armoured steed. Leopold clambered into the saddle and galloped towards his personal retinue of Knights of the White Wolf. His steed's ears were pressed flat against its skull in fear, and he could well understand its alarm. Until recently he had not even believed that these rat-creatures could exist; perhaps the late Mad Count of Averland had not been so mad after all. His throat was dry and he washed down another mouthful of brandy, passing the canteen to the knights as he watched the foe emerge from the noxious fog before them. Tattered banners fluttered above a sea of mange-ridden fur, stretching as far as the eye could see. By Sigmar, was there no end to their number? The stench of the creatures reached him even here and their monstrous, chittering cries sent a shiver down his spine as the dolorous peals of a doom-laden bell rang out. Leopold drew his sword and shouted. "Men of the Empire, today we face our death, but we are men of courage and though they may take our lives, they will never defeat us! Onward!"*

*Leopold von Stroheim raked back his spurs and led the last charge.*

The next time the Norse raiders attacked, they were met with fusillades of fire from concealed handgunners and crossbowmen, and their ships were sunk by unerringly accurate cannon fire, Helstorm Rocket Batteries and the powerful storms summoned by the Celestial College's arcane war altars, hundreds of Norse died without a fight as their heavy hauberks dragged them to the bottom of the sea, and those that survived to reach the shore were met by disciplined ranks of swordsmen, spearmen and halberdiers marching onto the beach. The berserk Norsemen were slaughtered without quarter, and the Emperor himself led the charge against the final Norse shield wall.

### The Battle of the Plain

The Battle of the Plain was fought in Imperial Year 2506, four years after Karl Franz's accession to the Imperial throne. At the time of the battle, Karl Franz himself was leading a large army against an incursion

by Orcs from the Black Mountains, who were plundering the lands along the upper Reik to the east of NuIn.

During his absence from the Imperial capital at Altdorf, a new threat to the security of the Empire was reported by the Elector Count of Ostland. A large body of Orcs and Goblins led by Orc Warlord Morglum Necksnapper had emerged from the Middle Mountains and begun to launch raids along the borders of Ostland and Hochland.

A new force was rapidly assembled and sent north to hunt down and destroy this army. After a number of small skirmishes between units of Kislevite cavalry and Goblin wolf riders, the two armies met across a barren plain just south of Wolfenburg in the province of Ostland. After a long and bloody battle, the Empire would finally emerge triumphant, and Morglum Necksnapper was forced to retreat.

### An Alliance Renewed

When the Dwarf King Barundin of Zhufbar was stricken with warpstone poisoning in 2507, the morale of his warriors suffered severely, and the Skaven attacking the lower levels of the hold finally penetrated its blockade. Word of their plight travelled through the Moot to the Empire, largely due to the efforts of the Halfling runner Stocky Borrowblade. Karl Franz personally led his Reiksguard through the treacherous sewers and tunnels of the Underway into the raging battle beneath Zhufbar. The Empire troops put the Skaven rearguard to flight at the Battle of Broken Pillars, and the Dwarfs took the opportunity to counterattack, repelling the invaders inch by inch. Since that famous battle, the alliance between Dwarfs and men has been stronger than ever before.

#### THE SIEGE OF WOLFENBURG

*Kurt Waldheim had always found this time of the morning the hardest on his creaking joints. The sun had just lit the peaks of the Middle Mountains but was yet to chase away the night's chill from the sleepy vale. He pondered the events of the past week and tried to fathom their effect on his home town.*

*Nestled between the mighty crags of the Middle Mountains and the massive expanse of the Forest of Shadows, the mining town of Wolfenburg had always held its own against the multitude of raiders, both human and bestial, but the increasing amount of rumours and trouble from the northeast disturbed the woodsman no end.*

*Forty summers of toil in the foothills and forty winters of logging the lowlands had created a bard, no nonsense character and all the recent carry-on had interrupted his routine.*

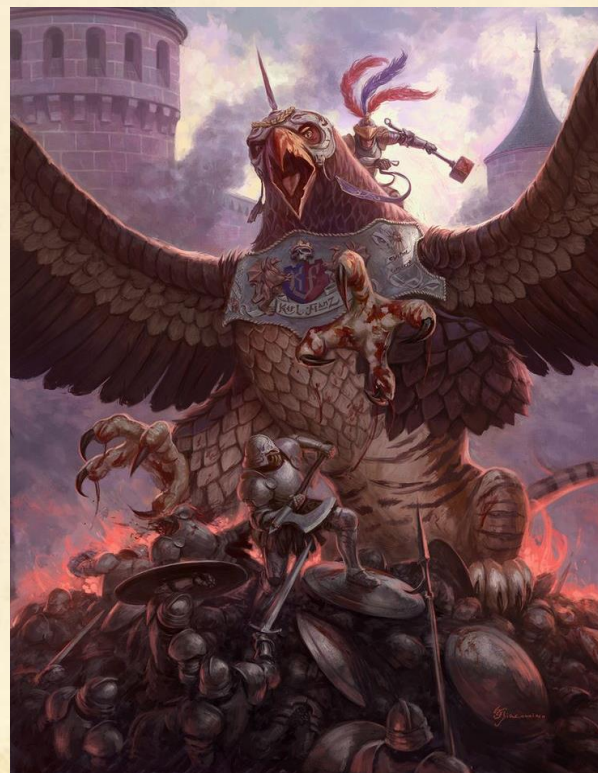
*"I'm grateful for their help and I want to keep the town safe," Kurt mumbled under his breath "but they're certainly overstaying their welcome." The logger heard the low mumbles of waking men coming from inside his modest cabin. The local militia had been recently reinforced by troops from Altdorf and their Captain had been using Kurt's clearing as his camp for several days now.*

*Waldheim stretched and made ready to enter his abode and face Captain Schultz with his concerns when the sound of hooves on the forest path caused him to turn. One of the local lads, a scout, was closing on him and crying out a warning. The door to the cabin was thrown open and the Emperor's man was calling his well-drilled troops to arms. By the time they were assembled in the clearing the echo of the riders' hoof beats had faded to be replaced by the unnatural braying of the dark bounds, the clink of weapons against armour and the crash of falling trees as some nightmare creature waded through the forest toward his borne.*

*"Logger? You have the look of a man with something to say?" Schultz spoke calmly.*

*Kurt Waldheim, axe in hand, stuttered his reply, "G-g-give p-p-praise to Sigmar that you are here L-lord!"*

*"Now it begins," the Captain turned to face the oncoming horror.*



## The Battle of Bloodpine Woods

In the year 2517, the Emperor marched again to battle, in an episode that quickly escalated into one of the most perilous encounters of his life.

The Reikwald Forest is infested with countless foul creatures, and Goblin Raids are just one of the numerous threats that constantly assail the Empire settlements within it. On this occasion, the Goblin King Raknik, the self-proclaimed 'Spider-King', had gathered a horde of greenskins and was burning his way across the Reikland. Karl Franz knew that the Reikwald quickly, for if he could not defend his own province, then his ability to defend the Empire might well be called into question. So it was that Karl Franz led an army to stamp out the threat once and for all. Vast columns of white-uniformed state troops marched down the Great Reik Road, advancing to the steady beat of drums beside Greatswords from Carroburg and fully half the Reiksguard, the armour polished to a mirror sheen. The Reiksmarshal led the Emperor's guard from the front, riding beside Karl Franz and his ferocious Imperial Griffon, Deathclaw.

The Spiderclaw tribe's lair lay within a region of the Reikwald Forest known as the Bloodpine Woods. As the Emperor's army approached its boundaries, the woodland grew increasingly dense and dark. The menacing area was thick with cobwebs and the soldiers could see corpses hanging from the trees wrapped in thick webs, their blood pooling on the forest floor. Reluctant to send his troops blindly into the heart of the Goblins' realm, Karl Franz instead ordered the bulk of his infantry to deploy in a long line, parallel to the road and facing the edge of the Bloodpine Woods; they were to hold the line, no matter the cost.

Though the foot-soldiery would bear the brunt of the coming attack, the Emperor needed them to buy time for Kurt Helborg and the Reiksguard to move into position. With his orders given, Karl Franz spurred Deathclaw into flight and vanished behind the eastern tree line. No sooner had the men of Reikland taken their positions than a great horde of shrieking Goblins and ferocious Savage Orcs erupted from the malign forest. The discipline of Reikland's troops proved equal to the task at first, but wave after wave of greenskins continued to pour from the Bloodpine Woods. The ferocity of the sustained assaults was such that the eastern flank would have crumbled were it not for the heroic efforts of the Carroburg Greatswords and the steadying shouts of Reikland captains. However, as yet more greenskins joined the fight, it looked as if no amount of courage would help them prevail.

Just as all seemed lost, the Reiksguard launched their counterattack. The hearts of men lifted, but greenskin eyes grew wide with panic as hundreds of heavily armoured knights crested the ridge and hurtled full-tilt towards the battle line, Kurt Helborg at their head. As the Reiksguard ploughed through the foe, the enemy's panic grew into abject terror. The Reiksmarshal ordered a full-scale pursuit, driving the greenskins back to the forest, and into the jaws of Karl Franz's trap. The greenskin horde halted in fear and confusion as the forest seemed to explode in an avalanche of claws and talons. Karl Franz had secretly led a force of Demigrph Knights to cut off the line of retreat. Caught between Karl Franz's monstrous cavalry to the front, and the Reiksguard to the rear, the greenskins were massacred.

The soldiers of Reikland cheered, but their celebrations were cut short as a coruscating bolt of green sorcery



shot from the tree line and struck the Emperor, pitching him from the saddle. In an instant, the soldiers' celebratory shouts turned into cries of fear as Raknik himself emerged from gloom atop a monstrous spider the size of a townhouse. Several similar beasts stalked out of the woods, and darting between their chitinous legs were hundreds of spiders as big as warhorses. The spider-mounted goblins descended upon the terrified soldiers, and the men were overwhelmed by the startling tide. Scores fell as black-fledged arrows found their marks, and Reiksguard knights were skewered by spear-sized bolts or else pulled from their horses by the hungry Trolls lumbering in the spiders' wakes.

Deathclaw shrieked with rage and pounced on the first regiment of Goblins that came close to the fallen Emperor, tearing them apart with his powerful talons. Karl Franz awoke to those bestial cries with the coppery taste of blood in his mouth. Were it not for the enchanted armour he wore the Shaman's sorcery would surely have killed him. Fighting through the pain, the Emperor remounted Deathclaw and soared towards the last colossal arachnid and the cackling Raknik perched atop it. Deathclaw slew the Shaman with one sweep of his mighty talons, whilst Karl Franz leapt from the saddle to land amidst the Goblins in the great spider's howdah. Fighting like a warrior-god of old, he sent their shattered bodies flying in all directions and sundered the great spider's skull with one titanic sweep of Ghal Maraz. All who witnessed the event claimed it was a feat worthy of Sigmar himself.

Kurt Helborg spread word of Karl Franz's recovery as swiftly as he could, and the soldiers of Reikland took heart once again. When they saw the Emperor standing

triumphant with their own eyes, their courage soared and they redoubled their efforts. With their Spider King slain, the greenskins swiftly fled, scuttling off in all directions. Though it would take another month to root out and eradicate the last nest of survivors, the Spiderclaw tribe was no more.

### The Third Battle of Black Fire Pass

The Emperor himself once again marched to war in 2519 at the request of Marius Leitdorf, the mad Elector Count of Averland. Dwarf Rangers had brought word of a massive horde of greenskins marching westwards through the Worlds Edge Mountains, and the ill-trained and poorly led provincial army of Averland would not be able to hold them back. With the might of the Reikland behind him, Karl Franz stemmed the tide of Orcs and left garrisons to aid the Averlanders in maintaining their borders.

Despite receiving the Emperor's aid, the Mad Count of Averland continued to cause problems for Karl Franz – challenging the other Counts, leading nonsensical military campaigns after imaginary foes and generally upsetting his neighbours. After Leitdorf's ruthless suppression of the infamous Halfling Rebellion of 2502, Karl Franz despatched his dour champion, Ludwig Schwarzhelm, to hold robust negotiations with the eccentric Elector Count. The cheerless Schwarzhelm's orders were simple – he was to ensure that Leitdorf's notoriously unpredictable behaviour did not imperil the Empire any further. With some unsubtle guidance from Karl Franz through Schwarzhelm, Marius Leitdorf appointed new advisors to curb the worst of his excesses, and the Emperor became fond of the eccentric Count.



In 2520, having been returned to the fold of the Emperor's trusted allies, Leitdorf sent word to Karl Franz that a massive horde of greenskins were once again advancing on Black Fire Pass and that the provincial army of Averland would not be able to hold them back alone. Realising the grave danger to the Empire's southern provinces, Karl Franz responded with the combined military might of Reikland and Altdorf behind him, including a trio of Steam Tanks. With such forces at his command, the Emperor reinforced Leitdorf's beleaguered army and stemmed the tide of Orcs before they could spill through into the open lands of the Empire beyond. The battle lasted for much of the day, the greenskins repulsed time and time again by the disciplined Empire soldiery as the Steam Tanks and artillery continued to inflict terrible damage on the tightly packed horde. Karl Franz made an early impact on the battle, swooping down on Deathelaw to crush the skull of a towering Giant with Ghal Maraz before it could break through the Empire lines.

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"If we die, we will die wielding our swords, for there is no better death for a warrior. We will sit at Sigmar's banquet like the heroes of old and our names will be remembered in the songs of our people till the end of time!"

*- Karl Franz's speech to his men, during the Third Battle of Black Fire Pass.*

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However, just when it seemed that the host of the Empire might yet stand firm against the successive waves of greenskin assaults, the Orc Warlord made his presence felt at last. Bursting from the woods on the Empire flank at the head of a host of Boar Boyz, Vorgaz Ironjaw routed the artillery batteries stationed there before ploughing into the side of the Empire battleline to devastating effect.

During the main charge on the greenskin host, the Emperor witnessed the death of Marius Leitdorf at the hands of the Orc Warlord. Vorgaz Ironjaw parried Leitdorf's Runefang with his battleaxe and let the Count stab him with the long poignard he was wielding in his left hand. The blade buried itself in the thick skin and muscles of the creature, which ignored the wound altogether and grasped the neck of the Count in its powerful left claw. After a few seconds of struggle, the man's strangled snarl was cut short by the drilling noise of bones snapping and the body of Marius Leitdorf related in the grip of the Orc, lifeless.

Though the Emperor arrived too late to prevent Marius Leitdorf's death, he was not too late to seek vengeance. An unnatural silence fell on the battlefield, all eyes turning towards the two champions, each representing the epitome of their race's fighting prowess. Ghal Maraz struck home on the Orc's forehead with a thunderous crack. The green giant fell, life quickly abandoning his crushed skulltibe Orc stared through his own blood at the enemy that had vanquished him and raised a claw in a last attempt to fight back, but his arm fell back, powerless.

The battle was over. Their leader defeated, the Orcs scattered and kept fleeing until they were back in their bleak territories. From that day on, the name of Karl Franz has been pronounced in the Empire with ever greater pride, for all heard tales of his victory in that duel. He later claimed this bloody retribution had been divinely inspired by the spirit of Sigmar. By this, and numerous other victories, has Karl Franz protected his realm and held the Empire's enemies at bay. However, with rumours reaching the Imperial Court of vast northern armies mustering in the Realm of Chaos, the Empire's darkest hour is about to arrive.







# HAMMER OF SIGMAR

Dark heavy clouds hung over the Worlds Edge Mountains, hiding the Black Fire Pass from sight and casting a gloomy grey light on the battlefield. The Empire Forces had managed to find the Orc horde and bring it to battle in a narrow gorge where the Old Dwarf road, descending from the pass, reached the rocky foothills. If the Orcs were not stopped there, they would swarm through the plains of Averland.

Kurt Helborg, Reiksmarshall of the Empire, was observing the battlefield from a dominating crag, an expression of intense concern on his battle-scarred face.

"Can you see him?" he asked the Master of the Engineers' Guild, who was searching the tempestuous skies with the help of his telescope.

"Yes," answered the Engineer. "He's heading back, but his griffon is flying in rather a peculiar fashion, I'm afraid it has been wounded..."

Soon it was possible to recognise the shape of the mighty Deathclaw, and its rider, the Emperor Karl Franz himself. The griffon was obviously in a bad condition, its flight painfully irregular.

The two high officers and the Reiksguard Knights, who were kept at the base of the crag in reserve, were momentarily ignoring the battle in the gorge below and following with apprehension that little dot in the sky.

The Knights were holding their breath, afraid for the safety of their lord, but the loyal beast, in spite of its serious wounds, eventually made it to the Reiksguard and was welcomed by a triumphal cry. Immediately the Emperor was surrounded by his men. His first worry was to see that the griffon was taken back straight back to Altdorf with one of the baggage wagons, and only then he accepted a flask of ale, mounted his warhorse and spurred it towards the Reiksmarshall at the top of the crag.

As Karl Franz dismounted, the two old officers first asked him about his griffon. "How bad is Deathclaw, Sire?"

"He will live, and I'm confident he will fly again!" Karl Franz reassured them. Then he noticed the amused expression that was appearing on the Reiksmarshall's face when his old friend realised that the Emperor was completely covered in green gore. "What are you sneering at?" asked Karl Franz, smiling as he removed some of the slime from his own armour. "I know that Giants are not very bright, but I assure you that they have enough brains for a man to bathe in! At least this one had... Now, what's the situation on the field?"

Kurt Helborg turned serious again and replied, "A stalemate my Lord, the Orcs are trying to push their way out of the gorge, but our infantry is holding its ground. We are outnumbered at least five to one, but as long as we keep them in the gorge they cannot make their numbers count. Furthermore, they're so densely packed they make a perfect target for our artillery, and the guns are causing tremendous casualties."

"But they are Orcs, those things do not fear death, they will keep on coming," murmured the Emperor. Then he added,

"Don't you think that their attack is quite unusual? Until now we have seen lots of Goblins and not so many units of Orc warriors: only that Giant presented a major threat. Where are their best troops, I wonder?"

"Perhaps up in the pass, storming the Dwarf fort" proposed Helborg. "Maybe the Dwarf garrison still resists."

"Let's hope so, Kurt," answered Karl Franz. "But please, warn your Knights that I might be forced to ask them to fight dismounted if the situation gets worse. The rough terrain of the gorge is not suited to cavalry."

"They dislike fighting on foot, but they all swore to follow you to the Far North if necessary. It shall be done as you command!"

"Thank you Kurt," nodded the Emperor, and then turned his attention back to the battle.

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From this distance, it was possible to tell the great difference between the fighting styles of the two races. The Empire battleline resembled a breakwater of steel which an immense green tide was trying to submerge. Yelling ferocious battle cries, thousands of Goblins and Orcs poured down the pass. Large mobs of savage warriors crashed on the disciplined ranks of the Imperial infantry.

The attackers were always welcomed with a volley of handgun fire from the small detachments deployed between the main units of halberdiers and spearmen. The blaze and crackling noise of their shots accompanied the killing power of their bullets and at times, especially with cowardly Goblins, this was enough to disperse the savages. Orcs on the other hand were much more difficult to stop, and often their charges hit home. Then the men had to face some of the fiercest fighters of the Old World. One-to-one, a human soldier was no match for an Orc warrior, those monsters were sluggish but they could continue to fight even with a spear driven straight through their body! Once again the superior tactics of the men compensated for their lack of individual strength. The closed ranks of spearmen and swordsmen were taking the brunt of the charges, and resisting long enough for halberd-armed detachments to hit the Orcs in the flank, eventually routing them.

The Empire artillery was dominating the battlefield, its cannons destroyed the primitive stone-throwers of the Orcs with surgical precision, while the mortars and deadly volley guns of the Engineering School opened huge gaps in the enemy ranks.

Here and there a blazing gout of fire or a blinding lightning bolt was discharged against the enemy, marking the point where a wizard had won his duel with the green-skinned shamans, whose unreliable magic was often as dangerous to their comrades as it was to the Empire troops.

Up to that moment the battle had hung in the balance. The soldiers of the Empire had repelled many charges, but more and more enemies were appearing from the winding road descending



from the pass. The Orcs and the Goblins seemed numberless, while after each attack the ranks of Men got thinner. The Empire had reserves, but they were mostly made up of hurriedly conscripted militia. Mercenary crossbowmen could barely replace the handgunners, and the rough fighters of the Free Companies lacked the staying power of the perfectly trained State Troops. The artillery too would eventually run out of ammunition, so the Empire army's only hope was that the morale of the Orcs would break. The same feral instincts that made Orc armies so devastating could also cause them to collapse irreparably if they were confronted with sufficient resistance.

The battle continued for hours and the Orcs kept attacking fiercely. The Empire soldiers were tired, but their unbending discipline still held. After all they knew that they were fighting to save the lives of their families, and their Emperor was there, at their side. So they stubbornly kept on fighting. Even when entire regiments were overwhelmed by the green horde, the men of the Empire held their position and fought on. Eventually the effects of their stern resolve started to show, as gradually the greenskins' charges seemed to lose momentum. Those brutes looked less confident now, as they had to scale the grisly piles of green bodies that were obstructing most of the gorge to continue their attack.

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The Emperor, from his dominating position on the crag, had noticed the reduction in enemy pressure. He was considering the idea of dismounting his bodyguard and leading it into the fray to deliver the final blow to the Orcs, when something terrible happened. A clamour arose from the north-east, where a new force appeared from a wood lying not far from the Empire's left flank. Massive Orcs mounted on brutal warboars were emerging from the cover of the trees and charging towards the panicking artillery.

Worst of all, the boar riders were led by the hugest Orc the Emperor had ever seen. The creature was a real monster, eight feet tall, and as broadly built as the ferocious beast he was riding.

Swinging a massive battleaxe over his head and bell wing a roaring battle cry at the head of the charging boar riders, he was the incarnation of the bloodthirsty spirit of his race. Surely this was the Warlord responsible for the creation of the Waaagh!, a dire threat to the realms of Men and Dwarfs of the Old World.

The Orc cavalry ran down the artillery crews and smashed into the left flank of the Empire battleline. Entire regiments were caught while turning their formation to face the new threat and were easily routed and butchered. A few units broke rank and fled, as panic started to spread through the Empire left flank. Nothing seemed able to stop the Orc Warlord. At the same time the mobs of Goblins on the road to the front of the Empire lines were swept aside by fresh troops who rushed forward as soon as they detected the cavalry attack. Those Goblins who were not fast enough in getting out of the way were ruthlessly trampled by the newcomers. These were the best Orc warriors, powerful veterans covered in scars, bigger and stronger than the average Orc, they formed an awesome fighting force. Beside them, small groups of monstrous Trolls were pushed against the men, and one more Giant appeared and joined the fray.

"Sire..." began the Reiksmarshall, a tone of despair in his voice.

"I know Kurt," Karl Franz interrupted him. "This explains why the Stirland contingent did not arrive. We underestimated the cunning of these barbaric warriors- It looks like our army has fallen into a colossal trap!"

"Sire, there is only one thing left to do. You must return to Altdorf. I would only ask you to give me a squadron of Reiksguard Knights to engage the boar riders, so that we may buy some time for the rest of the army to retreat-" Karl Franz looked puzzled at this proposal, he stood silent and turned to look in the direction of his capital... Yes, he could retreat to Altdorf, and from the safety of its walls raise another army. Then his eyes met the green fields of the Moot on the far horizon and he considered what would be the fate of that merry land and of all the people living in the eastern provinces of his Empire if he followed Kurt's wise advice. A sardonic smile appeared for an instant on his lips, and when he turned towards the waiting Reiksmarshall, the decision was made.

"No," said the Emperor firmly, "Not while I live."

"Kurt, you will return to Altdorf with a small squadron and organise the defenses in case we fail, my place is here. We all know that without a leader the greenskins are nothing of a threat and I think that there lies our last hope. I will personally confront their Warlord, and only then will the battle be decided."

"But Sire, it's such a desperate plan, it would be rather..."

"That was an order, Kurt. We have no time to waste."


Recognizing unflinching decision in the Emperor's eyes, Kurt Heiberg gave in. He knew that there was nothing he could say to make the Emperor change his mind. He also realised that the chances were that they would never meet again in this life, but he was a soldier, one of the best, and as a soldier he reacted- The old veteran stood to attention and answered... "Yes, Sire. May Sigmar fight by your side."

Then he left.

Karl Franz mounted his black warhorse and addressed the Master of the Engineers' Guild, "Tell your men to concentrate their last rounds against that Giant and to abandon the guns when they run out of shots. There will be enough deaths today."

Then he reached the standard of the Reiksguard and under its inspiring colours he spoke to the Knights.

"Men, I'm going to lead you into a desperate charge. I won't lie to you, there are not enough of us to prevail against that immense horde of boar riders. We do, however, have a chance. You have all experienced that Orc armies dissolve like snow in the sun if their leader is killed, and this is our last hope of winning the battle. I want to confront their chieftain and I need your help to reach him through his army. This is a sacrifice that I don't want to impose on any of you. Anybody who wants to leave with Kurt is free to do so; your Reiksmarshall will need protection on the way to Altdorf. The ones who decide to stay must know that they are probably choosing death. But they must also know that if we succeed, we will spend the rest of our life knowing that we have saved thousands of innocent lives. We will know that we were ready for the extreme



sacrifice in the name of the Empire. If we die, we will die wielding our swords and there is no better death for a warrior. We will all sit at Sigmar's banquet like the heroes of old and our names will be remembered in the songs of our people till the end of time. In any case, we will become the stuff legends are made of. That I can promise you. So, who is with me?!"

A murmur rose through the Knights and the banner bearer answered to the Emperor: "My Lord, I'm sure that I speak for all of us. We will all be with you, up to the end. We have trained all our life for this moment, we all swore to die protecting you and the tradition of the Guard will not be stained by any of us walking away from danger and abandoning you! Reiksguard Knights, your Emperor is calling'. Five hundred swords were unsheathed and held high, and with a single word the Knights renewed their oath of loyalty: "SIGMAR!".

Filled with pride, the Emperor turned his steed towards the green horde below arid, raising the holy Hammer of the Empire's patron god, he shouted: "Ride with me, Men of the Empire. Charge!"

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The Empire line was in tatters, only the right flank conserved some of its former order. Of the Men's centre a mere two regiments were left. The largest was a group of demented Flagellants, too worried about the end of the world to run for their lives. Not far from them were the Greatswords of Averland, holding their ground in a desperate square to protect Marius Leitdorf, Elector Count of Averland. The two groups of men looked like small islands in a green sea, but their sacrifice was slowing down the enemy advance, giving time for the right flank to reorganise. Suddenly the boar riders were on them. The Orc Warlord drove his gigantic mount through the tall men in heavy armour, tossing them aside like broken dolls, and made his way to the Count himself. Marius Leitdorf came forward to meet the monster and dodging the charging beast he swung his Runefang in a deadly arc. The massive boar was disembowelled by the magic sword and its rider fell to the ground. For an instant the Orcs hesitated, but immediately the Warlord was on his feet again and leapt towards the Elector Count.

The ensuing duel was over in a few seconds. The creature parried the Runefang with his battleaxe and let the Count stab him with the long poignard he was wielding in his left hand. The blade buried itself in the thick skin and muscles of the creature, which ignored the wound altogether and grasped the neck of the Count in its powerful left claw. After a few seconds of struggle, the man's strangled snarl was cut short by the chilling noise of bones snapping, and the body of Marius Leitdorf relaxed in the grip of the Orc, lifeless.

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The Orc Warlord turned around to contemplate his victory, the humies were defeated, the pitiful remains of their army would soon be crushed. There they were, still fighting off his boyz, but the sight of their boss dead at Iris hands should now break their spirit, he thought.

Unexpectedly, the humie line rang with cries of hope and a new energy seemed to fill them, all eyes were looking west. The Warlord could not understand what was happening, but then he

perceived a tremor on the ground and heard the blast of a horn mixed with the screams of panic from the gobbos behind his boar boyz. Eventually he caught sight of the enemy knights as they charged through his troops, running down the gobbos as Thy fled and then crashing into the boar boyz.

At first the humies seemed to prevail, their charge penetrating deep within the mob of boar riders, slaying dozens of those ferocious warriors. But the boyz were too many and rir, matter how many were killed in those first moments, the humies' charge eventually exhausted its impetus. The humie knights rallied around their banner, their lances broken, their steeds wounded and spent.

At that point the Orc Warlord saw their leader and realised that the one he had killed was not the boss of the humies. The Orc recognised the weapon that the enemy leader was wielding with such an implacable power: Skull-splitter! That warhammer had been the bane of his race since the dawn of times, according to the shamans' tales. If the mounted humie boss had the Hammer, he must be the Warlord of all Men, the one they called 'Emperor'. The Orr was filled with pride, ire would kill that Emperor and take his hammer. All the humies would then surrender to him and more Orcs would join his Waaagh! After that he would butcher the bearded stunties and he would become the greatest Warlord ever to walk under Gork's sky!

The Emperor of the humies had seen him too and started to move towards him, smashing his way through the boar riders. The Warlord could not wait for that fight and ordered his bodyguard of huge mounted bosses to stop the other knights, bid to let the big humie with the hammer come to him.


His bodyguards, who had almost finished crushing the last Greatswords, grunted affirmatively and charged in.

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Karl Franz spurred his horse towards the Orc Warlord. His arm was tired, he couldn't remember how many boar riders he had dispatched with the mighty hammer and now he could see that one more mob of them was coming towards him and his Reiksguard. These ones were impressive creatures, even bigger than normal boar riders and better armed and armoured. There were more of them than he had Knights left; the situation was grim. Well, he would make sure that they paid a high price for his life. "Sigmar and the Empire!" he shouted, closing his visor and spurring his charger towards the incoming Orc. The Knights and the Orc bodyguard clashed in a thundering clamour of steel against steel, but something strange happened around Karl Franz: the boar riders opened up in front of him and let him through, concentrating their attacks on the Reiksguard. The Emperor stopped his horse and was about to turn it, but then saw the Orc Warlord standing straight ahead in front of him, on the body of Marius Leitdorf. The monster raised its axe in a clear challenge directed at him. The Emperor understood, rode towards the Warlord and then dismounted, readying himself for the final confrontation.

The two opponents studied each other for a few seconds, while all around them the battle seemed to stop. An unnatural silence fell on the battlefield, all eyes turned towards the two champions.

Everybody, Orc and man, knew that this was the fatal moment when the battle would be decided.



The two opponents were magnificent warriors, each of them representing the epitome of their race's fighting prowess.

The Emperor was a tall, muscular man, clad in his black full armour. He had removed his helm, knowing the importance of eye contact in single combat. On his chest the Silver Seal was shining like a star and the runes inscribed on Ghal Maraz; the mighty Hammer of Sigmar, were burning bright.

His opponent was towering over him, a mountain of green muscles. The steam of its breath made Karl Franz think of a savage beast ready to charge. The bits of armour strapped onto that immense body seemed more like a decoration than real protection for its rock hard flesh. The heavy axe in its hands was as tall as a man. Karl Franz noticed the crackling green energies playing around the edge of its blade and realised that he would not have to deal only with muscular power.

Detecting that the attention of the Emperor focused for an instant on the axe, the vicious Orc seized the occasion and sprung towards the man. It moved at a speed unthinkable for such a huge creature, and its bellowing battle cry was in itself an assault on the man's fighting spirit.

The instincts developed in years of training in the best fencing schools and the experience built on dozens of battlefields saved the Emperor. His shield arm rose just in time to stop the axe swinging towards his neck. The impact was terrible. The axe cut right through the shield bearing the insignia of the Emperor, destroying it, but the blade was stopped by the Emperor's armour, the Silver Seal countering the energies that would have allowed that fearsome axe to sever his arm.

Karl Franz ignored the pain and struck back with Chal Maraz. The hammer hit the Orc on the shoulder and the savage warrior screamed its pain to the sky. That gave the Emperor the time to recover and regain the distance he wanted to keep from his opponent. He didn't want the Orc to get too close. He knew that if the monster grabbed him, that would spell his doom.

The wound seemed to eliminate any trace of rational thought from the Orr. It reverted to its most basic instinct and charged in with even stronger ferocity.

The series of blows that followed were parried, dodged and returned by the two opponents, in a duel that often got too fast for the troops around to clearly follow. After a few long minutes it became clear to Karl Franz that he was slowly losing, his body felt numb where some of the Orc blows had reached him, he could feel his own blood flowing in the leggings of his armour. His strength was waning, while his monstrous opponent kept attacking relentlessly. Finally the Emperor begun giving ground and eventually fell on one knee. At that sight a cry of pain came from the Empire troops- The Orc Warlord, foretasting victory, prepared for the last strike.

Karl Franz was overwhelmed by pain. He understood that he was losing the duel because his race had lost that blood lust, that same savage spirit that filled his opponent with strength. Civilisation had brought many advantages on mankind, but Men nowadays relied more and more on blackpowder and other technological means to fight for them, and the warrior spirit of their barbaric ancestors was not as strong as it used to be. If only he could have the same strength as holy Sigmar of old, who vanquished this very same enemy millennia ago in this same mountain pass... If only he could regain that spirit to save his subjects and protect his land.

His silent prayer was sincere and was not ignored.

Karl Franz did not know where the new energy came from. Was it from the hammer he was still holding in his hand or was it from within the recesses of his own soul, he could not tell. All of a sudden the pain was gone, his muscles flexed with unearthly strength and a primal fighting spirit filled his heart.

The Emperor rose once more to meet the Orc.

The Warlord stopped. He could not believe what he was seeing. He had been fighting a man in armour, so why was the figure standing before him that of a gigantic warrior dressed in furs? This was not the same person, this was taller, more powerful, but the hammer he raised in the air was the very same legendary weapon. The man shouted a loud battle cry that boomed among the mountains as it had done so many centuries before: "Unberogen!"

At that sound the instincts of the Warlord were overcome by memories inscribed in the soul of his race, memories of mighty barbarians defeating the Orcs in the war for the domination of the rich plains, arid driving them to the desolation beyond the mountains. In those times Men were led by this very same champion, he who had denied the possession of this land to the green-skinned race.

If the Orc Warlord could have known such an emotion, this would have been the moment he would have felt fear. Instead his reaction was rather one of hesitation, a split second of hesitation that was to cost him everything.

Ghal Maraz struck home on the Orc's forehead with a thundering crack.

The green giant fell, life quickly abandoning his crushed skull. The Orc stared through his own blood at the enemy that had vanquished him. Once again he was seeing the wounded man in the black armour, and not the god-like barbarian warrior. The Orc could not understand the Power that defeated him and raised a claw in a last attempt to fight back, but all his strength had gone and his arm fell back, powerless. Then he saw no more...

The battle was over. Their leader defeated, the Orcs scattered and kept fleeing until they were back in their bleak territories. The men, too tired to pursue, took care of their wounded, starting with their glorious Emperor.

From that day on, the name of Karl Franz has been pronounced in the Empire with even greater pride, for all heard tales of that duel. And even though in years to come the stories about the battle were embellished and exaggerated, everybody always agreed that on that day Sigmar Himself had fought alongside His warriors.





# TIMELINE OF THE EMPIRE

-1500

Fleeing more powerful adversaries, agrarian Human tribes cross into the lands between the World's Edge and Grey Mountains.

-1000

The ancestors of the founding tribes of the Empire arrive, bringing with them the knowledge of bronze and the wheel.

-500

Humanity rises in the Old World. Numerous warlords, chieftains and petty kings war amongst themselves to establish realms in the northern Old World. Many tribes already live in the Steppes to the north and in the outer lands of the Chaos Wastes. Larger settlements are established along rivers and coastlines. Goblins, Beastmen, and other vile creatures prey upon these scattered tribes.



-250

Dwarfs intensify trading with tribes of Men in the land to be known as the Empire. Men are poor craftsmen and learn comparatively slowly.

-50

Artur, chief of Teutogens, discovers Fauschlag rock (later known as the Ulricsberg), and enlists the help of a Dwarf clan to tunnel up through the mountain and build a mighty fortress that will be known as Middenheim.

-30

Sigmar is born to the chief of the Unberogen tribe.

-20

Marius of the Jutones is defeated by the Teutogens and determines to lead his people to a new land. However, not all his folk are willing to leave their ancestral lands, which occupy parts of what would later become the provinces Nordland and Ostland. Marius leads the Jutones west and those who stay behind become known as the Was Jutones. Marius founds the new realm of Jutonsryk and becomes its first king. He begins a ten-year campaign to rid the Reik marshes of Mist Demons. In response to the influx of Jutones into the marshes, Marbad, the chieftain of the Endals already scratching out a living there, founds the settlement of Marburg on the Reik estuary. Here he discovers an ancient Elven blade and names it Ulfshard. It becomes his symbol of power, upon which he will later swear his allegiance to Sigmar.

-15

A New Alliance. A Dwarf trading convoy from Karaz-a-Karak is ambushed on its way to the Grey Mountains. King Kurgan Ironbeard is captured by Orcs and rescued by Sigmar. In gratitude for his rescue, Kurgan gives Sigmar the rune hammer Ghal Maraz, or Skull Splitter, an ancient heirloom of the Dwarf King's family.

-8

Upon the death of his father, Sigmar becomes chief of the Unberogen tribe.

-1

Battle of Black Fire Pass. The united armies of Humans and Dwarf crush a Greenskin army and win the victory that makes the foundation of the Empire possible. Soon after, Dwarf artisans begin to travel to the Empire, where they are in demand. Humans and Dwarfs establish trade with each other and a measure of prosperity returns to the Dwarfen realms.

1

Sigmar is crowned Emperor at Reikdorf by the High Priest of Ulric. Alaric the Mad begins the creation of the Runefangs.

15

Nagash rebuilds his empire of the dead. Despising the weakling race of man, he invades the newly-founded empire of Sigmar, aided by several of the vampires that return from exile to fight alongside their lord. In a titanic duel Nagash is slain by the hammer of Sigmar and the vampires driven into the darkness once more.

17

Sigmar destroys a Skaven horde in the Middle Mountains of the Empire.

40

Talgris, son of Krugar, founds Talabheim.



50

A New Age. After a half century of building and prosperity in the newly proclaimed Empire, Sigmar vanishes into the east. The system of Elector Counts is established whereby the provincial leaders elect one of their number to be Emperor.

63

Wulcan, High Priest of Ulric, has a vision and builds a temple on a site in Middenheim, which starts a steady stream of pilgrims.

73

The spreading cult of Sigmar the Patron God of the Empire receives its first High Priest (later called the Grand Theogonist), Johann Helstrum.

c.100

Emperor Heydrich is presented with the Runefangs by Alaric the Mad and he passes them to the Counts.



100-500

The electoral system is solidified, and the Cult of Sigmar becomes widespread, which leads to open conflict with the High Priest of Ulric.

113

The temple to Ulric at Middenheim is completed.

322

Emperor Hündrod the Furious slays Mascar the Great Dragon in the Drakwald.

479-505

Emperor Sigismund II masterminds the defeat of the Red Waaagh! by inventive use of falcon messengers to coordinate all eighteen of his armies.

501

The army of Emperor Sigismund II defeats that of the King of the Jutones and adds the former lands of Jutonsryk, now Marienburg, to the province of Westerland.

555

To avoid Middenheim's complete secession from Empire, charter is granted.

632

First Norse raids on Marienburg.

732

The corrupt Emperor Siegfried I falls out of the saddle at a critical moment during the Battle of Fates and is burnt to a crisp by his own dragon in the confusion.

765

The treaty at Athling of Traktatsey ends Norse raids on the growing settlement of Marienburg.

1000

*The birth of the Old World nations, start of a constant series of wars, and the fragmentation of Empire. Plague and civil disorder in the Empire make plans for colonising forest region impossible. Trappers and adventurers travel extensively along rivers as far as the headwaters of the Talabec. Imperial culture and authority are represented by missions of Taal and Rhya along major rivers, often at the sites of former Elven and Dwarf settlements.*

1010

*Halflings are established in Stirland. To the dismay of the Elector Counts, Ludwig the Fat issues a royal charter to the Halflings of the Moot granting them administrative autonomy and an Imperial vote.*

1053–1115

*Reign of 'Fat' Boris Goldgather the Incompetent. He is universally reviled, corruption is rife.*

1102

*Manaana is made patron deity of Marienburg.*

1106–1110

*An ever-increasing number of Chaos beasts appears in the Drakwald. Vilner, heir to the Drakwald throne, is slain. The Emperor places the Drakwald Runefang in the palace vaults until such time as he decides on a new heir.*

1109

*Norse raid Marienburg. Snorri Half-hand proclaims himself Jarl of Vestiland. Counts of Westerland hold out in Rijker's Isle.*

1111

*Clan Pestilens unleashes the Black Plague in the Empire. Nine-tenths of the Empire's population are wiped out in the next four years. Massive Skarven incursions erupt across the land to take advantage of the disaster. Many small settlements are abandoned due to falling populations and the depredations of the Skarven. In Sylvania the necromancer van Hel raises a huge Undead army from the bodies of the plague's victims and turns back the Skarven invaders. The bulk of Middenheim's populace avoids the plague due to strict isolation enforced by Graf Gunthar. Norse abandon Marienburg.*

1115

*The Skarven start to systematically enslave the surviving Human settlements in the Empire. The death of Emperor Boris Goldgather from the Black Plague. His reign was noted for the corruption of Imperial officials, exorbitant taxes, and neglect of the Imperial army. Despite the misery of the Empire, there is much rejoicing in the streets and celebrations are held all across the land. No successor is elected during the ensuing anarchy.*

1122

*Count Mandred Ratslayer rallies support from the Elector Counts and leads a crusade against the Skarven.*

1124

*Battle of the Howling Hills. Count Mandred 'Skarvenslayer' leads a crusade that drives the wine, out of the Empire. In recognition of his deeds, Mandred is elected Emperor and under his rule the Empire rebuilds.*

1152

*Assassination of the Emperor Mandred. The Elector Counts cannot agree upon a successor and the Empire divides into self-governing provinces. War erupts between Talabecland and Stirland as rival would-be Emperors vie for power.*

1153–1200

*The villages of the Drakwald decline, as woods reclaim the land and settlements are overrun by Chaos beasts and Goblins.*

1359

*After years of deliberation, the Elector Counts name Grand Duke of Stirland the new Emperor and he is crowned in Nuln.*

1360

*Grand Duchess Ottilia of Talabecland declares herself Empress. A difference of opinion between Graf Heinrich and the High Priest of Ulric leads to the High Priest moving to Talabheim to support Ottilia. Defenceless Marienburg is sacked for the third time. Over the next few hundred years there are to be two Emperors, the elected Emperor and the reigning Count of Talabecland.*

1366

*Tilean mercenaries begin to fight on both sides in civil wars that ravage the Empire.*

1414

*Nordland and Middenland sign an agreement to divide the contested lands of Drakwald, ending the dispute over Mandred's edict.*

c.1435

*Sultan Jaffar, a powerful Arabyan sorcerer, welds together a coalition of several desert tribes and expands his city state to a small empire. Legend speaks of him summoning Daemons and conversing with spirits.*

c.1450–1550

*The Crusades against Araby. Sultan Jaffar invades the lands of Estalia. In response, King Louis of Bretonnia issues a call to arms. Many of the Empire's Knightly Orders, disillusioned with civil strife wracking the Empire, pledge themselves to this noble cause. A bloody century of war ensues in which no less than a dozen new Knightly Orders are founded, Estalia is feed and the Sultan's empire is destroyed.*

1520

*The Ravages of Gorthor. Gorthor the Beastlord, emissary of Dark Gods and the most deadly Beastman ever to have led his armies from the forest invades the Empire. His rampaging utterly destroy the city of Hergig. With the Empire's knights fighting in foreign lands, the armies sent to halt Gorthor are swept aside in a tide of slaughter. The provinces of Ostand and Hochland are brought to the brink of destruction.*

1547

*The Time of the Three Emperors. Rapprochement between the High Priest of Ulric and Graf/Grand Duke Heinrich is achieved by the Cult accepting a vow of celibacy for all priests (to avoid the High Priest of Ulric founding a rival dynasty). The Count of Middenheim proclaims himself Emperor. There are now three Emperors. None of them commands much loyalty amongst the other provinces, and each effectively rules an independent state.*

1550

*War erupts between Middenheim and Talabheim, Middenland becomes a separate province. Marienburg is seized by the Bretonnian army under the Duke de L'Anguille. The five-year occupation ends when an army under the Grand Duke of Middenland approaches the city.*

1550–1978

*Middenland becomes a separate province. The Empire steadily disintegrates, with an increase in the numbers of demonologists, necromancers, and worshippers of the Chaos Gods.*



1604

*Count van Buik grants a seat on the Marienburg City Council to merchants and ship-owners, marking the beginning of democratic government in the city.*

1681

*The Night of the Restless Dead. Nagash returns to life once again, years after he was slain by Sigmar. For one night throughout the Known World the dead stir and walk the land, sowing terror and confusion amongst the living. Entire villages and towns are overrun and destroyed by corpses and spirits before the night of terror ends and the spell of undeath subsides.*

1707

*Waagh! Gobad. The Orc Warlord Gorbad Ironclaw invades the Empire through Black Fire Pass. Nuln is sacked and the Moot devastated. Solland is overrun and Eldred, Count of Solland, slain – after this Solland ceases to exist as a separate land. The Solland Runefang is captured by the Orcs. Gorbad advances north along the Upper Reik. A large Imperial army under the Count of Wissenland is defeated at the Battle of Grünberg just south of Altdorf, but Gorbad is wounded during the fighting. Altdorf is besieged. During the siege Wyverns kill Emperor Sigismund IV, but Altdorf holds out.*

1797

*Vlad von Carstein becomes the first of the Vampire Counts of Sylvania. Over the next two centuries the remaining noble families are infected with the curse of Vampirism.*

1812

*Middenlanders lay siege to Middenheim, repulsed with Dwarfen aid. The Undercity is sealed for all time.*

1850

*Norse raids along the Sea of Claws resume. Marienburg is sacked for the fourth and final time.*

1979

*Magritta of Marienburg is elected Emperor by the Elector Counts not otherwise claiming the crown for themselves. The Grand Theogonist of Sigmar refuses to acknowledge the appointment, and the Imperial system is effectively ended. From now until the time of Magnus the Pious there are no Emperors and the lands become increasingly divided. As individual cities look to their own government the mercantile Burgomeisters gain in power.*

1988

*The coastal town of Debneitz comes under attack by Dark Elf Corsairs. The Elector Count of Nordland, Alfrich Gausser, arrives with a relief army only to find the fortress town in ruins, the corpses of its entire populace flayed and nailed to the nearby cliffs.*

1991

*Gunpowder and cannons find their way into Imperial arsenals.*

2000

*A twin-tailed comet sears across the night skies. Soon after, a giant meteor crashes down in the middle of the city of Mordheim. Intrepid treasure hunters from many different races venture into the haunted streets to claim the bounty of wyrdstone rock that lies scattered.*

2000

*Old Worlders exploring westwards are prevented from entering Ulthuan by Elves.*

2001

*Finubar of the High Elves lands at Bretonnian port of L'Anguille. He travels extensively and opens relations with the Empire, Bretonnia and even the Dwarfs.*

2010

*The Wars of the Vampire Counts begin with the devastation of Ostermark by Vlad von Carstein, the first of the notorious Vampire Counts of Sylvania. Undead armies rampage between Stirland and the northern border.*

2025

*Vlad von Carstein is slain by Grand Master Kruger of the Knights of the White Wolf. Von Carstein returns a year later and Kruger's body is found at the base of Ulricsberg, drained of blood.*

2051

*Vlad von Carstein is slain at the Siege of Altdorf, and Isabella commits suicide rather than carry on in unlife without him. The Vampire Counts fight amongst themselves and their Undead army splinters into separate feuding forces.*

2051

*The Sigmarite prophet Gunther von Linten sets fire to his own beard whilst lighting his pipe. His screams of pain set in motion the Flagellant Schism and plunge Stirland into religious war.*

2092

*The Witch Hunter, Helmut van Hal, leads an army of Stirlanders into Sylvania, burning the villages of Dechstein and Lichenheim to the ground and slaying the Vampire Lord Pieter von Carstein.*

2094

*Konrad von Carstein emerges as the most powerful Vampire Count. He leads his forces against the Empire, but a combined Empire and Dwarf army finally destroys him at the Battle of Grim Moor in 2121.*

2111

*The Count of Middenland, Luitprand II, has the entire town of Rotebach hanged for "Chaotic allegiance."*

2132–2145

*Mannfred von Carstein, the last and most cunning of the Vampire Counts, launches a surprise attack against the Empire when it is in the grip of a vicious civil war. He almost succeeds in capturing Altdorf, but is finally forced to retreat back to Sylvania by a combined army of Empire troops, Dwarfs, and High Elves. Determined to end the threat of the Vampire Counts once and for all, the various factions of the Empire unite and, along with their Dwarf and High Elf allies, scour the dark forests of Sylvania. Mannfred is*

*finally brought to bay at Hel Fenn, where he is defeated and his Undead army destroyed.*

2203

*The magic wards of Castle Drachensfels are disturbed opening a rift to the Realm of Chaos. A host of Daemons pours through and utterly destroys the towns of Bogenhafen and Ubersreik.*

2302

*The Great War against Chaos begins as the forces of Chaos march across the Lynsk and lay siege to Praag. Praag falls in the winter of 2302/2303.*



2303

*Magnus the Pious meets and defeats the Chaos armies at the gates of Kislev. The Skaven ambush several contingents of the Empire army as it returns home and soon afterwards minor plagues are unleashed in Nuln, Talabheim, and Marienburg.*

2304

*Magnus the Pious of Nuln is elected Emperor. Rebuilding of the Empire commences. Magnus establishes his court at Nuln as the first of the Griffon Emperors. Teclis founds Colleges of Magic in Altdorf. Magnus creates the Articles of Imperial Wizardry, a set of laws and rules which all users of magical abilities within the Empire must obey on pain of death. During his reign, the Imperial Gunnery School and the Imperial Engineers School grow in power.*

2308

*The Nordlander Affair. Following the Empire's victory against the Bretonnians at the Rattle of Parravon, a battalion of Nordlanders are mistakenly attacked by a relief army of over-eager Stirlanders who have heard tales of brightly clothed foreigners with funny accents invading their lands.*

c.2312

*Waaagh! Gttrippa is obliterated at the siege of Carroburg by no less than six Steam Tanks.*

2369

*On the death of Magnus, the Empire passes not to his brother Gunthar von Bildhofen (having antagonised the Grand Theogonist), but to Count Leopold of Stirland.*

2370

*At the behest of the Elector Count of Middenland, a vast army of the Empire's soldiers and artillery ventures into the Middle Mountains to reclaim Brass Keep from the Warriors of Chaos. The army is never seen again.*



2371

*Gunthar von Bildhofen's granddaughter marries Boris Todbringer, and their son becomes the first Todbringer Graf of Middenheim.*

2378

*Marienburg's merchant fleets and militia conduct a highly successful campaign against the pirates.*



2383

*Children report visions of Shallya in a grove outside Pfeildorf. Some claim they can work miracles. Inquisitors from Nuln take a dim view and have the children burned. The sect survives and becomes the Order of the Children of the Dove.*

2390

*The Battle of Rutgarburg. Count Rutgar defeats Warlord Grotfang's Orcs.*

2410

*In exchange for twelve dozen wagonloads of gold, Dwarf craftsmen build Fortress Kreighof for the Elector Count of Ostermark. However, when the Dwarfs receive their payment, they discover they have been short-changed by a measly two and a halfpennies. They return to Kreighof with a sizeable army from Karak Kadrim and raze the fortress to the ground.*

2415

*The Night of a Thousand Arcane Duels. Rivalries between the Colleges of Magic turn into outright violence, and for a single night, the sky above Altdorf is lit with fireballs, lightning bolts and multi-coloured flashes of light as wizards turn their powers and war machines upon each other. Order is restored after a magical backlash kills six of the eight Patriarchs in a variety of gruesome and horrific ways.*

2420

*The Goblin Warlord Grom leads a coalition of Orc and Goblin tribes into the World's Edge Mountains.*

2424

*Attack of the Goblin King. After defeating the Dwarfs at the Battle of Iron Gate, Grom's army moves into the Empire. Much of the north and east is devastated and parts of Nuln are burnt to the ground. Grom leads his army to the sea where he builds a huge fleet and sails into the west, never to be seen again in the Old World.*

2429

*Marienburg secedes from the Empire after the Burgomeisters collude with Emperor Dieter IV to secure their independence in return for an enormous amount of Marienburger gold. Dieter is deposed after the ensuing scandal. Wilhelm III takes the throne. The crown passes to the Elector Counts of Reikland. Wilhelm's armies quickly become famed for their pike blocks and heavy cavalry. A daring trio of illusionists attached to a prestigious theatre company staying in the Imperial Palace in Altdorf make off with a fine selection of treasure from Emperor Wilhelm III's collection. Wilhelm III orders a mass trial for wizards on charges of witchcraft and consorting with Chaos. The Battle of Grootscher Marsh is fought. Duke Frederik turns Tarhelm's Keep into a prison.*

2448

*Marienburg is flooded. The Vloedmuur defences are extended and the drainage system improved.*

2449

*In Marienburg, rioting spreads from the Suiddock throughout the city in response to anti-Labour Guild laws passed by the City Council.*

2453

*The Liche King, Arkhan the Black, rides at the head of a vast army of skeletal warriors directly towards the gates of Altdorf. However, the bold frontal assault is a fiendish diversion. As the city's state troops defiantly hold back the Undead legions at Altdorf's walls, Arkhan uses magic to break into the catacombs beneath the Temple of Sigmar and steal the dreaded Liber Mortis.*



2470

*Emperor Luitpold and his infant son, Karl Franz, are ambushed in the Reikwald Forest by Beastmen. The Reiksguard bravely defend their lord, but they are butchered by a trio of Ghorgons. Just when it looks as if the Emperor and his son are about to fall to a Mimotaur's axe, Wood Elves burst out of the forest and come mysteriously to their rescue, cutting the Beastmen down in a hail of arrows, before vanishing back into the trees.*

2499

*Skaven erupt from the sewers of Nuln, destroying whole quarters of the city.*

2502

*Accession of Karl Franz, the reigning Emperor; whose first act is to lead an army to aid of the Elector Count of Nordland to repel a massive invasion of Norse barbarians. Aided by the wizards and war machines of the Celestial College, Karl Franz predicts where and when the northern marauders plan to attack. With this knowledge, Karl Franz prepares a well-executed ambush that devastates the Norse forces before they even realise they are under attack. The Emperor personally leads the Reiksguard in the final charge against the Norse shield wall, and in doing so, establishes a reputation as a brilliant and courageous military leader. The Imperial armies are revitalised and thrust into battle against the evils that plague the Old World. A new age of war is begun.*



2505-present

*The Deeds of Helborg. The Emperor dispatches the Reiksmarthal, Kurt Helborg, to lead his armies in battle against numerous foes; the Ogre reavers of Gutlord Breaskus, the Orcs of the Blighted Towers and many others. Kurt Helborg leads the Empire's army to victory after victory, establishing his name as one of the greatest generals and tacticians of his age.*

2506

*Waaagh! Morglum. Out of the Middle Mountains, rampaging through Ostland comes Waaagh! Morglum. Raids on Ostland and Hochland follow, until the Orcs are brought to battle on the plains south of Wolfenburg. Many of the Empire's greatest heroes join an army led by the Elector Count of Ostland and defeat Morglum Necksnapper and Gorfang Rotgut. But Morglum is not finished. He amasses another horde in the Black Mountains, using promises of slaves to enlist the aid of the Chaos Dwarfs. At the Gathering of Might he shatters an Empire army led by Karl Franz. Morglum's forces are subsequently defeated at the Bridge of Doom and the Battle of Talabheim. The Waaagh! is ended, but Morglum survives.*

2507

*The Battle of Broken Pillars. Karl Franz leads the Reiksguard through the Underway to aid the Dwarfs of Zhusbar against a subterranean attack.*

c.2508

*Malathrax the Mighty, a massive Doomfire Dragon, terrorises Reikland. Several villages are razed, and the Dragon single-handedly destroys the Knightly Order of the Ebon Sword. Malathrax is tracked down by the Huntsmarshal, Markus Wulhart, and his regiment of monster hunters, are ambushed whilst resting on the banks of the River Reik. The Dragon is slain before it can reach the opposite river bank after the Huntsmarshal shoots not one, but three arrows through its heart.*



2509

*Massacre at the Tower. When the tower of Leopold Groeth is seized by a Chaos warband, the army of Ostland marches to oust the invaders. The battle culminates as Harrax Soultrader is slain by Priest Toben Bell.*

2510

*The Battle of Blood Keep. Karl Franz's loyal Griffon, Deathclaw, defends the prone body of the wounded Emperor for three hours, slaying any enemies who come near until the Reiksguard can forge a path to their fallen lord.*

c.2511

*The Chaos warhost of Tamurkhan the Maggot Lord is defeated at the gates Nuln.*

2512

*Baugard the Rash of Bretonnia, launches an attack upon the Empire to avenge an insult done to his infamously ugly wife by the visiting Elector Count Averland Marius Leitdorf. The short-lived crusade is ended before the walls of Helmgart when the knights are bloodily repulsed by the keep's massed Helblaster Volley Gun batteries.*

2512-2515

*Azhag the Slaughterer invades the Empire from the Troll Country. Aided by many Goblin tribes he raids Ostermark and razes the towns of Kohlitz and Nachtdorf. Empire forces rally at Bechafen. At the Battle of Grim Moor, Valmir Von Raukov defeats the Goblins, earning the Empire some respite, but is still forced to withdraw. Wolfenburg is attacked, but holds. The town of Forstich is destroyed.*

2515

*Battle of Osterwald. Nearly three years of relentless bloodshed and carnage wrought across the northern Empire by Azhag the Slaughterer finally culminates in the Battle of Osterwald. An army sent by the Emperor, led by Marshal Otto Blucher and the Grand Theogonist attacks Azhag's army at the*

*Osterwald. In a vast battle that leaves both armies grievously depleted, the Slaughterer's rampage is finally brought to an end by the blade of Grand Master Werner von Kriegstadt. Azhag is slain and the Waaagh! is over. Azhag's Crown of Sorcery is secured and passed into the care of the Grand Theogonist and remains in the care of the Cult of Sigmar to this day.*

2515

*The Beastlord Graktar destroys Gortsburg and Leitenbad, but loses the Battle of Helmgart.*

2515

*The Black-Iron Reaver. The Chaos Lord Mortkin, leader of the Fell Legion, invades Ostland at the head of an immense horde. Allied with the fire dragon Skulex the Great, Mortkin's forces slaughter the defenders of Kislev and forge southwards to the city of Volganof, intent upon yet more butchery. His bloody rampage is ended during the Siege of Volganof, though the city itself is burned to the ground.*

2516

*At the behest of Karl Franz, Supreme Patriarch Balthasar Gelt intervenes in the dispute between the Counts of Nordland and Hochland, averting the threat of Civil War.*

2516-2517

*The Beastlord Graktar is defeated in a challenge by Khazrak who embarks on a series of raids across Drakwald, sacking Jagerhausen, Immelscheld, and Arenburg.*

2517

*The Battle of Bones. The Vampire Lord Zacharias the Everliving raises an army of Skeletons and Zombie Dragons and attacks Wissenland. The Empire forces, hard pressed to hold back the terrifying hordes, believe they are doomed when a second Undead host approaches from the south to surround them. However, this army, led by a mummified kin, instead bolsters the faltering Empire line and together they drive the shambling hordes of Zacharias back.*

2517

*Battle of Bloodpine Woods. Karl Franz leads an army into the heart of the Reikwald to eradicate the Spiderclaw tribe of Goblins.*

2518

*The Martyrs of Thalfjord. The Chaos warhost of Grakthor Flameaxe is vanquished when Volkmar the Grim arrives with an army of ten thousand Flagellants. Riding atop the War Altar of Sigmar, the Grand Theogonist leads them across the River Talabec, into the heart of enemy force. The river runs red with the blood of the slain, and at battle's end, only a score of Flagellants, and Volkmar himself, are left standing.*

2518

*Boris Todbringer the Second purges Drakwald of Beastmen and personally takes the eye of Khazrak at the Battle of Elstertweld.*

2519

*Khazrak takes out Todbringer's right eye in an ambush outside Norderingen. The Count offers a 10,000-crown reward on Khazrak's head.*

2519

*Slaughter at the Six Spikes. Despite the heroic actions of Kurt Hellborg, the Empire barely manage to hold back a tide of monsters during the Slaughter at the Six Spikes. The Beastmen army is only narrowly defeated when Balthasar Gelt draws upon the raging Storm of Magic to transmute the Chaos host into a forest gilded statues.*

2520

*Siege of Middendorf. Luthor Huss rallies the defenders of Middendorf as the city is besieged by Daemons.*

2520

*The Third Battle of Black Fire Pass. Orcs and Goblins stream through Black Fire Pass in numbers not seen since the time of Sigmar. They are met by a combined army from Altdorf, Reikland and Averland, led by the Emperor himself. During the battle, Marius Leitdorf is slain by the Orcs' chieftain, Vorgaz Ironjaw, but he is avenged when Karl Franz pulps the greenskin's skull with a single blow from Ghal Maraz.*



2521

*Pride and powder kegs. The Imperial School of Engineers claim that their ingenuity surpasses that of their Dwarf allies, leading to raging arguments. The resultant field testing contest escalates when each side decides to demonstrate their superiority in the field of counter-battery fire. Before long the air is filled with silvered shot, runic cannonballs, flaming naphtha and helstorm rockets, whilst exploding flying machines and clockwork angels duel with steel zeppelins and Gyrocopter squadrons in the skies above.*

2521-present

*Storm Clouds Gather. Word reaches the Imperial Court that Archaon, a Chaos Warlord of unprecedented power, is uniting the northern tribes and preparing for invasion. Karl Franz's advisors also tell him that the Realm of Chaos is expanding, and in response, the Emperor rallies the armies of the Old World and beyond to stand together against the coming storm. The armies of the world muster once more for a new era of merciless conflict.*





# THE BATTLE OF OSTERWALD

"The sun is climbing above the hills, milord," said the young Reiksguard Knight. "It is time to mount up."

Otto Blucher looked up from the map of the battlefield. Outside his tent the flower of the Empire's fighting men waited for the battle to begin. How many of them would not be coming back by this day's end, Blucher wondered? The terrible weight of responsibility pressed down heavily on him. Unconsciously he sat straighter, holding his hack ramrod stiff.

All night Blucher had sat at this table, studying dispositions by candlelight while his men slept fitfully. He was weary now, but he let none of his tiredness show on his face. Today of all days, he could afford to show no indecision, no weakness. Too much depended on the outcome of this battle. If Blucher failed here then the Goblins would be free to ravage the Empire's eastern provinces, and tens of thousands of innocents would die in agony and despair. Blucher forced himself to smile confidently at the youth

"In a moment lad. In a moment. The greenskins have waited all night for death. Let us grant them a few minutes reprieve."

Through the thin silk walls of his tent, Blucher could hear the soft whinnying of horses and the clatter of war gear as men made ready for the fray. There was that curiously subdued air that he had come to expect before a great battle. Death stooped over this tump and all the men sensed its waiting presence.

By Sigmar, he hoped that Imperial cartographer had done his work properly if not then Blucher would have him shot. Too many lives could be lost because of some scribe's careless error. Well, it was too late to worry about that now. It was too late to worry about anything. His plans had been laid. Every man knew his part in the coming battle. Blucher had planned for every contingency he could think off, confident that his troops could carry out their assigned tasks. Now he needed to have faith in himself and his plan. Blucher rose from the table and removed the goblet from the map's edge. With a defiant gesture the old soldier tossed back the last of the wine. It seared the throat and tasted bitter in his mouth. He slammed the cup down so hard the table shuddered.

Without the goblet's restraining weight, the map began to curl up. With deliberate casualness Blucher picked up the parchment and finished rolling it with his stubby, powerful hands. Now, the time for pouring over maps was over. The time for battle was near.

Blucher knew he had every reason to be confident. For twenty years he had fought the Emperor's wars and he had never been beaten. But then, there's always a first time, he told himself. Over confidence is as deadly as a sword. He shook his head ruefully, still able to remember his father telling him that twenty five years ago when he had been as young as that Reiksguard there. He felt a momentary pang of nostalgia for that simpler time.

Then there had been none of these niggling worries, only the glory of the charge and the reckless pursuit of the fleeing enemy. His only anxiety had been that the Knights Panther might earn more glory than his own Reiksguard unit. Then he had not had to trouble himself with the disposition of troops and the reports of spies. There had been none of these new-fangled devices to deploy or take into account; his father had never needed to find a place for the Steam Tank or the War Wagon or the Volley Gun in his battle lines.

Like most members of the old warrior aristocracy, Blucher was still suspicious of these mechanical machines, but he was a good enough soldier to recognise their utility. It was his duty to defeat the enemies of his Emperor using whatever means came to hand, and duty was the watchword Otto Blucher lived by.

With his helmet under his arm Blucher strode calmly from his tent to receive the acclamation of his army. From the distance, the Goblins greeted the mighty roar with a howl of defiance. Blucher made the sign of the Hammer over his chest with his leather clad fist. He breathed a last prayer to his god, and then climbed into the saddle once more. He brandished his great warhammer aloft and gave the signal to advance.

The time of blood and iron was close at hand.

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Wearily Blucher wiped away the green blood that had splattered his armour and gave thanks to Sigmar for the victory. Before him lay the corpses of Azhag the Slayer and his wyvern. The great lizard looked as fearsome in death as it had in life, and yet there was something pathetic about the way it lay so close to its fallen master. Blucher was reminded of a great hound he had once had as a boy. That dog would have given its life to protect him, he was sure. Blucher was not surprised. The Orc had been a mighty foe and the man did not doubt the loyalty Azhrak had inspired in his followers. The heaped mounds of stunted corpses were testament enough to that.

As Blucher watched, the downcast Halberdiers continued to pile the dead onto the pyres for the burning. Clouds of oily smoke drifted over the battlefield from the other fires. None of the infantrymen would meet his gaze. Blucher did not blame them but he could not forgive them; there was no shame in being afraid, the shame came from letting your fear master you. Blucher was the first to admit that there were moments when he himself had been afraid; but he had not fled like a scared rabbit.

The battle had been close, closer than Blucher would have liked. His plan had almost failed bogged down by the sheer size of the Goblin host and the awesome power of the Orcish gods. The terrible sense of their presence was gone now, but there had been a moment during the battle when he could have sworn that he had seen their huge forms looming over the field green giants emerging from the red murk of battle. He would see those great claws in his nightmares. The memory of the way they had shovelled a seemingly unending stream of howling green-skinned devils into the combat would haunt him to his dying day.

Wolfgang Greiss the Amethyst Wizard rode up. His face was pale and drawn and he seemed to have aged ten years in a day. Blucher felt a sneaking sympathy for the man, wizard though he might be. Greiss had stood like a rock that day, using his body as a channel for energies that would tear a lesser man apart and drive him to the edge of madness. He could see from the look of him that the exertion had cost him dear.

"There it is, the source of all this horror," said Greiss, pointing to the great rune-encrusted crown that rested on Azhrak's brow.

"Best destroy it now," said Blucher softly. The crown's cold glitter was hypnotic and he felt a near irresistible urge to claim it as his prize.

"Such things cannot be destroyed, only temporarily neutralised. The Theogonist and I will deal with it."

"I trust you will," said Blucher, gently guiding his steed away from the fallen Orc warlord. "I trust you will."

Already the Knights had begun to chatter and joke about their victory. They cheered Blucher as he approached. He forced himself to smile as they gave him the ovation but really he just wanted to rest. He was tired, and looking at the fallen body of Azhag had reminded him of the eventual fate of all conquering generals, and indeed of all men.

# THE EMPIRE

Commissioned by His Imperial Majesty Karl Franz I two thousand five hundred and three years since the founding of the Empire by our Lord Sigmar.



# THE LAND OF THE EMPIRE

The Empire is the largest and most powerful of all the many and varied realms of the Old World, stretching from the icy Sea of Claws in the north to the soaring Black Mountains in the south. To the west, the Grey Mountains form the Empire's border with the noble kingdom of Bretonnia, while its eastern frontier is the virtually impenetrable wall of the Worlds Edge Mountains and the cold steppes of Kislev.

The popular Old Worlder conception of the Empire is of vast, dark forests surrounded by impenetrable mountains, a land in which Humanity and other races exist within scattered islands of civilisation and peer fearfully out from behind their walls at whatever dangers lurk in the shadows under the trees.

The Empire is a land dominated by deep, dark forests strewn with spider webs and the moss-covered remains of the fallen. Its heartlands are infested with all kinds of evils, from the savage Beastmen to marauding greenskins. These forests are punctuated by the spires of wizard's towers and the ruins of once-elegant Elf cities destroyed during the War of the Beard, many of which are now the lairs of fierce beasts, bandits, or mutants. The southern and western lands of the Empire are more civilised, with numerous fortified cities built along the magnificent River Reik. The Reikland is the heart of the Empire, and houses the current capital city of the Old World, Altdorf. The briar-choked wilderness that rises into the Worlds Edge Mountains is far more dangerous. Its wild and untamed places breed hardy fighters who form the backbone of many of the Empire's armies

The individual character of the Empire's provinces has long been defined by its landscape. Its borders encompass vast forests, towering mountains, and many miles of wilderness as well as cities, farm lands, and bountiful rivers. Tall mountains act as borders, vast forests provide food and the material of production, while wide rivers make trade and travel over great distances possible. In the valleys of these rivers and their tributaries lie the rich farmlands and great cities of the Empire.



Yet at times, the land itself seems to strive against the Empire's progress, concealing monsters and villains of all sorts in steep passes and dark groves. Within its extensive borders can be found gloomy, tangled forests, where brigands, greenskins and Beastmen make their lairs in forgotten Elven ruins and ancient fortresses clinging to towering spires of rock. The Empire is a land of savage, primal magnificence, but it is also a land of danger where death and war are never far away. Yet, though peril awaits from within and without, the Empire has thus far proved equal to the challenge.





## THE TOWERING MOUNTAINS

The great natural barriers of the mountains both protect the Empire from invaders and harbour some of its most dangerous foes. The three main ranges of mountains – the Worlds Edge Mountains, the Grey Mountains and the Black Mountains – converge in the far south of the Empire in a high, soaring land known as the Vaults. Tall and forbidding, each has its own unique character and dangers. The mountains form a defensive barrier which keeps invaders out, but they also harbour many dangerous foes both on the surface and beneath their tall peaks. Orcs and Goblins, Skaven and unspeakable horrors of Chaos infest the great caverns and tunnels of these ranges and their malign gaze is ever turned towards the Empire. There are only a few passes which remain open all year, although many smaller routes can be traversed freely throughout the summer months. These permanent passes are vitally important to the security of the Empire, and it is hardly surprising that fortresses guard these strategic points.

### The World's Edge Mountains

The Worlds Edge Mountains are grimly forbidding peaks, tall beyond imagining and seeming to scrape the sky with their immensity. In ancient times, the entirety of the mountains was once the domain of the Dwarfs, who crafted vast cities and fortresses into the rock. Grand processional tunnels once linked the halls of their underground realm, stretching from the far north to the south beyond the Old World itself. At various strategic points the tunnels branched east and west to hidden gates in the mountainsides, allowing passage from one side to the other. Many of these workings were destroyed by volcanic activity and earthquakes following the wars between Elves and Dwarfs, forgotten or captured by Night Goblins, Skaven and other evil creatures, their treasures waiting for brave souls to claim them. Some of the ancient fortresses and cities still harbour Dwarfs, but the connecting tunnels

are dangerous places which even the Dwarfs use with due caution. Only the insanely brave would dare risk the untold dangers of crossing beneath these mountains now, but the overland routes are perhaps even more dangerous, rife with Orcs, Ogres and Griffons. In 2520 Engineer Gerhart attempted the first aerial crossing of the mountains in his 'heavier than air' vessel, a refinement of Engineer Rauvork's Phantasmagorical Aerial Splendiferousness Enabler. Whether or not he succeeded is unknown as he has yet to return...

The Worlds Edge Mountains are extremely tall and almost impossible to cross where they border the Empire. The passes that cross these inhospitable peaks are rife with Goblin tribes and Trolls, but if an invading army wishes to cross the mountains, these are the only possible routes. Mighty fortresses of ingenious design defend these strategic points, most of which are of ancient Dwarf construction and have known constant battle for thousands of years. Many of these fortresses are now manned by soldiers of the Empire, the Dwarfs having retreated to their few surviving holds in the distant reaches of the Worlds Edge Mountains.

In the north of the Worlds Edge Mountains is Peak Pass, which cuts through to the Desolation of Drakenmoor. Overlooked by orc tribes living in the ruins of Karak Ungor and Gnashrak's lair, it is a perilous crossing for those foolish or desperate enough to travel eastwards out of the Empire. In recent times, it has been noted as the site of several great battles between the Dwarf Slayer King of Karak Kadrin and the Kurgan hordes of Vardek Crom.

### The Grey Mountains

To the west, the Grey Mountains divide the Empire from Bretonnia, realm of the Knights of King Leoncoeur. Outside of the few towns and mining villages, there are Dwarf settlements within the mountains, but these are fewer in number and far less

wealthy than the mighty holds of the east. Dwarfs are more common in the southern range than in the north, where the mountains trail off as Chaos-tainted hills in the Wasteland. The Dwarfs are a declining presence, however, as the mines play out and more and more of the population moves to the Human-dominated cities.

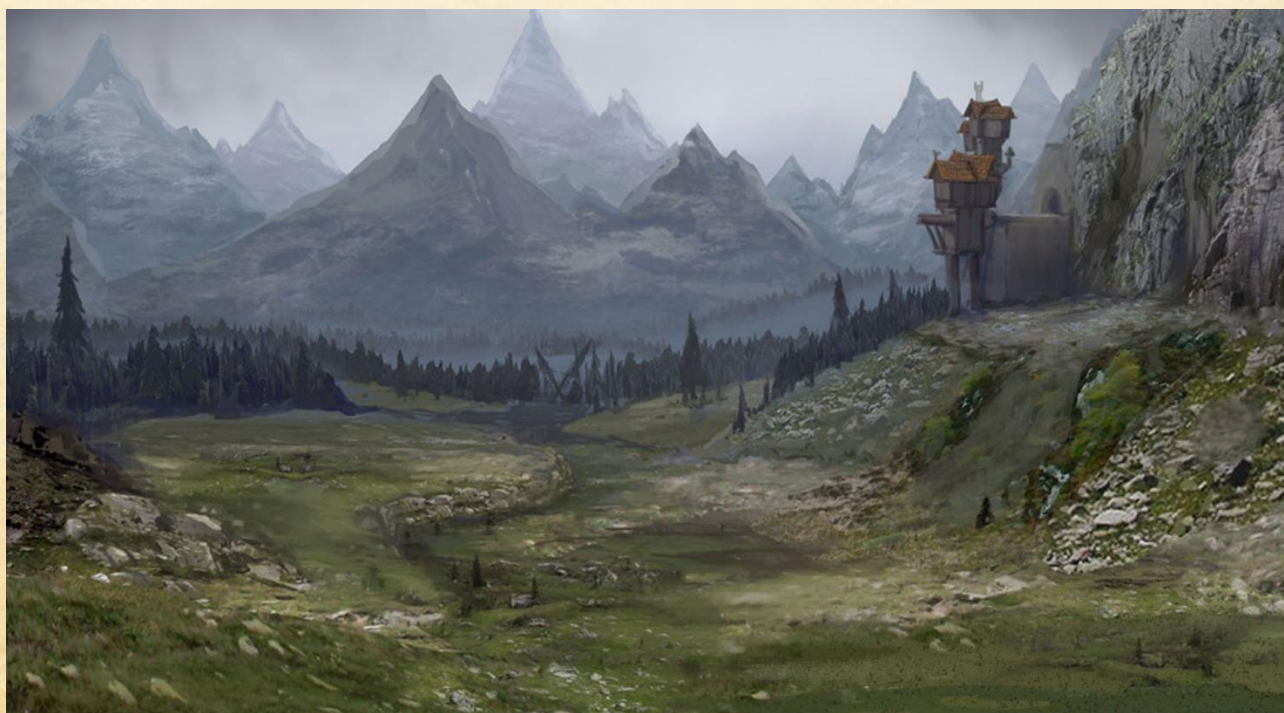
The Grey Mountains have an evil reputation with the folk of the southern Empire, its shadow-haunted crags the source of many a dark legend. Whispered tales are told of corpses of villagers drained of blood and the reoccupation of Blood Keep – legendary home to a Vampire warrior order – and of Helsepire, a dread fortress garrisoned by an army of Liches. Macabre storytellers delight in telling of the bleak and forbidding Castle of Constan Drachenfels, hidden amongst the crags and valleys between the Axe Bite and Grey Lady. It is a haunted ruin said to once have been the lair of a powerful necromancer, now commonly considered abandoned.

Most of the passes across the Grey Mountains are narrow and dangerous, wide enough for small groups or a train of horses, but not much else. Bretonnian and Imperial fortresses guard the few large passes through the Grey Mountains, the widest of which lies to the southwest of Altdorf and is known as Axe Bite Pass. This is the favoured route of invading armies marching in either direction. The eastern end of this pass is protected by the fortress of Helmgart, a massive tower that rises steeply from the mountainside and whose battlements overlook the path below. On the far side lies the Bretonnia castle of Montfort, and both have seen much fighting over the centuries, as ambitious Imperial nobles and Bretonnian knights seek to gain an advantage over their neighbours. The short-lived crusade of Baugard the Rash of Parravon in 2512 (to avenge an insult done to his infamously ugly wife by the visiting Count of Averland) ended before the walls

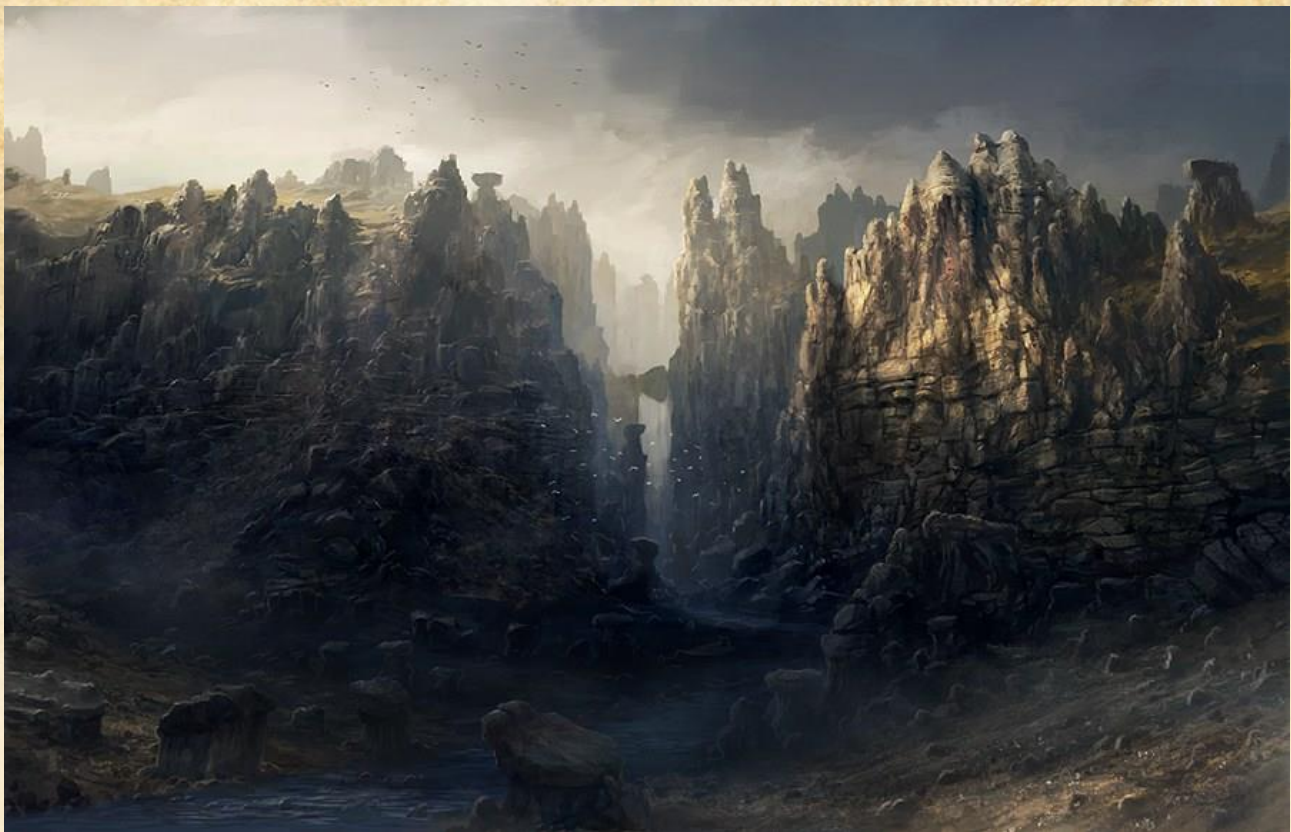
of Helmgart when his knights were bloodily repulsed by the keep's massed cannons.

Another famous route is Grey Lady Pass, which gives passage from Ubersreik to the plains between Parravon and the Loren Forest. The Grey Lady gains its name from the legends of Fretha, a woman of the Age of Wars who promised to wait faithfully for her warrior husband to return from an expedition against Bretonnia. When he did not return, she went to the top of the pass and built a hut to watch for him. There she died during a blizzard, mad with grief, having waited over fifty years. Locals say she remains there to this day as a ghost, waiting to snatch travellers she mistakes for her husband.

The northern tip of the Grey Mountains gradually declines into a hilly upland region known as the Gisoreux Gap – the principal route between Bretonnia and the Empire – though many merchants and nobles prefer to risk the journey across the mountains rather than add weeks to their travels and exuberant tolls to their expenses by going around. Many fatally regret that choice when they wander into the territory of a raging Hippogryph. There are other ways across the mountains, smaller routes and forgotten paths that may be traversed freely throughout the summer months. The ambitious but overconfident Goblin warboss Fizgit the Sneaker attempted to circumvent the fortresses of the Grey Mountains by leading a long column of his followers into the Empire via a narrow path known as the Crooked Corridor. Fortunately for the Empire, his plans came to naught as his scouts had failed to mention a small, but important detail... that their route passed in full view of the upper ramparts of Blackstone Tower, which was garrisoned at the time by Von Blucher's famous Reikland Sharpshooters. From this comes the triumphant expression, 'Like shooting Goblins in a gorge.'







### The Black Mountains

The Black Mountains lie between the Grey Mountains and the Worlds Edge Mountains and divide the Empire from the wild southern lands of the Border Princes. The Black Mountains are possibly the least hospitable of all the Empire's borders, the skies wreathed in dark thunderheads as the towering crags climb towards the Vaults, and flocks of Blood Harpies, while Ice Giants and other predatory creatures prowl the blizzard-swept slopes. The Black Mountains are riddled with crude, Goblin-hewn tunnels. They are crude and narrow compared to the Dwarf mines of the other mountain chains and prone to collapsing unexpectedly. The whole mountain range is infested with Night Goblins, Trolls, Skaven and countless other less numerous but equally deadly creatures, including Wyverns and dreaded Cockatrices. Some even whisper that Frost Dragons make their lairs in these grim mountains and tales abound of these deadly creatures venturing down to the Empire to feed.

Many passes, such as the Winter's Teeth, cut through the Black Mountains; castles and forts watch these, both to protect the flow of trade and to guard against raids or invasions by the Orcs, who frequently ravage the petty states of the Border Princes.

The greatest of all the passes over the mountains is where the World's Edge Mountains and Black Mountains divide – Black Fire Pass. This deep cleft in the rock is famous throughout the Empire as the site of Sigmar's great victory against the Orcs, which saw him crowned Emperor, but this is not the only battle to have been fought here. The steep sides of the pass, sheer walls of dark, menacing rock, rise above the track

below, widening out in the middle of its length into a massive upland valley that remains littered with the rusted blades and bleached bones from the countless battles that have been fought here.

### The Vaults

The Vaults are a meeting-point of four mountain ranges, and the pressure of their collision has raised a land so rugged that only one overland route cuts through it to Tilea, the Brenheim Pass, which is often sealed by snow from fall to spring. Several monasteries line its way, so that travellers have shelter in need. There is also one inn near the summit of the pass, the Brandy Home. It is a fortified structure of stone, built centuries ago and held by the same Human family since. It is here that, between the spring melt and the autumn frosts, Dwarfs from the Vaults and the western Black Mountains come to trade with Imperials and Tileans, and to sample the inn's famous brandy.

The great wonder of the Vaults, however, is the River of Echoes, which is the source of both the River Soll and the Cristallo River in Tilea. Over three hundred miles long and with an underground town in the middle, the River of Echoes is a direct trade route between northern Tilea and Wissenland.

### The Middle Mountains

Forming the other main upland region within the Empire are the Middle Mountains, which lie in the northern reaches of the land. Middenheim, City of the White Wolf sits on the south-western tip of the Middle Mountains and beyond them is Ostland, northernmost province of the Empire. Smaller than the mountains

surrounding the Empire, they are nonetheless rugged and risky for travellers. This massive range is surrounded by impenetrably dark forest and is shunned by all right-minded folk, as it is the domain of bandits, rogues and other undesirables. There are no large Dwarf delvings in these mountains, only inhospitable rocky uplands that no sane person would wish to explore. Deep within the mountains stands Brass Keep. Once an Imperial fastness, it was captured during the Great War Against Chaos and is now the refuge of the Warriors of Chaos who maintain a foothold in the midst of the Empire. The taint of Chaos has blighted the land to such an extent that parts of the mountainside have been known to mystically come to life, devouring with stalagmite-sized teeth any who dare trespass. Bat-winged Manticores and Chimerae soar above the rocky crags, their monstrous roars cutting through the howling winds. Graf Boris Todbringer of Middenheim has led armed expeditions to clear out these foes, but most of these forays into the mountains are doomed from the start and few, if any, of the brave souls sent forth ever return. The Middle Mountains remain, for all intents and purposes, enemy territory.

## THE MIGHTY RIVERS

Surrounded as it is by huge mountainous uplands, the Empire acts like a basin into which drain countless raging torrents. Beginning as crashing streams and spectacular waterfalls high in the mountains, these quickly converge to form spectacular, foaming rivers. By the time they reach the flat lands of the Empire they have become deep and substantial – the greatest waterways in all the Old World. These broad rivers are characteristic of the Empire.

Without its rivers, the Empire could not exist. They are the frame on which the whole structure is built. While several major roads cut through the Empire, these are often too dangerous for travel: bandits, war, monsters, and even inclement weather make road-travel far riskier than many are willing to tolerate. The rivers thus are the Empire's preferred highways for commerce and long distance travel. Armies in the field will often travel along a river's route, keeping their supplies close at hand. The great merchant houses of Marienburg and the Imperial cities prefer to ship by riverboat, which is cheaper and safer than caravan. The great rivers are also natural boundaries between several of the Electoral Provinces, providing both clear demarcation and a frontier for squabbles between princes.

The principal rivers of the Empire flow from the east to the west, and as they converge they become greater still. The accompanying map shows the most substantial rivers, but the scale does not permit us to show every stream and tributary, of which there are many thousands. The principal river systems and their major tributaries are described below.

The people of the Empire tend to refer to the areas adjoining rivers by the names of the rivers themselves; Talabecland around the river Talabec, Reikland by the banks of the Reik, and so on. The River Sol is the southernmost of the Empire's rivers, cutting through what was once the province of Solland, and is the southernmost of the Empire's rivers. Now part of Wissenland since Gorbak Ironclaw's invasion, there are some people of the Empire, mostly nobles from families that once lived in Solland, that refer to this region as Sudenland and refuse to acknowledge the rights of the Wissenland count.





### The River Reik

The Upper Reik begins just south of Black Fire Pass where countless mountain streams converge to form what many people take as the beginnings of the mighty river Reik. Its waters are fast and crystal clear. The Upper Reik is joined by the Sol to the south of Nuln and continues northwards until it converges with the blue waters of the Aver to form the Reik at Nuln itself. The Reik is actually the longest single river in the Old World, although only because it bears its name from its source in the Upper Reik to where it joins the sea at Marienburg. The Talabec/Lower Reik watercourse is in fact greater in total length. Rarely blocked by ice, the Reik is fed at its source by the Upper Reik and Sol, while the Aver, Stir, and Talabec rivers add their flow. Flooding is therefore a frequent problem in spring as the snow melts. Cities and towns take what steps they can to mitigate the damage, but only Nuln and Altdorf have made much progress.

The Reik is undoubtedly the most important river in the Empire, and its surrounding territories, the Reikland, are the most prosperous. It is a busy river, with fully laden merchant vessels travelling all the way from Marienburg to Nuln. Down it flow Imperial goods bound for Bretonnia and beyond, while the luxury imports the wealthy classes demand – Bretonnian brandy, Cathayan silks, and the perfumes of Araby, among others – make their way upstream. This broad stretch of water carries more shipping than the rest of the Empire's rivers put together, and it is the principal route for trade. Not surprisingly given the amount of commercial traffic, the Reik basin also has a problem with pirates, particularly between Altdorf and the Wasteland. River patrols garrisons of River Wardens are therefore frequent along these stretches, but while they are merciless with those they catch, it is impossible for them to prevent all piracy. The forces are often undermanned and even corrupt, leading many to hire their own guards.

The capitol city of Altdorf is built upon an island in the River Reik formed of deposits of black soil carried from the Middle Mountains along the Talabec, surrounding the city with many shifting channels, mudflats and marshes renowned for their evil smell and River Troll-infested bogs. These reunite into a single large body of water just north of Altdorf, and from here the river takes on a different character. Broad and deep, it runs over a rocky bed that sometimes breaks out of the river to form steep rocky islands midstream, before reaching the sea at Marienburg. These islands are secure places for imposing fortresses, smuggler's dens and even as sites for remote villages. Only the most desperate of the Empire's citizens live on such places, for many have been ravaged by flood and storm, and still others have fallen foul of merciless corsair raids. However, even more worrying are the reports of entire villages being destroyed overnight, dragged into the torrents by the tentacles of an impossibly large denizen of the deep.

### The River Talabec

Next in importance is the Talabec, which begins where the waters of the Upper Talabec and Urskoy Rivers meet in Kislev. A broad and slow river, the Talabec is a major highway through the dark forests of the north, and is the preferred route for communicating with distant Kislev. Its waters are rich with life, and many small villages line its path, subsisting on the fish it provides. The only major city on it is Talabheim, whose port of Taalgrad has a reputation as both a dangerous place and a good spot for dumping deadbeats who can't pay their fare. The Talabec joins the Reik at Altdorf. The Talabec also serves as a border between Talabecland and its neighbours to the north: Middenland, Hochland, and Ostland. It is an often-contentious border, with raids in both directions in times when Imperial authority is weak. Too wide to ford, ferry points are frequent points of dispute, as they often house revenue-raising tollhouses.

The Talabec originates in the rapid streams. The river is named for the god Taal, Lord of Beasts and master of wild places, and the surrounding land of Talabecland is the heartland of the god's worship. According to common superstition, Taal is easily offended and quick to anger, so when crossing one of the Talabec's bridges, the folk of the Empire tip their hats in deference or throw ravens' feathers into the rapid waters.

The Talabec's two forks, the Upper and Lower Talabec, flow westward between the Dwarf holds of Karak Kadrin and Karak Ungor in the Worlds Edge Mountains and converge in dark pine forests with an evil reputation, known as the Ostermark Marches – a borderland punctuated by watchtowers, armouries and smithies that supply the Empire's northern armies. In these hinterlands of the Empire there are many roving bands of Orcs and Beastmen who descend from the mountains in search of prey and plunder.

Further south, where the Talabec joins the River Urskoy, it is broad and impossible to cross, becoming wider as it flows towards Talabheim. This stretch of water swarms with flesh-eating lurker fish and vast, scaled monsters have been known to smash merchant barges apart to feast upon their crews. At Talabheim, the waters are calm enough for a ferry point and the banks of the river are fortified with cannon emplacements and a permanent garrison of the Elector Count's Greatswords to protect it against invaders.

Between Talabheim and Altdorf the river is joined by many streams which flow south from the Middle Mountains, laden with dark soils washed from the mountain slopes. Taken as a single body of water, between its source and where its waters reach the sea at Marienburg as the Reik, this is the longest and most substantial river system in the Old World.

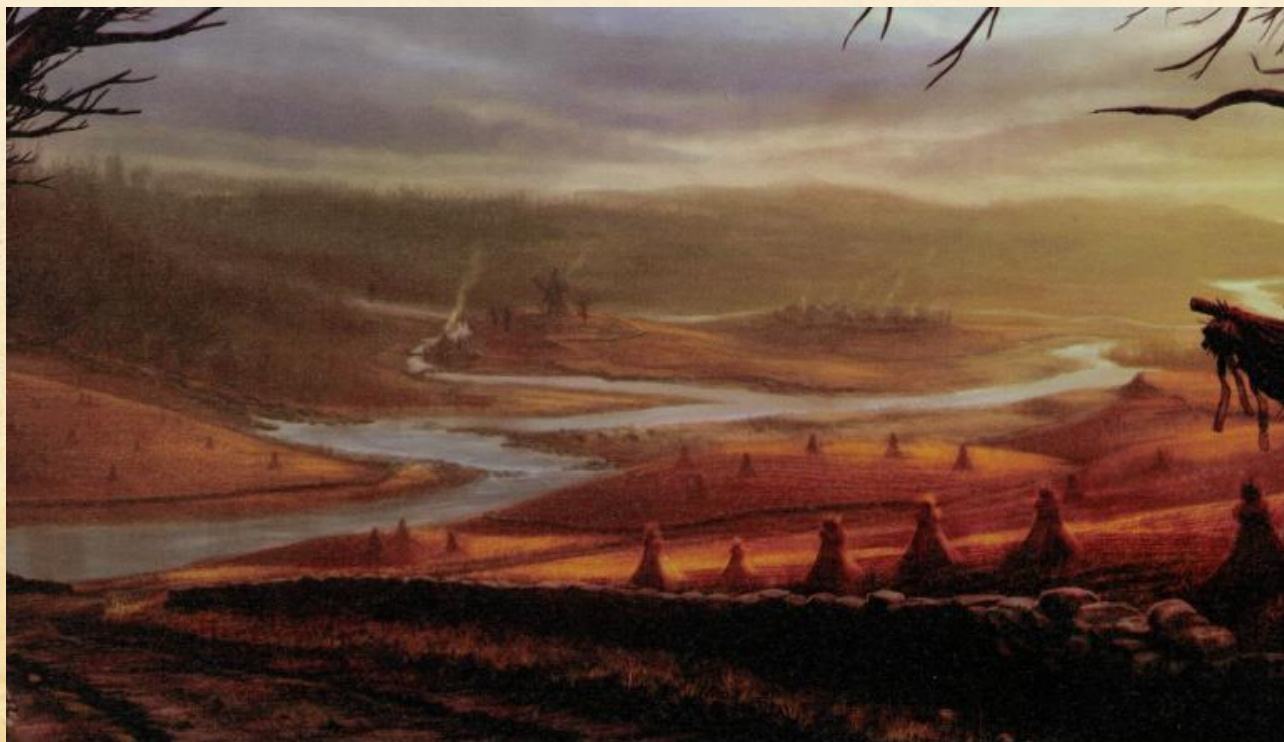
During the height of the Decade of Ice the River Talabec froze solid allowing a Beastmen invasion to cross the River Talabec and attack the city of Talabheim. Many city gates were nearly breached and only the timely intervention of the Ice Queen of Kislev and a large cohort of fur-clad Winged Lancers saved the city from certain destruction.


### The River Aver

The River Aver flows from the mountains above the Dwarf fortress of Karak Varn just north of Black Fire Pass. Plunging over a series of immense waterfalls, these become two broad and startlingly blue rivers that are said to have magical healing properties – the Aver Reach and the Blue Reach – that finally unite in the Halfling realm of the Moot, a fertile land referred to as the breadbasket of the Empire. The River Aver continues westward past the provincial capital at Averheim and finally flows into the Reik at Nuln. The wide, fertile plains of Averland form prime grazing lands for horses and the steeds of this province are said to be the fastest horses of the Empire and hence in great demand by the quartermasters of the Knightly Orders.

### The River Stir

The Stir may be traced to the streams which flow from the western slopes of the Dwarf fortress of Karak Kadrin, quickly developing into a major river flowing within a deep, wooded valley that is said to be one of the most awe-inspiring vistas in the Empire. For virtually its entire length the Stir flows through the Great Forest and its breadth and few crossing points means that the river forms a defensive barrier and a border between Stirland and Talabecland. Its width makes it an ideal barrier, easy to police and defend. Nevertheless, its length means it must be constantly patrolled, lest enemies find a means to cross it. Past





enmities with Talabecland mean that the Stirlanders are almost as keen to keep their neighbours at bay as they are Orcs and Beastmen! The Stirland State Army provides a portion of its soldiers to the River Patrol, a specially trained militia based at forts spaced along the southern bank of the river. The archers of this force are especially feared for their prodigious accuracy.



Since the Time of Three Emperors, these provinces have shared an uneasy peace at best and there have been many battles fought at important river crossings. In 2427, at the Battle of Leitziger Ford, the rivalry between these two provinces erupted into outright hostility. The Elector Counts duelled in the centre of the crossing point, and the combat only ended when the Count of Stirland hacked the leg from his rival with a blow from his Runefang and the unfortunate Count of Talabecland was swept down the river where he had to be rescued by his Greatswords at battle's end. The severed leg was recovered by the soldiers of Stirland and, despite repeated requests by the Count of Talabecland's descendants to have the leg returned, the Counts of Stirland are quite fond of this grisly trophy and seem determined to hang on to it.

The River Stir has a sinister reputation amongst the people of the Empire, for upon its banks lie both the dark land of Sylvania and the former site of Mordheim, a cursed city destroyed by a warpstone meteorite. Foul magic leeches into the Stir and, when the Chaos moon shines bright, the river turns black and many who gaze into its depths are said to glimpse their own grisly death reflected on the surface.

## The River Sol

The river Sol is the southernmost of the Empire's rivers. It rises in the Vaults and its fast flowing waters are further augmented by the many streams flowing from the eastern edge of the Grey Mountains. During the spring the Sol becomes a torrent as melt waters vastly increase the volume of water. The waters of the Sol are notoriously cold, and the hardy people that live in that region are used to the mountains and extreme climate.

## THE DARK FORESTS

The Empire is a land dominated by grim forests strewn with spider webs and the moss-covered remains of unwary travellers. Towards the north these turn into pine forests and eventually thin out to form the grassy plains of Kislev. The forests are wild and dangerous places, although there are towns and innumerable villages situated within the woodlands. These gloomy, tangled woods are infested with all kinds of evils, and all manner of dreadful creatures and forgotten secrets are concealed beneath darkened boughs.

This vast swathe of dark woodland is punctuated in places by the spires of wizard's towers, fortified watchtowers and arcane ruins – many of which are now the lairs of fierce beasts, bandits, or mutants – as well as a few of the more isolated settlements of the Empire. These are lone pockets of civilisation, high-walled towns and villages where the gates are locked and barred every night and the surrounding forest is regarded with dread. It is with reason that the people of the Empire fear what lurks in the forests, for the trees hide many foes: bandits, rampaging Orcs, Forest Goblins and mutated Chaos beasts. The deeper forests are virtually impenetrable and hostile territory. Few dare venture beyond sight of the treeline – and those that do are rarely seen again.





Connecting the towns and villages of the Empire are perilous, rutted roads with fortified coaching inns scattered along their length. To be caught out in the forests at night is the terror of those who must brave the dangers of travelling through the forests, and the sight of a coaching inn through the darkness is a welcome one indeed. However, even these refuges are not without danger, and many tales are told of weary travellers who have discovered an inn completely empty of life, its inhabitants slaughtered to a man and the walls coated thickly with their blood.

### The Forest of Shadows

Situated in the north-eastern region of the Empire, the Forest of Shadows encompasses most of the province of Ostland and lies to the north of the Middle Mountains. The road that links Middenheim and the Kislevite city of Erengrad runs through this forest, though it is a dangerous road to take. It earns its name, for it is the gloomiest of the Empire's forests, its ancient trees having grown so close together that their branches nearly interweave like tightly clasped fingers, twisted into grotesque shapes that claw at the sky and are draped in hanging curtains of moss and lichen. Dark and forbidding, the forest is a fearful place of evil creatures and unquiet shadows. Strange, bloated fungi proliferate there in the form of huge, bilious puffballs and brightly coloured toadstools. Only the foolhardy would brave a night within the gloomy depths. It has always had a reputation as a dangerous place, home to Giant Spiders, Beastmen, and the secret meeting places of Chaos cultists. It is a dark and brooding pine forest, thick with raiders, bandits, and Chaos warbands, and only heavily protected convoys have a chance of passing through. It is often said that in the Forest of Shadows there are more brigands than trees. The Forest of Shadows to the north is dense and dark, and inhabited by Forest Goblins and ferocious wolf packs.

This is an area of the Empire which has never really been tamed. Many foolhardy adventurers have gone into the forest to explore the truth of these rumours, but few are ever heard of again.

Occasionally, the Counts of Ostland have mounted expeditions into the forest in the wake of raids mounted by the dark creatures within. Such ventures are fraught with danger and any armies that set out into the forest return with many fewer warriors than when they started and a host of fearful tales of the monsters that dwell within the Forest of Shadows.

The Doom Lord, Dieter Helsnicht, was defeated here at the Battle of Beeckerhoven, but his body was never found. Shambling corpses and terrifying Wraiths are often seen wandering the abyssal forest, and tales persist that the Necromancer still haunts there.

### The Drakwald Forest

West of the Middle Mountains lies the infamous Drakwald Forest, the region of the Empire that recalls the name of a lost province now overrun by Beastmen, wild Demigryphs, mutated monsters and many other things, each viler than the last. It is a fairly sparse forest mostly of birch trees on a light, sandy soil. The area is not very fertile, and so has never been cleared for cultivation. In places the trees do grow more thickly and pines occur in some hilly areas. Ghostly mists thread the trees and the gloomy boughs echo to bestial howls and bellowing roars. Vicious monsters and savage beasts prowl the dark pines, and more frightening noises than the echoes of howling wolves keep villagers awake at night. The city of Middenheim stands atop its great crag of rock within the depths of the Drakwald and the Chaos beasts of the forest have ever been the scourge of the local people. The depths of the forest are home to many Beastman warbands and

the hag trees of the Drakwald are terrible sights to behold, nightmares of blackened growth and skeletal remains. They remain a grim warning to those who attempt to travel through these haunted woods. When the inhabitants of the Empire shudder at the thought of monsters that bear the shape of Men fused with cattle, goats or vermin, they think of the Drakwald, for it is said to be home to the largest and most fearsome beasts imaginable. At Elector Count Graf Todbringer's decree, there is a standing bounty on the heads of these dread creatures, attracting mercenaries from all over the Old World. The Knights of the White Wolf often rake up the hunt, seeing it as a good way to test their skills and blood their Order's newest initiates. So it is that bands fierce knights often sally deep into the Drakwald to cull the beasts in the name of Ulric. Small wonder then that the people of the north are hardened to lives of battle, for theirs is a struggle against hunger, cold and the dangers of voracious forest creatures.

The greatest huntsmen of the Empire test their trade in the Drakwald Forest, and for every hundred would-be monster hunters that are ripped apart by baying hordes or devoured by blood-greedy beasts, one may succeed in capturing particularly ferocious and impressive creature. These are often sold for a healthy profit to the Imperial Zoo in Altdorf, or to an Elector Count for his own, personal menagerie. However, it is not just the savage animals of the forest that prey on unwary travellers; the trees themselves have been known to attack passers-by. Reaching out with sturdy boughs,

they entrap their victims before absorbing their vital fluids and spitting out their withered husks. It is not without reason that children of Nordland are scared into obedience with tales of the Drakwald Oak.

The Drakwald takes its name from the dragons that once lived there. Man and Elf alike had fought against them since the days before Sigmar, and the last died under the axe of Emperor Hündrod the Furious in the 4th century. Though no dragon has been sighted in the Drakwald since then, deep within the forest northeast of Delberz at the Fane of Sacrifice, one can still see the scarred land where the dragon's chaos-tainted blood poisoned the land forever. In the far north lies the Laurelorn Forest, home of the reclusive Wood Elves. While both Middenland and Nordland claim the forest as theirs, the Elves dare either to try to enforce their claim.

In some northern reaches of the forest, the trees grow more thickly and swathes of pine forests grow in the bleaker, hilly regions of this land. The road between Marienburg and Middenheim runs through this forest, though only those with a force of well-armed and resolute soldiers would dare travel this route for fear of ambush by the beasts of the forest. Many a daring bandit chief has made his fortune from robbing travellers on this road. The Elector Counts of Nordland and Middenland have both attempted to establish fortified coaching inns along the road, but each attempt has ended in failure, with every single inn burned and all of their inhabitants slain and devoured.



### THE RUINATION OF GLUMHOF

*On a small crossroads along the Old Forest Road lies the tiny village of Glumhof. Here brave citizens have dared to settle, facing the horrors that live in, and rampage through, the Drakwald Forest. But even though they are protected by stout walls and a watchtower built and garrisoned by soldiers of the Empire, there is constant danger of sudden and ruthless attack.*

#### *Glumhof: A Brief History*

*Citizens of the town of Glumhof are extremely dour. The small village has an air of inescapable gloom, perhaps due to the long-suffering the ill-fated hamlet has sustained over the years.*

*1114 - Glumhof wiped out by Black Plague.*

*1450 - Entire population joins crusade, never again to return.*

*1560 - Glumhof destroyed entirely during Empire civil war.*

*2022 - Overrun by Undead during Vampire Wars.*

*2303 - Glumhof population eaten by vengeful Beastmen returning from the Great War Against Chaos.*

*2511 - Burnt to the ground by Forest Goblins.*

*2522 - Recently rebuilt town collapses into unexplained tunnels. Only gnawed bones remain.*

### The Great Forest

Further south, covering the central area of the Empire, is the Great Forest. It is an ancient, colossal and diverse woodland that stretches from the Middle Mountains in the north to Nuln in the south, and from Altdorf in the west to the borders of Kislev in the east. It contains many majestic old oaks and hoary willows. The central regions of the Empire are a largely continuous block of uninterrupted forest, with areas cleared for towns and farming. Together with the other mighty forest lands of the Empire it forms an unimaginably vast heartland of darkened, twisted trees that dominates the central area of the Empire. A goodly portion of the Empire's population dwell within the bounds of the Great Forest. As a result, countless acres of it have been cleared to allow for cultivation, or to provide logs for the hillside forts which are the main defence against the terrible creatures that lurk in the forest's depths. Rugged hills occasionally rise from the forest, and there are many ruined towers and ancient castles atop such lonely peaks, some dating back as far as the Age of Three Emperors.

In some places, the venomous thickets are so dense that the air itself is poisonous to breathe. In other areas, the trees have mystically been petrified, and if a man were foolish enough to touch one, he too would be turned to stone. The Great Forest is also home to tribes of spiteful Forest Goblins and hordes of gigantic spiders, some of which are the size of fortified manor houses. Villages within the Great Forest are raided with alarming regularity and entire populations have been discovered wrapped in cobwebs and drained of blood.

The constant attacks mean that many people become dispossessed, and roving bands of Flagellants are a common – if not exactly welcome – sight in the Great Forest. Their bloodied processions of whipping, screaming madmen march from town to town spreading their messages of doom and despair to all they encounter.

### The Reikwald Forest

The Reikwald Forest lies to the south of Altdorf, filling the land between the River Reik and the Grey Mountains. The main road between Bretonnia and the Empire runs through this forest and climbs over the Axe Bite Pass. It is a favourite haunt of those who have been outcast from the Empire's cities, where fugitives from justice take to an existence of banditry. It is a haven for desperadoes, cut-throats, criminals and all manner of ne'er-do-wells. Though it is but a few leagues from the Empire's seat of power, there is scant resolve to clear the Reikwald Forest, as it provides a ready source of mercenaries and conscript regiments to the Emperor's banner when he marches to war. Many such bandits are content to turn a coin fighting as mercenaries and, though they are neither as reliable nor as well trained as state troops, whilst they fight in the Emperor's armies at least they are not robbing his lands!

Lying between the River Reik and the Grey Mountains, it is through this forest that the main road that links Bretonnia and the Empire runs, and those who pass along it must bring plenty of protection for their every step will be dogged by bandits and brigands. The road crosses the Grey Mountains over Axe Bite Pass, and those who emerge from the forest are very often poorer than when they entered it.


At the mouth of Axe Bite Pass is the Empire fortress of Helmgart, a massive tower that rises from the mountainside and whose battlements overlook the narrow path below. Invading armies favour Axe Bite Pass for crossing the Grey Mountains and this region of the Empire has seen many bitter battles as the armies of Reikland fight off their many enemies.

### THE NORTHERN DEEPS

"The Northern Deeps" is a general term for the northern provinces of the Empire, one often used by southerners and Reiklanders as a mark of disparagement for the lands of their northern kin. To southerners, the provinces of Middenland, Ostland, Hochland, and Nordland are wild places, where people have to huddle behind their doors for fear of what lurks in the dark forests that crowd in on their towns and cities. While they are not far wrong, those who live there and thoughtful people throughout the Empire agree that the northern lands are the heart and soul of the Empire.

Forest is the distinguishing characteristic of the northlands, stretching in one almost unbroken band from the dark, deciduous eaves of western Middenland to the spirit-haunted pines of the Kislev Verge.





Beyond the Empire's northern shores is the Sea of Claws, a wild, storm-tossed sea that is often plagued by pirates and Chaos reavers sailing from Norscan ports. The Empire has tried to found ports and naval bases on the Sea of Claws, but with little success. Consequently it depends on the ships of Marienburg to keep its shores safe, something that rankles the pride of the northern rulers.

## THE SOUTHERN AND WESTERN BREADBASKET

South of the river Talabec and west of the Reik are the agricultural and population heartlands of the Empire, the provinces of Talabecland, Averland, Stirland, Reikland, and Wissenland. Only in the western half of Talabecland and in the Reikland along the River Reik is it heavily forested; these are known as the Great Forest and the Reikwald, respectively.

Closer to the Grey Mountains, the forests thin and the land becomes ideal for farming. Indeed, Reiklander white wine is considered the best the Empire produces, and the foothills west of Bögenhafen are sometimes called "Ranald's Garden" for the amount of wine produced there.

South of Talabecland are the rolling plains of Stirland and Averland, used both for farming and raising cattle. Less heavily forested than the northern tier, these provinces are more densely populated, with many more towns and villages along their rivers and roads. Trade with the Dwarfs of the World's Edge Mountains comes through these provinces, turning Talabheim, Wurtbad, and Averheim into important markets for the Dwarf trade. From here, products flow north to Middenheim or, more commonly, west to Nuln and Altdorf, and thence to Marienburg.

Carved out from the lands of Stirland and Averland long ago by Emperor Ludwig the Fat, the Moot is the most fecund region in the Empire. The Halflings who live here mostly keep to themselves, trading with their neighbours and importing those luxuries they cannot make themselves, such as fine porcelain and silks.



East from the Mootland, the southern plains begin to rise toward to the World's Edge Mountains. The woods become thicker and turn into true forests again, covering the provinces of the League of Ostermark and the vampire-haunted lands of Sylvania. From here come some of the Empire's toughest troops, hardened by centuries of fighting invading Orcs, raiding bandits, and even the restless dead. It is from here also that there came the undead army of the von Carsteins to save the Empire in its moment of greatest need.

At the southernmost end of the Empire is the Electoral Province of Wissenland, considered an upstart for absorbing ancient Solland after the Orc invasion of the 1700s and for its claims to rule Nuln. Less friendly to agriculture than the Reikland to the north, it nonetheless is self-sufficient in food, and exports a particularly high-quality wool from the sheep grazed in its foothills. Mining is common in the Vaults, particularly along the upper reaches of the Soll and near the village of Scharmbeck, where gold was recently found. Few venture deep into the mountains, however, for the Dwarfs of Karak Hirn and Karak Norn are protective of what they consider as their patrimony.





# STORM CLOUDS OVER GEISTHEIM

The booms of the Orcs' gigantic drums could barely be heard over the sound of their guttural war chants. As the loyal troops of Talabheim stood in disciplined ranks, the sound of crashing trees and branches snapping increased in volume before finally the Orc horde emerged from the treeline. Elector Count Schepke steadied his horse and, raising his sword high above his head, he calmly addressed his troops

"Hold the line, men!" he yelled. "Artillery, ready your fuses and await my command!"

His voice was barely audible above the jeers of the massive Orc horde. A solid wall of Greenskins now stood facing his brave soldiers, bellowing fierce challenges and clashing crude choppas against their rusted armour, a stark contrast to the disciplined ranks of the Empire soldiers. The people of Talabheim had thought themselves safe, hidden deep within the heart of the Great Forest. A lapse of vigilance resulting from years of peace and prosperity had allowed the sudden Orc invasion to devastate the villages and towns surrounding Talabheim. Huge numbers of Orcs had been reported raiding the unprotected settlements, disappearing as quickly as they had emerged, leaving a broken trail of wanton destruction behind them. Only the town of Geistheim lay between the advancing Orcs and the city known as The Eye of The Forest.

A veteran of many campaigns, Elector Count Otto Schepke had seen a pattern developing within the attacks of the Orcs. Mustering his regiments and Knights, he rode to the small town and alerted the mayor of the approaching danger. If his deductions proved correct, they had only a short time to prepare for battle. The mayor of Geistheim exhorted the townsmen to gather their weapons. The Count knew that a man fighting to defend his home was a dangerous opponent, a match even for the skills of his bravest soldiers. They would need such courage in the battle were they to stand any chance of defeating the invading army.

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The sun was setting as Elector Count Otto Schepke led his small group of Reiksguard Knights back towards the village of Geistheim. The Count was exhausted after the hard-fought battle and dearly wished to wash the stench of Greenskin blood from his body, but a tale of heroism had reached him that stirred his warrior heart.

As the army had begun to make camp for the night, the talk around every fire was of a lone Free Company soldier who had single-handedly disrupted the entire Orcish line after seeing every one of his comrades blasted to death by Orc magic. The man's bravery had thrown the Greenskins into confusion and he had gone on to slay the Shaman who had killed his fellows. If these tales were to be believed, then such courage must be rewarded and harnessed.

"There is the fellow," said one of his knights, with a hint of contempt in his voice, pointing to where a lone figure sat at the edge of the forest.

"Are you sure this is wise, my lord?" counselled another, "The man is a brigand! A pardon for past deeds is one thing, but offering him a commission in your Greatswords is like pouring fine wine to a mongrel."

"Come now, my knights," replied Otto reproachfully,

"Where is your humility? This brave soul served me well today and deserves a reward. What greater honour could I bestow upon him than offering to raise him from the gutter into my own personal bodyguard? I daresay the fellow will be overcome with gratitude and mend his ways forthwith!"

The knights looked unconvinced as the small group reined in their horses before the bloodstained soldier. The man drank from a half-empty bottle of brandy, ignoring the armoured horsemen. He was a rough looking fellow, thought the Count. Dark stubble matted his scarred features and he was dressed in a battered leather jerkin and britches with a black, studded patch over his right eye. A sword sat propped against a tree behind him, the blade stained dark red with Orcish blood.

Otto cleared his throat pointedly and approached the soldier, a scroll containing the man's pardon in his left hand. The man took a mighty swallow from his bottle and glanced at the knights without interest.

"What do you want? I'm busy" he said, indicating the brandy; his voice rasping and hoarse.

"Show some respect to your betters, you dog!" snapped one of the Reiksguard.

Otto waved the knight to silence and said, "I come, sir, to offer you the chance for greatness, for honour! I have heard tales of the valour you displayed on the field of battle today and wish you to know that I respect and value such qualities in a man. I need men like you to serve me, and for that reason I hereby offer you your pardon and a commission within the ranks of my Greatswords!"

The Count extended his hand towards the soldier who said nothing and continued to drink from the bottle, draining the remainder in one gulp. He wiped the back of his hand across his lips, then pushed himself to his feet and sheathed his sword. He was powerfully built, wearing his physical strength like a cloak, and Otto involuntarily took a step back. The man radiated threat in every gesture.

"Is that my pardon?" he asked, nodding towards the scroll.

"Uh, yes," said Otto eventually, "But did you hear what I said? I wish you to join the Greatswords, my own household soldiers. My bodyguard. The honour I offer you is great!"

The man shook his head, saying, "I heard you. But I serve no-one." and pushed past the startled Elector Count, snatching the pardon from his hand. The knights moved to stop him, their sense of propriety outraged at this scoundrel's behaviour. Otto halted them with a gesture as the Free Company soldier arrogantly strode through their ranks, heading towards the village tavern.

"Wait then," called Otto Schepke. "If you will not accept the reward I offer you, will you at least give me your name?"

The man stopped as if considering the question and looked back over his shoulder.

"Name's Koplisken. Karl Koplisken. But most folk just call me..."

Koplisken paused and shook his head with a wry grin.

"Never mind..." he said, and walked into the village.



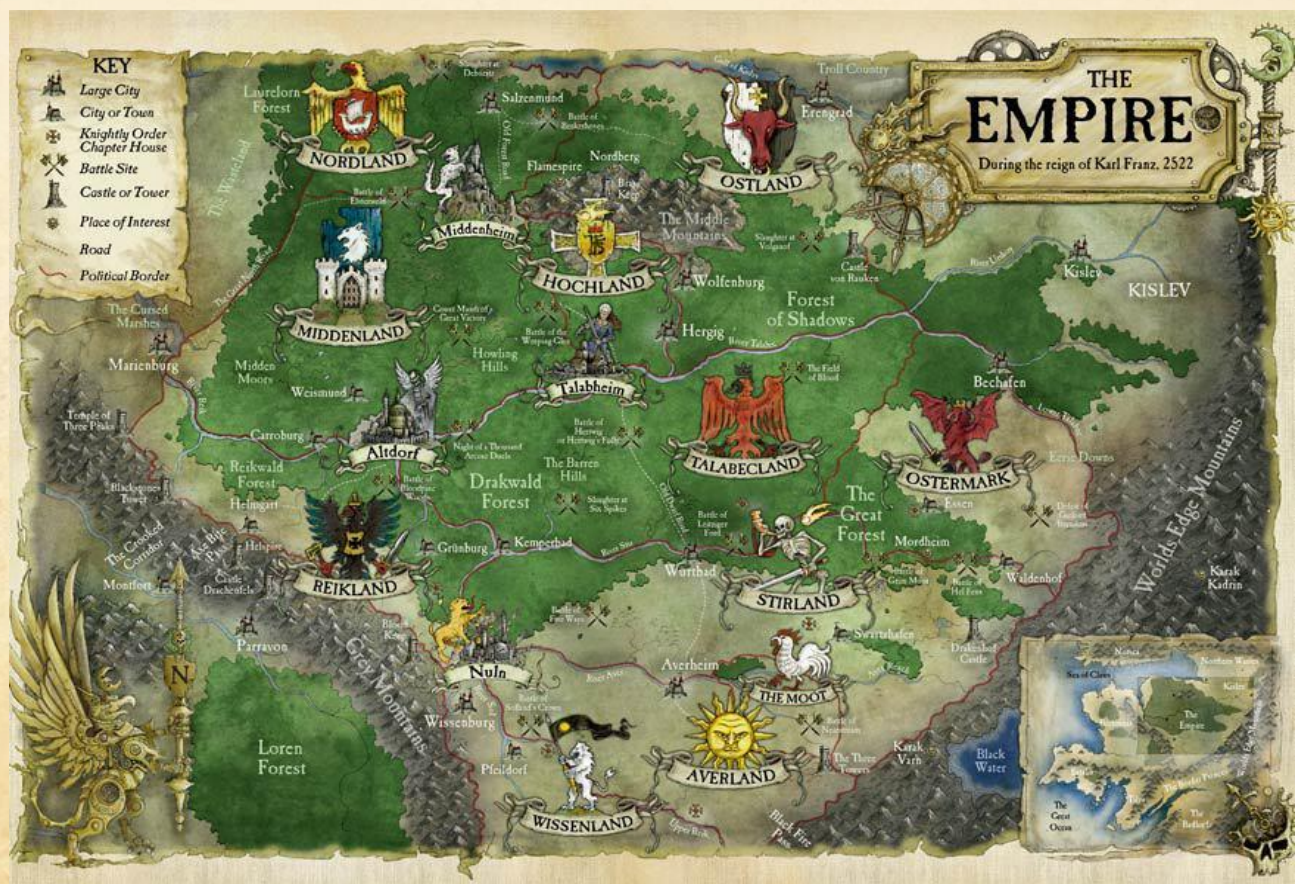
# THE GRAND PROVINCES


Though the Empire might outwardly present itself as a single country unified under the throne of Karl Franz, the truth is far more complex. The Empire is a vast land, a loose conglomeration of individual and extremely independent states, barely joined together by ties of culture, religion, language and common survival.

These regional states are called provinces and they were originally based upon the ancient tribal homelands of Sigmar's allied chieftains. During the founding of the Empire, these twelve chieftains became known as counts and the boundaries of their realms were formally established. Over the centuries, the boundaries have changed, with new states emerging and others disappearing altogether. The cursed land of Sylvania, long haunted by the dread Vampire Counts, was once a province of great importance, but is now a backward region ruled by the count of Stirland and shunned by all sane folk. The former province of Solland is now no more than a footnote in history, for it never recovered from the destruction wrought by the Orc Warboss Gorbak Ironclaw, and its lands have since been subsumed by Wissenland. The province of Drakwald is likewise no more, and its lands have been folded into those of Middenland and Nordland, but its memory is preserved in the name of the Drakwald forest.

Provinces are ruled by a count who maintains his own fighting forces, issues his own coinage, and levies his own taxes. In the case of city states some are ruled by popular assembly, others by hereditary councils, but they have the same status as provinces and also have their own armed forces. The rurally based provinces and cosmopolitan city states have banded together in a confederation known throughout the Old World as The Empire. Its people are united not only by a common language and way of life, but also by a complex series of trading and military treaties. The Empire has become so firmly established that individual provinces are completely dependent upon each other to maintain prosperity and security.

The Empire is a nation forged in bloodshed and quenched in war. Each of the Empire's surviving states is fiercely proud of its own heritage while rightfully wary, and sometimes outright disdainful, of their neighbours' traditions. This is not surprising, for the provinces must compete with each other for mercantile, political and military power. The Empire's enemies lurk both without and within its borders, and it is a rare month that does not see armies marching and clashing together somewhere in the Empire's many provinces. When no other enemies present themselves, the nobles of the Empire have been known to turn on one another and go to war over land, titles, or insults real or imagined.





Though not common, skirmishes between neighbouring states are not unheard of and occasionally boil over into all out warfare. These wars don't tend to last very long as neither side has anything to gain by involving the Empire in a conflict that might weaken its forces.

There are many idiosyncrasies, superstitions and dialects within the Empire, and they vary widely from province to province. The southern and western lands of the Empire, such as Reikland and Nordland, are more cosmopolitan and civilised (or effete and snobbish, depending on whom you ask). Those who live in the briar-choked wilderness of the eastern and northern provinces, such as Stirland and Ostland, are generally more rustic and belligerent, having lived under the threat of invasion for most of their existence. These wild and untamed places breed hardy fighters who form the backbone of many of the Empire's armies. Contact with other nations and races off the battlefield are all but unthinkable to the common people of the Empire. Indeed, to an average Hochland citizen, who considers the folk of neighbouring Talabecland to be strange and untrustworthy, the inhabitants of distant Reikland would seem as foreign as Bretonnians or Tileans.



While they share much in common, there are also great differences between them. Some of these arise from history, for some provinces consider themselves superior for having been the home of past Emperors, while others carry grudges from the days of civil war, when inter-provincial wars were common. Others have their roots in religion; with long ago clashes between Ulricans and Sigmarites still a sore point for many.

Disputes between the provinces often originate in the ambitions of their noble houses, great and minor, and these often provide the catalyst to make a crisis out of other, more long-standing differences. The Electors naturally equate their dynastic desires with the needs of their provinces, leading to conspiracy and war between them. Thus, the Elector of Nordland declared war against Ostland in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Ostensibly in support of the Middenheim emperor's claim to the throne against the Sigmarites to the east, the Nordland ruler really acted because he saw this as a good opportunity to seize some of Ostland's western territories. So far, however, the Empire has been lucky that the provinces have been able to put aside their grievances and recall their common interests when great danger threatens. Whether that will hold true in the current crisis is yet to be seen.

Each province has its own forces, war machines and distinctive iconography. Just as the Elector Counts who rule over each province have their own favoured strategies, tactics and eccentricities, the armies of the Empire are as diverse as the lands from which they hail. The capital state of Reikland is famous for its regiments of elite Greatswords, armoured in gold-trimmed steel and adorned with the feathers of Griffons, whereas the parochial province of Stirland is famed for its Huntsmen, their uniforms rag-tag and filthy but their aim perfected over years of patrolling the beast-haunted wilderness they call home. So it is that when the armies of the Empire muster for battle, they often appear as a riot of colour and variety, their soldiery arrayed in their full panoplies of war, magnificent in scope and intent on bringing victory to the realm of man.

Each province has its own history of warfare and its own traditional enemies, from the Nordlander's hatred of the Norscan raiders who ply the sea of claws to the grim spectre of the Vampire Counts haunting the province of Stirland. When soldiers from different provinces meet, they swap stories of their battles and their enemies, each convinced that their foes are the most deadly and that they deserve special praise for emerging victorious against them.

#### IMPERIAL CASTLES

*The castles of the Empire are distinguished by their massive square towers and keeps that are surmounted by high pitched rectangular tiled roofs. Empire Counts will often glaze these tiles with yellow and black chevrons or even eagle motifs to show off their opulence and status within the kingdom.*

*The gatehouse of this castle is also roofed in this way and doubles as an extra ball for the large garrison of soldiers that live permanently within the fortress. The castle is approached by a drawbridge across a deep moat or ditch and the gateway itself is protected by up to three portcullis gates.*

*Empire castles are usually sited on crags above sheer cliff faces, especially on the banks of the great rivets where supplies are winched up by crane from barges on the river below.*

*The lower foundations of Empire castles are sometimes built on ancient Dwarf masonry that has been abandoned long ago. Once finished, these castles can be huge, easily able to house entire towns in times of siege. Sally ports are also a feature of Empire fortifications, as are dungeons and secret passageways that the defending army can use to mount surprise attacks against invaders who have managed to breach their defences.*

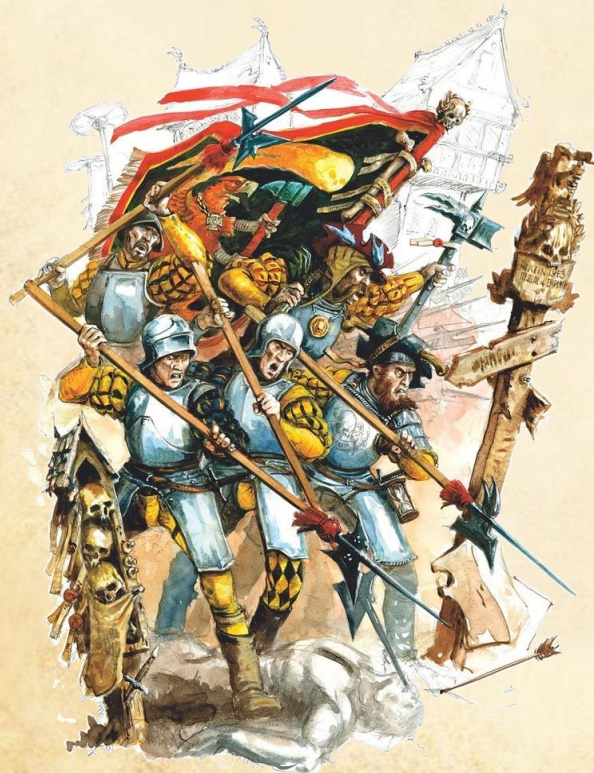
*Further east in Ostland, and especially in Kislev, timber fortresses are more common. These are constructed from massive logs stacked on top of each other and roofed with wooden shingles. In Kislev, fortresses are normally topped by onion-spired domes as has been the tradition over the centuries.*

## AVERLAND

Averland is an extremely wealthy province. This is largely thanks to the fact that the domain is far less forested than it is further north, and the climate is less unkind. These advantages make it easier to farm the land and have provided Averland with a flourishing trade in breeding fine horses.

Lacking the great forests that cover much of the rest of the Empire, Averland is a series of sun-drenched rolling plains running roughly northwest to southeast between the rivers of the Upper Reik, the Aver, and the Blue Reach. To the west lie Wissenland and Nuln, while the plains rise in the east to meet the Black and World's Edge Mountains. Within the mountains are the kingdoms of the Dwarfs, which stand between Averland and the Border Princes.

Averland's wealth comes mainly from agriculture. Though its lands are not as fertile as the Reikland or Ostermark, its warm climate and large stretches of open plains allow for the mass production of more uncommon crops, and the raising of fine thoroughbred horses. Averland's plains are watered by the annual floods of the great rivers that border it. In some years the waters crest far higher than usual, flooding many of the cities and towns along their banks. Averlanders see this as a price to pay for having abundant crops. In recent years, the Elector Counts of Averland have begun discussions with the Dwarfs of Karak Angazhar in the Black Mountains to construct a series of dikes and levees along the north bank of the Upper Reik to control its waters in flood season. Both Wissenland and the Engineer's Guild of Nuln have protested this. The former because they feel their lands will suffer more while the Engineer's Guild claims such work is theirs by right and should go to Humans, regardless.



Away from the rivers, the plains rise gently to the geographical centre of the province, where the Old Dwarf Road and Agbeiten road meet at Heideck. The interior of Averland is given over to small villages of tenants that dot the vast fiefs of the rural nobility. In the west and central portions of the province, nobles devote themselves mostly to the raising of the famous Averland longhorn cattle, leading their herds each year to the stockyards of Averheim and Loningbruck for slaughter and export. While some barons, particularly near Nuln, have adopted sophisticated airs and consider themselves above actually guiding a herd to market, more conservative and traditional families still consider it a point of honour to personally lead their cattle, showing them off before rivals. Residents of the two towns know to stay out of the local taverns when the cattle lords are in town, as their retainers like nothing better than a good brawl.


In the south-central and eastern portions of the country, cattle raising partly gives way to viticulture and winemaking, as the country there is more suited to the growing of quality grapes than in most parts of western Averland. Grapes are either pressed and the wine made on the estates, or the grapes are transported to nearby towns where brokers will sell them to local wine makers. Famous and infamous Averlander wines include the Grenzstadter White, which fetches high prices Marienburg where it is the fashion, and Loningbruck "Ruby" wine, which is produced quickly and is popular with discerning beggars from Nuln to Carroburg.

The far east is home to traders in gems, minerals, and furs. Many Humans mine the foothills of the Black and World's Edge Mountains, giving a portion of the take to the local lord in return for rights to work the mine. Few venture far into the mountains in search of mineral wealth, however, for eventually they would trespass on the claims of the Dwarfs, who have no hesitation about hauling a claim-jumper before a Human court and demanding restitution. The Elector Counts of Averland are anxious to keep the Dwarfs happy, and they have secretly instructed their local vassals to find for the Dwarfs whenever possible.

The furs commonly brought down from the mountains are beaver, otter, and the rare blue mink, named for a bluish sheen to its fur. Quality furs fetch high prices in the markets of the big cities, and trappers have to be wary of those who would steal their hard-won gains.

### The People of Averland

Averlanders claim their ancestors arrived in their province during the great migrations around -1000 IC. Masters of horses and chariot warfare, the Brigundians drove out or conquered the existing tribes and made themselves lords of all they surveyed. From their great camp and fort at the site of the future Averheim, the kings of the Brigundians made war against the Humans of the Unberogen, Asoborns, and Merogen tribes and the invading bands of Orcs and Goblins. They developed good relations with the Dwarfs and often



provided cavalry for their armies. The Brigundians developed reputations as fierce warriors who liked to strike fast and hard, and they had the respect of even their bitterest rivals. Indeed, their leader, Siggurd, was given the honour of accompanying Sigmar himself in the final charge at the Battle of Black Fire Pass.

While time and the movement of peoples have brought new bloodlines to Averland, the Brigundian traditions are still strong. Though no longer raiding their neighbours (except for the occasional civil war) nor riding chariots into battle, Averlanders are steady troops who keep their cool and do not break easily. Their nobles fight in cavalry formations wielding lance and sword, while foot-militias of pikemen and crossbowmen provide support.

The people of Averland are a curious lot. Folk whisper the proud bloodline of the Brigundians has curdled somewhat, with time, inbreeding and the looming influence of the Black Mountains. Already considered a little "moon-touched" by most of the Empire, the accession of Elector Count "Mad" Marius Leitdorf caused much amusement at Averland's expense. At their best, Averlanders are open, passionate, and honest about just what they're thinking. If a funeral happens to strike them as funny, well, they'll laugh. If someone upsets them, they'll let them know. Known to be generous, especially when entertaining, Averlanders prize those skilled at the art of telling tall tales – something wandering entertainers are very glad of. Dwarfs are also very welcome in Averland as their plain talking ways are very much admired.

At their worst Averlanders are contradictory, flighty, and changeable. Astrology and other such superstition is very popular in Averland, and merchants will often ditch a deal made in "an unfavourable hour" or on an "unlucky day." Marius Leitdorf, known for his dark depressions and strange rages, was considered typical of the Averland temperament. Even troll slayers have been heard to say that Averlanders are "a bit odd in the head." Their changeable nature has resulted in many jokes about the regiments of Averlanders retreating in the face of fear, something that irritates them to no end – they resent any implication that their martial prowess is any less than that of any other state. Averlanders are also known for their intolerance of lawyers and contracts, as they imply a man might change his mind. Those dealing with Averlanders are constantly irritated with their insistence that everything be done "on honour" – particularly given their unreliable reputation. Some whisper this "whim of iron" is in fact a cunning bargaining tool of the Averland merchants.


Currently, there is no clear ruler of Averland. Their Elector, Marius Leitdorf, was killed in 2250 IC and no one claimant to the title has emerged. The other provinces point out that this is typical of Averlanders – where all other provinces would have a good, honest, short sharp war, the Averlanders are insisting on a drawn out game of politics, one-upmanship and devious manoeuvring. The Leitdorfs are relative

newcomers to the reins of power – having ousted the ruling Alpraum family and seized power in a brilliant, if unconventional coup. This grab for power seems as if it will be short-lived however – as the Elector Count's siblings and relatives fight one another the Alpraums are quietly building money and influence once more. To complicate matters, the favours of the nobility seem to change with each phase of the moon – sometimes they seem to prefer one claimant, at others, a different one. No one pretender to the title can count on support against their rivals – a situation some scholars believe to be to the benefit of the wealthy nobility of Averland – for whilst Electoral business is carried out in a dead man's name, no new taxes, levies, or trials can take place. Indeed, many merchants have cause to celebrate this temporary reprieve from Electoral demands, and are in no hurry to see "normality" restored.

Averlanders have a strange, almost "sing-song" element to their speech. They tend to soften harsh words and elongate vowels. Many artists and young nobles with pretensions to poetry imitate an Averland accent, in a belief that all great geniuses are touched by madness.

### The Army of Averland

Averland has the dubious honour of defending Blackfire Pass, a common invasion route into the Empire. Mighty fortresses and watchtowers guard the end of the pass, but there have been times when these defences were overwhelmed and marauding hordes have poured through into the heartlands of the Empire. Most notable was the terrible invasion in 1707 led by Gorbald Ironclaw, the greatest orc warlord in history. Gorbald's armies rampaged and ravaged the lands of the Empire, and he was only stopped after his attempt to besiege and sack Altdorf failed. The entire province of Solland was wiped from the map, and the disinherited nobles of that land settled in Averland, whose banner now bears their icon, a stylized sun, in memory of those terrible events. However, with the province currently without an Elector Count there is talk of reinstating the banner of the previous household.



#### VON KRAGSBURG GUARD

*Recruited, trained, and equipped by the von Kragzburg family of Averheim, the von Kragzburg Guard have travelled throughout the Old World. Like his father before him, Duke Bertald von Kragzburg is forever seeking rich pay and the spoils of war. When the price is right the von Kragzburg Guard has safeguarded merchants along the Old Dwarf Road, joined armies staving off invaders in Wissenland, and led expeditions to destroy Beastmen strongholds in the Great Forest. The regiment has fought for Averland, but always under a contract for payment. While the scruples of the 'Dirty Duke' may be questioned, none may contest the unit's fighting prowess. Countless tales prevail, from withstanding charges by wolf riders on the plains of Averland to battling towering Ogres in the Worlds Edge Mountains, the proud von Kragzburg Guard get the job done.*

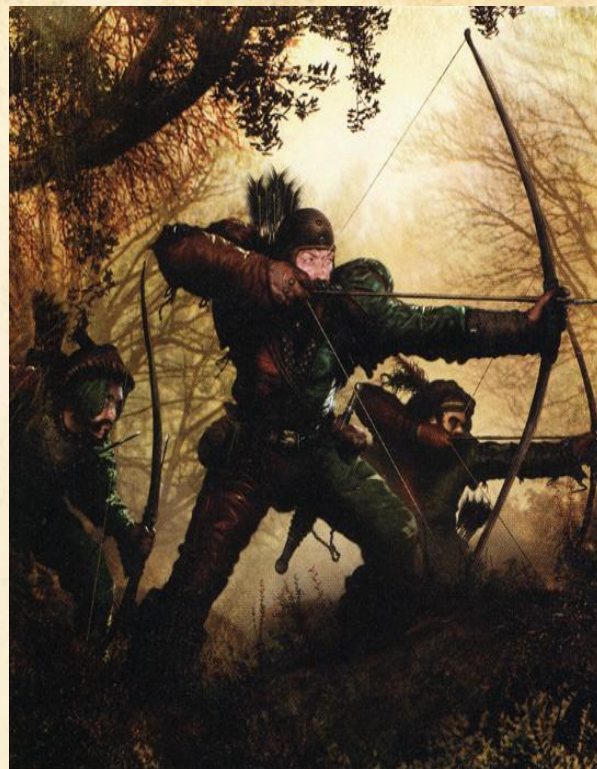
The colours of Averland are black and yellow and the soldiers are known for showy uniforms and ostentatious war gear. The province's affluence means its armies are often clad in gleaming armour, equipped with the latest innovations in weaponry, and adorned with outlandish feathers and decoration on their livery. Averlanders are known for their ostentation, but their land is one of political wrangling without a ruler. The soldiers, however, are dependable and courageous in battle, and proud of their history. Averland has the dubious honour of defending Blackfire Pass, a route into the Empire favoured by marauding Orcs and Goblins from the Badlands and Darklands. As a result, the soldiers of Averland have become experts in siegecraft. The greenskins have proved a grave threat time and again, and Averlanders have developed a particular loathing for these warmongering brutes.

## HOCHLAND

The province of Hochland is swathed in the eastern marches of the Drakwald Forest and its northern border comprise of the foothills of the dangerous Middle Mountains, a mighty range of peaks that harbour many vile and terrible creatures right in the heart of the Empire. Under the dark canopy of the trees, roads theoretically connect the far-flung towns and logging camps, but contact is tenuous at best. The vast tracts of wilderness that separate villages are full of savage beastmen, goblin tribes and other dangers. A series of forts, watchtowers, armoured shrines and fortified coaching houses dot the forest highways, and patrols of road wardens regularly march or ride the routes between. However, any journey is perilous and there is often time for just a single volley before foes are upon you. As such, Hochlanders tend to become top-notch marksmen and learn to make each shot count. Comprising the eastern end of the Drakwald Forest, Hochland is a heavily wooded province bounded by the Middle Mountains in the northeast, and the rivers Drakwasser, Talabec, and Wolf's Run on the west, south, and east, respectively. West beyond a strip of Hochland on the left bank of the Drakwasser lies Middenland, and Talabecland is to the south, while Ostland girds Hochland's east and north. Deep within Hochland are the Weiss Hills, a treacherous mixture of hill country and fens watched over by lonely Fort Schippel.

Though mostly covered in forest, the farms along the river banks and around the villages are fertile thanks to the many rivers and streams that flow south from the uplands of the Middle Mountains. This makes Hochland self-sufficient in food, although luxury victuals have to be imported from Middenheim and Talabheim. Heavy snows in the winter and rains in the spring make Hochland towns susceptible to flooding, though the prior ruling house of Tussen-Hochen invested heavily in dikes to control the floodwaters.

Heading north from the Talabec, the land rises gradually to the massifs of the Middle Mountains, forbidding peaks claimed by many, but wholly




controlled by none. Three main roads wind through the province. The Old Forest Road runs from Middenheim to Talabheim and beyond, the Hochland portion leading from Krudenwald to near the shrine-town of Gruyden before coming to the Talabec Ferry. Normally a busy highway, traffic from the north has died except for Imperial Messengers and units of soldiers, thanks to the war.

The North Road carries traffic from Wolfenburg in Ostland to Krudenwald, while the New Road opens the way from southern Ostland to Delberz and Altdorf. These were built by prior Counts as part of a plan to develop Hochland's economy through trade, tolls, and tourism, but the war has wrecked these plans for now. The highways are dangerous places where whole stretches are controlled by outlaws, and the forces of the Count are only slowly reasserting control, having so far turned down the offers of the Elector Count of Talabecland of large numbers of troops to "restore order."

Hochland's main trade is in timber and woodcrafts. Thick woods of oak and sycamore grow in the south, while pine and cedar are in the north. Guilds of lumbermen cut down the trees, trim the trunks, and float the logs down-river to mills in Esk, Bergendorf, Krudenwald, and Hergig. The logs are then bought by brokers, loaded on barges, and shipped out. Woodsmen in the south were awaiting the construction of a mill along the Talabec by Count Ludenhof, so they won't have to ship to Ahlenhof in Middenland, but that has been delayed. The mill in Hergig is a recent and, before the war, quite controversial development, for the Elector of Ostland felt it encouraged illegal logging in his lands and demanded tolls for lumber floated down the Wolf's Run.





Deep within the forests lies the Weiss Hills, a sparsely inhabited area of moorlands and low hills that's mainly travelled by poachers and licensed trappers and hunters. Much of the land is a royal demesne of the Counts of Hochland, watched over by the Warden of Fort Schippel. Lately, some Greenskins decided that the Weiss Hills were as good a place as any to stop, and now the area and the surrounding woods are infested with the Goblins and Orcs of three different tribes, in addition to Human outlaws.

### The People of Hochland

Hochlanders are for the most part descended from the proud Cherusen tribe. Having mingled for some time within the Taleutens of Talabecland, the tribe eventually left the lands of the Great Forest and migrated to a small area near the Middle Mountains. Amidst verdant woods filled with game, these people had found the home they wanted. Less warlike than their neighbours, they contented themselves with hunting, fishing, and singing praises to Taal and Rhya. When other tribes or war bands of Orcs or Beastmen would raid, the early Hochlanders would melt back into their forests, using craft to defeat their enemies. By the time of Sigmar, the Hochlanders (so called because they were upriver of their kin to the south), had become skilled scouts and skirmishers, and made valuable contributions to Sigmar's wars. In return, he made their Chief Aloysius a Count of the Empire, much to the annoyance of the Talabeclander Count, who felt the ties of kinship gave him the right to rule Hochland.

Hochland is a small but proud province, famed for its hunters and trackers. Their traditional dish of fired venison has been exported across the Empire, but gourmants say it still tastes best cooked under the night sky of Hochland. At their best Hochlanders are considered loyal, valiant, and adaptable. Modern Hochlanders are amongst the most open and friendly people in the Empire. With their land being a crossroads for so much of the northern and eastern Empire, they have developed a tolerance unusual elsewhere. Though mainly worshippers of Taal and Rhya and of Sigmar, contact with travellers and merchants using the roads has made Ulric popular in the northeast, while Shallya has a strong cult. Contact with educated outsiders has led to a respect for intellectuals, such that the rulers of Hergig encouraged the founding of private academies and even a school of wizardry.

Recognising their land is unsuited to large-scale farming or cattle-raising, the people of Hochland have done what they can to encourage others to visit and leave some of their cash behind. Shrines to several cults can be found most towns and villages, each claiming to be the site of a miracle and having blessed relics for sale. Fortified coaching inns sprang up along the roads for the convenience of travellers, though several had been bought by the rival Tunnelway and Wolf Runner coaching lines. During the war, several of these inns became important rallying points for defence.

Fond of hunting in all its forms, tales of loyal friendship and jaunty ballads, Hochlanders are also known to be easily distracted by the prospect of a little sport. Some folk also whisper that their valiant nature is due in the main to their naivety more than any innate loyalty. Jokes about Hochlanders who love their bow more than their wives abound, though most are too rude to repeat. This dedication to marksmanship has resulted in the excellent Hochland long rifle regiments that have proved so useful in recent times. The Hochland spirit is said to resist defeatism in all its forms, "even unto death." In recent years, however, much has happened to change the normally optimistic, trusting Hochlander character.

The folk of Hochland are known for their positive, warm style of speech more than their accent, which is mild at best. They tend to use a lot of animalistic references in their language.

### The Army of Hochland

Hochland is well-known for producing excellent marksmen. The sturdy troopers of Hochland are clothed in the state colours of red and green. The provincial banner bears an Imperial Cross on a field of red. The heraldry of Hochland regiments often makes reference to their traditional hunting grounds and the prowess of the famous Jaegerkorps. The horn and the bow are used throughout Hochland to declare the allegiance of its regiments, and the state banner features a gruesome skeleton blowing a hunting horn. The skeleton is typical of the images of death found throughout the Empire. This one carries a sword, signifying an indomitable warrior spirit, while Sigmar's twin-tailed comet flies behind it. The Emperor's emblem was added in the year 2510 as a special honour after a Hochland forest patrol saved the life of Emperor Karl Franz when his small hunting expedition was assailed by a marauding force of Beastmen, now known as the Battle of the Weeping Glen, the bloody affair is still sung about in many Hochland inns up and down the Old Forest Road. Despite frequent patrols and fortified watchtowers along the roadways, ambushes by bandits or worse are common under the dark eaves of Hochland.

The armies of this province field a high proportion of skilled handgunners and archers, and many of the Hochlanders who travel south hope to find work of a similar fashion. Hochland is often looked down upon by more cosmopolitan provinces, largely because its people are down-to-earth types who live off the land and lead simple lifestyles. However, the marksmen of this province are skilled indeed, and the famous hunting rifles of the region are much sought after throughout The Empire.

The Hochland long rifle was developed by an Imperial engineer from the accurate weapons used by the hunters of the province. Known properly as Leon Todmeister's Fantabulously Far-reaching Harquebus of Unforseeable and Unperceived Bereavement, the gun has become the bane of enemy generals and unit

commanders, its firer being able to single them out even within a regiment of troops thanks to the excellent precision and magnifying telescopic apparatus mounted on the barrel. The Hochlanders are suitably proud of the invention and have often put it to good use. When the provincial capital of Hergig was threatened by a sudden attack of massed goblin tribes, sharpshooting engineers on the highest towers targeted the goblin leaders with the biggest profusion of banners and feathers, as well as aiming for the eyes of the gargantuan spider that spearheaded the assault. The enemy quickly fell into disarray, and were soundly beaten when a relief force arrived from the nearby Count's castle.

## MIDDENLAND

Home to the cult of Ulric and the great city of Middenheim, Middenland is one of the most important provinces of The Empire. Middenland is a vast province, and within its borders lies the dark and foreboding Drakwald Forest.

Middenland is the land of Ulric, god of winter, wolves and battles, an ancient warrior-god who predates the birth of Sigmar. All those who travel here offer up a prayer lest they fall foul of the vicious white wolves that roam the land. These creatures are sacred to Ulric, and his icon takes the form of one of these ferocious beasts. Middenland is the centre of Ulrican worship, and his great temple is located in the capital, Middenheim.

Founded by the ancient Teutogens, perhaps the fiercest tribe in Sigmar's confederacy, the Grand Duchy of Middenheim and Middenland (commonly referred to simply as "Middenland") is the powerhouse of the northern Empire. Through military and economic power, it dominates its neighbours to the east and north, Hochland, Ostland, and Nordland. Its influence rivals Reikland and Talabecland, and its great city of Middenheim considers itself the equal of Nuln or Altdorf. Middenland has provided Emperors in the past and looks to do so in the future. When regional crises threaten the Empire, Middenland is considered (and considers itself) the voice of the North.

Middenland comprises a vast swath of territory stretching from the River Reik and the Great Northern Road of the Wasteland in the west and southwest, and Hochland and the Middle Mountains to the east. South beyond the Talabec is Talabecland, Middenland's sometime rival for leadership of the Cult of Ulric. To the north are her ally Nordland and the Laurelorn Forest, home of the mysterious and occasionally hostile Wood Elves. That the Elves are hostile because of Middenland's longstanding claims to the Laurelorn is immaterial, since these claims were inherited from the Drakwald Emperors of long ago.

The Drakwald itself is a vast, ancient forest running from the edge of the Wasteland to the far end of Hochland. While Mankind has made settlements there,


some deep within it, the forest holds many secrets, and it does not give them up graciously. Dragons terrorised the ancient tribes and early Empire from there, until an Emperor killed the last of their kind. Still, foolhardy treasure hunters brave the depths of the Drakwald to seek the riches of a lost dragon's lair, or perhaps their eggs, which are said to remain fertile forever and only need great heat to hatch.

Deep under the forest eaves also lurk Beastmen, descendants of raiders from long ago, who breed and wait, occasionally attacking the lone farm or small group of travellers, until the time comes for Chaos to claim the north. The nobles and burghers of the province occasionally mount expeditions to root them out, but survivors always flee deeper into the forests, to wait again and regrow their numbers.

In the far west of the province are the Midden Moors, a vast, infertile tract of hills and wetlands that are the source of several tributaries of the Reik. The vast pools of its interiors are said to be still as glass, even when the wind blows – so still they perfectly reflect the night skies. Nobles and the wealthy sometimes come here on fishing expeditions, for the trout are reputed to be the sweetest in the Empire. But the moors are reputed to be haunted, too. Strange lights are seen in its mists at night, and the Ghosts of Drakwald soldiers killed long ago are said to haunt its farther reaches.

At the far southeast are the Howling Hills, where the winds among the badlands keen like spirits of the dead. The castle of Middenstag guards the Delberz-Hergig Road from the outlaws who hide among hills and canyons. To the north, near Middenheim, the ground sinks into a swampy morass called the





"Schadensumpf." Little of worth is found here, though some small villages make a good living harvesting bog iron. The Schadensumpf also provides refuge for criminals fleeing the Graf's justice. Of note is the vast population of black cranes that migrate each autumn from the Schadensumpf to the warm climes of Tilea, before returning in late spring. The crests of the birds have become quite fashionable in hats, leading the Graf last year to impose a tax on each bird taken. This, in turn, has led to a rise in poaching and smuggling.

### The People of Middenland

Middenlanders are descendants of the warlike Teutogen tribe. Fierce and unrelenting in their ways, they quickly carved out a kingdom from the harsh lands of the Howling hills, driving the native Jutone tribe into the fog-shrouded depths of the Wasteland. When Sigmar came to them, he found a tribe with an unbending will, and strong sense of honour. Though other tribes had joined under his banner, the Teutogens refused to submit to the future God. Eventually Sigmar was forced to kill their tribal chieftain, Artur, in single combat to prove his strength and worth to the Teutogen peoples.

Like all Northerners, Middenlanders are famed for their stubborn ways. This, their Teutogen blood and their "firebrand" tempers has given them a reputation as uncontrollable traditionalists. They hate change of all types, and defend what they see as "tradition" at all times. They are the last to admit that they are wrong, and the first to challenge an unworthy leader. Whilst those of southern Middenland are less strident than their Drakwald cousins, even they are considered coarse, arrogant, and controlling by the rest of the Empire.

At their best, Middenlanders are staunch defenders of pride, property and traditions. Should an unjust tax be levied, Middenlanders will march in protest, torches flaming and pitchforks raised. They can sometimes rally behind a single person's case, particularly those of destitute war widows, orphans and put upon guild

#### THE SWORDS OF ULRIC

*The Swords of Ulric are one of the many regiments formed by and paid for by the Temple of Ulric in Middenheim. The formidable training of the Swords of Ulric consists not of marches or weapons practice, but instead of patrols and war parties led out of the city into the surrounding Drakwald. Initiates hoping to join the unit must accompany such excursions - only those that fight with honour and survive are admitted. It is left to each soldier to equip himself in the blue and white colours of Middenheim. Since the regiment's founding, in the days when Count Mandrel rallied the Empire behind him and became Emperor, the sons of Ulric have borne yellow shields to battle. By tradition, each shield bears a variation of the same device - a red wolf, signifying Ulric embattled. The grim northerners have little room for formal ceremony but what they lack in parade-ground discipline they make up for with savagery on the battlefield.*


members. This has caused Middenland politics to have a crude, rabble-raising element that does not exist so much in other provinces.

At their worst, Middenlanders are a fractious, intolerant group of individuals. Not only are they quick to mock (and sometimes pummel) those they see as foppish, dandified folk, they are also exceedingly suspicious of foreign influence upon their province. They refuse to use the occasional Bretonnian, Tilean, or Estalian words that have been absorbed into Reikspeil. Ordering a Bretonnian brandy in a Middenland Tavern will cause a yawning silence as all the folk look round at the fool who has just signed his own death warrant. Curiously, if a foreigner stands his ground, and demonstrates pride in his country, Middenlanders will often accept them as "a braver soul than most" or "probably has some Teutogen in them - Ulric knows our ancestors got about, eh?"

Middenlanders are divided along what were once clannish lines, but have now divided into geographical prejudices. At one time the Drakwald region had a distinct identity from the rest of Middenland, producing a line of notoriously corrupt Emperors. With the collapse of their dynasty and the devastation of the Great Plague of 1111 when almost the entire population was wiped out by disease, the power of the Drakwald was decimated. It ceased to exist as a separate entity when the Emperor Mandred gave it to Middenheim, creating the province as it stands today. Its people are still known as mean-spirited and grasping ("once a Drakwalder, always a Drakwalder") but seem to be softening over time. The province was formally divided up between Middenland and Nordland, but has never really been reclaimed. Towns and villages lie ruined and overgrown deep within the dense trees, ruled only by the beastmen.

Those from the South of Middenland, closer to the influence of Altdorf and Marienburg, are known to be "cosmopolitan" by Middenland standards. As far as the rest of the Empire can gather, this seems to mean that they wash a little more often, and are less likely to shout at people in the street. Those from further North meanwhile, especially in Middenheim, are more laconic and brusque - they do not believe in wasting words, nor do they like it in others. Old, apocryphal stories say that Graf Boris's grandfather on his mother's side once had a Halfling's tongue cut out for taking too long with his after-dinner speech. The further south one goes - and the closer one comes to those effete Reiklanders, some Middenlanders say - the people become more talkative and expressive. Carroburg, for example, has the only school for oratory in the Empire, a relic of its days as the Imperial capital.

Middenland's relationship with its capital, Middenheim, is also rather complex. The City of the White Wolf has not always been part of the province - its fortunes often waxing and waning with the ruling houses of the times. As Middenland has laid siege to Middenheim several times throughout Imperial history,



there are many jokes about "ridiculous uprisings" – much to the irritation of the men of Middenland. In truth, the city and the province are separate political and social entities, drawn together by the rule of Boris Todbringer, and likely to fracture should power pass from his line.

In war, Middenlanders overall are regarded as a "tough bunch." The province is home both to the Knights Panther – the Graf's royal guard – and the Knights of the White Wolf, Templars fiercely devoted to the service of Ulric and the protection of his people. These two orders form the shock troops of Middenland's forces, backed up by sturdy pike and halberd men from among the burghers and peasants. These forces formed the core of the strength that defends Middenheim and keeps foes from breaking into the heart of the Empire. There is agitation from among those called to service to be allowed to return home to their families, farms, and businesses. This has fed resentment among the officers, largely easterners, and the rulers, who think the common folk "should just shut up and do their duty."

Outside their province Middenlanders are strongly associated with their provincial dish – the spiced sausage. Though each village and town guards its own traditional recipe, and claim they will eat no other, it's a well known fact that when Wursthfest rolls round, Middenlanders are first to the table.

Middenlanders use harsh tones, much like Nordlanders, however their accent is more famed for its use of archaic words and grammar. They refuse to acknowledge many of the foreign terms that have penetrated Reikspiel.

### The Army of Middenland

The hearty soldiers of Middenland are quickly turned into seasoned warriors as the sprawling woods of the untamed Drakwald harbours countless Goblins, Beastmen, and worse. Beastmen are especially numerous within the Drakwald Forest and are a major threat to the people of Middenland. These savage man-hating mutants are not content with lurking under the eaves, and regularly pour out of the forest in frenzied hordes to tear down human settlements and feast on the torn flesh of the fallen. Isolated farms and outposts maintain high walls and a careful watch, while the forest roads are heavily patrolled – but the danger is always there. Middenlanders have learned to be wary, and have become well-practiced in battles with the accursed half-beasts over the centuries. Only Middenheim, seat of Elector Count Graf Boris Todbringer, offers a reliable haven against the Beastmen.

The state colour of Middenland is blue, with ribbons and slashing of contrasting colours used to identify different regiments, while those from the capital are differentiated in blue and white. The state flag bears a white wolf, the symbol of Ulric, and warriors of the region often wear cloaks and boots trimmed with wolf fur, or carry wolf-tooth amulets and trinkets for

protection in battle. Boris Todbringer, has added a castle motif depicting the province's most important city onto the provincial banner, the crowning glory of the region and a near-impregnable fortress.

### NORDLAND

Nordland is one of the lesser provinces, and most of its strategic importance comes from the heavily tolled coastal road, which provides wealthy merchants with safe passage to Marienburg. In law, the writ of Nordland extends from the Ostland border west to the edge of the Wasteland, and north from the Great North Road to the shores of the Sea of Claws. The Elector Counts of Nordland have accumulated an impressive collection of titles and claims over the millennia, which, if enforced, would make them rulers of most of the north of the Empire. Reality has a way of foiling the most grandiose ambitions, however, and the Counts' rule extends to barely half the lands they claim.

Two great forests blanket Nordland, leaving Humans to exist in pockets carved out of the solid woodlands and along the barren shoreline. The eastern quarter includes the edges of the Forest of Shadows, which dominates Ostland. It extends as far as the Erengrad-Middenheim Road, crossing it north of Beeckerhoven and finally ending on the banks of the River Salz. The Forest of Shadows has a dark, dread reputation in Ostland, and that reputation has carried over to the people of Nordland. Predatory Giant Spiders are known to lurk deep in the forest, while Beastmen and worse have been seen in increasing numbers since the war began. Lumbering parties rarely travel far into the woods anymore, unless accompanied by armed soldiers. The increased danger has led to a fall in timber harvests, hurting the local economy and leading to rumblings that the Count is not doing his job.

West of Salzenmund and the Silver Hills above it lies the Laurelorn Forest, which stretches west to the borders with the Wasteland. Technically a part of the Count's domain, the Laurelorn is in truth a wholly independent realm. Its rulers are the reclusive Wood Elves of Laurelorn, the descendants of the High Elves who chose not to leave the Old World at the end of the War with the Dwarfs.

By agreement with the Elector Counts of Nordland, the Elves allow Imperials to settle the area between the Rivers Salz and Demst, which enters the Sea of Claws at Hargendorf. The agreement strictly limits numbers, however, and the Elves must approve before any new settlements are made. This they have been loath to do, placing many restrictions on what the settlements may harvest from the forest. The Humans chafe under these restrictions, and nobles have pressured Grand Baron Gausser to demand a renegotiation. Impatient as ever, some Humans have made illegal settlements in the area, which the Elves have threatened to remove by force, if need be. Some observers fear a coming clash between the Elector Count's knights and the warriors

of Laurelorn, but the war has held Salzenmund's hand, so far. There are worries, however, that the Elves may see this as a time to assert their rights.

Beyond the Demst is the core of Laurelorn, a place Nordlanders call "the Witch's Wood" out of their superstitious fear of the Elf Queen. Imperials are forbidden to cross into it under pain of death: even the Elector Counts of Nordland are under this ban. What lies within the Witch's Wood is unknown: Some have speculated that the Elves have no capital, living a nomadic life under the trees. Old books, on the other hand, mention a nameless city of glass deep in its heart, a place that glows with its own light. Whatever the truth, it is certain that neither creatures of Chaos nor Greenskins last long once they enter the Laurelorn, for the Elves defend their home ferociously against all comers.

The coast of Nordland is a desolate place, where a hard people eke out a living from the sea. The whole coast is frequently blanketed by thick fogs and lashed by storms in fall and winter. This has made the Nordland coast a tough home for the Imperial fleet, but since Marienburg seceded from the Empire the ocean fleet has had no choice but to base itself here. The fleet's primary anchorage is the growing town of Dietershafen, which uses the province's ample timber in a burgeoning shipbuilding program.

From the westernmost settlement at Hargendorf east to Neues Emskrank, the shore comprises sandy lowlands often interrupted by marsh and bog. West toward Norden, the shore becomes more rocky and covered in shingle as it rises to the coastal hills of Ostland. Here on the Drosselspule Bay, fishermen harvest vast numbers of herring and cod, most of which is salted and exported south. Wreckers are still common along Nordland's coast, as some people supplement their meagre incomes with the pickings of ships they have led to their deaths. This has occasionally brought conflict with the authorities in Marienburg, whose livelihood depends on the free flow of trade.




## The People of Nordland

The people of Nordland are descendants of the ancient Was Jutone tribe. Close brothers to the Was Jutones of Ostland, the Nordland branch of the tribe eventually became estranged from the more easterly settlements of their peoples. Eventually, the early Nordlanders fell in battle, becoming vassals of the belligerent Teutogens, and frequent victims of Norscan raids. During the chaos that reigned in the aftermath of the Great Plague, much of Nordland's coasts of the river valleys were invaded and colonised by the Norscans, leading to a mingling of the tribal bloodlines. Emperor Mandred Ratslayer, faced with graver threats elsewhere, had little time to answer the pleas of the Nordlanders, much to their horror.

As time passed and populations mixed, the Nordlanders adopted many of the customs of their Norscan cousins. Courts frequently resort to trial by combat, the contest taking place on a white sheet pegged to the ground: The first person to stain the sheet red with his blood is declared the loser and the guilty party. Older houses often have runes carved into their doors and window frames for luck and spiritual protection, and along the coast the longhouse style is still common. At feasts and gatherings, Norscan bragging contests have evolved into more genteel storytelling events, with each speaker trying to outdo the last. So great is the Nordlander love of stories that they have become famous around the Empire as great storytellers. Popular tales range from historical epics to low comedy, mythology, and horror.

The folk of this province are said to be amongst the loudest and frankest of all the Empire. They seem to lack any subtlety, tact, or common sense. Several local legends involve heroes who blurt out the truth at the vital moment, thus saving the day. Other provinces point out this is because Nordlanders are too stupid to lie. At their best Nordlanders are solid, straightforward, and honest folk, lacking in guile and looking down upon the mealy-mouthed words of politicians, poets, and soft Reiklanders.

At their worst, Nordlanders are churlish, uncouth, and thoughtless speakers. Even the merchants of Nordland have this blunt approach, though they seem to be fine with doubledealing. Indeed, they have found that shouting the final price of something loudly and repeatedly has a profound effect upon merchants used to the subtleties of barter and negotiation. Many provinces point out that this is because of their mongrel Was Jutone, Teutogen, and Norscan bloodlines. This mixed heritage has been a source of Nordlander shame. Modern Imperials look on Norscans with a mixture of admiration and fear, seeing them both as powerful warriors and wild, uncivilised barbarians, not to be trusted around one's daughters or sheep. A popular Imperial saying runs "Character is in the blood," meaning that ancestry determines character. Thus Nordlanders, though of the Empire, are often regarded as "not quite one of us," rougher and more uncouth even than the wild and hairy Middenlanders.



Another cause for discomfort among Nordlanders comes from the current fashion among nobles, especially in the north, for tracing ancestry back to one of the founding tribes. The purer the background, the higher one's status climbs, and the summit is the tracing of a lineage back to one of the founding chiefs. Alone among the provinces, the Nordlanders' ancestors were conquered by outsiders, which is a source of embarrassment for status-conscious nobles, particularly when dealing with arrogant Middenlanders or Stirland bumpkins. The Middenlander claim to have "bowed only before Sigmar himself" is particularly galling.

To compensate, most Nordlanders are more vocally and demonstratively loyal to the Empire and the cult of Ulric than almost anyone else in the Empire. Their efforts ring hollow to some, while others see them as exemplars of duty and patriotism. Whatever the motive, there is no doubting their bravery in battle. When in an army with troops from other provinces, Nordlanders are almost rash in their desire to close with the enemy. At the battle of Frote in 2421, the Nordland pikes were so anxious to come to grips with the forces of the Chaos warriors that they charged before an order was given, leaving them isolated on the battlefield and their own army's flank exposed. Since then, Imperial generals have been quietly advised to treat the Nordlanders "as they would a hound on a leash" to keep them under control.

Renowned hunters and foresters, the Nordlanders' woodland skills are so strong that even Hochlanders and the folk of the Talabec will grudgingly admit that they are "not too bad." Certainly Nordlanders are close to the land: The province has one of the largest communities of Rhya worship in the north of the Empire, centred around the clannish villages south of Hargendorf. The Worship of the Harvest Mother without her consort Taal, is considered particularly dangerous in some circles of thought. Talabeclanders in particular are dismissive of this "women's worship." They whisper that the Elves join the Humans for their religious rites at old stone circles deep in the woods; though speculation is rife, no one knows what really goes on in these joint ceremonies. The Elector Count is not comfortable with this, and is considering sending investigators to determine if the people of the Demst vale are planning a revolt.

A Nordlander's accent is one of the most distinctive of the Empire. Their speech is very harsh and fast, almost barked out rather than spoken. Nordland singing is said to sound "like gravel in a barrel rolling down a hill."

### The Army of Nordland

The northernmost province of the Empire is the only one with a substantial coastline. The icy Sea of Claws lies beyond its shores, and a chill wind blows off the waves and through the snowbound forests. Strange monsters lurk beneath the waters, but that is not the worst threat that comes from the sea. When the northern tribes of Chaos-worshipping marauders and iron clad warriors invade the lands of the south,

oftentimes they will bypass the realm of Kislev completely by constructing a fleet of longships. Seaborne incursions are a major issue for there are hundreds of miles of cliffs and beaches, and little warning as the dark sails appear looming out of the fog.

Consequently the coast is lined with watchtowers and sea fortresses, manned with stern-faced regiments, and mounted shore-guards patrol in between. Systems of warning beacons and fast riders are maintained ready to raise the alarm whenever enemy ships are sighted. Time is of the essence, for once an invasion force has made landfall, it can easily disappear into the cold forests and become a much greater problem to deal with. The armies of Nordland are often forced to trudge through knee-deep snow as their scouts attempt to locate warbands that have slipped inland. As well as its toll roads, Nordland is famous for its navy, which includes the Nordland state Mariners. These hardy troops are adept at deploying swiftly by sea, catching opponents off their guard. The state troops of Nordland, including the Nordland Mariners, wear a distinctive blue and yellow uniform, with feathers dyed various colours to distinguish between regiments.

For the most part, Nordland's navy patrols the Sea of Claws to intercept enemy ships or bring early warning of large invasion fleets. As a result, Nordlanders are far more familiar with boats, ropes and nautical matters than the average Empire citizen, and it is common for young adults to serve time on board ship before taking up their chosen profession.

The forces of Nordland have fought many battles with Norse pirates, and many regimental banners bear the image of a war galley in recognition of these encounters. Like many parts of the Empire that rely on specialist soldiers and tactics, the goddess Myrmdia is the favoured deity, and her eagle dominates the provincial banner. The bird grasps the unifying Imperial cross in its talons, visually reinforcing the Nordland belief that the Empire exists by virtue of its doughty soldiers. This is the symbol used as part of the coat of arms by the Elector Count Theodoric Gausser. Traditionally the Elector Count of Nordland is also the Prince of Marienburg, and this has been a point of contention since that city seceded from the Empire. Other oft-seen emblems Nordland include the Imperial Cross, various ship, anchor or fish designs, and the five-pointed crown of the sea god Manann.

### OSTERMARK

The province of Ostermark is in the far east of the Empire, where the Emperor's writ stops at the boundaries of wild Kislev and the kingdoms of the Dwarfs in the World's Edge Mountains. It is a sombre, bleak land of vast moors between two arms of the Great Forest. Ostermark is a rural state, relying almost exclusively on agriculture for its economy. Snowfalls blanket the land in winter, while the spring thaw turns most of its roads into muddy quagmires. Even in

summer, the sunlight seems to have a weakened, tentative quality to it, as if it is not sure it belongs there. Ostermark has a history abound with battles, invasions, disaster and lawless reavers. To the north lies rugged Kislev, to the south the cursed lands of Sylvania. Other landmarks include the ruined city of Mordheim, the Bleak Moors, and the ancient battle site of Hel Fenn, and the entire region is avoided by all with any sense. Between the Dead Wood, Hel Fenn and the Eirie Downs lies the town of Essen, which has the reputation of the most haunted settlement in The Empire.

Ostermark is divided into four main regions. In the north, there is the arm of the Great Forest known locally as the "Gryphon's Wood" that follows the line of the Upper Talabec and contains the capital, Bechafen. In the south, along the banks of the Stir, the expanse of the Great Forest near Essen, when spoken of at all, is referred to as the Dead Wood, for the dead city of Mordheim lies in its midst. Between these two arms but south of the Brunwasser River are the central moorlands, a vast expanse of low hills, fen lands, and shallow lakes that is sparsely inhabited, save for the herds of sheep and some scattered villages. North of the Brunwasser between the World's Edge Mountains and the end of Gryphon's Wood are large tracts of rolling grasslands. Well-suited to raising horses, these lands have often been fought over by Ostermarkers and their Kislevite neighbours.

The Gryphon's Wood around Bechafen has long been the centre of Ostermark's political and economic life, especially since the destruction of the old capital at Mordheim in 1999 IC. The region's main exports are lumber and riverboats, the latter often built on the spot from some of the trees harvested that season. The logs float down-river from as far as Fortenhaf and Remer to Bechafen, where skilled boatwrights build craft that are considered among the best in the Empire. Not as dangerous as other forested areas, the Gryphon's Wood is home to many small villages and isolated steads, while ruins of older villages, and even small towns, lie deep within it.

Ostermarkers largely avoid the Dead Wood in the south. Traffic between Krugenheim in Talabecland and Essen or Karak Kadrin in the mountains beyond either travels along the Stir or takes a roundabout route through the Bleak Moors. The woods have had a frightening reputation ever since Mordheim's destruction. None live there, and few willingly enter it. Locals swear that they can hear screams coming from the wood at night, and that any who enter it will come back mad and mutated – if they come back at all.

Some blame the anger of the gods, others the weird powers of the stone that fell from the sky that legendary night, but, whatever the reason, nothing natural lives within these woods now. Sometimes a thing escapes from the woods and goes on a rampage amongst the farms and villages, until at last the frightened people hunt it down and kill it, burning the



body on the spot. A particularly horrible incident occurred in Essen last year, when a band of five Mutants broke through the town gates and went on a rampage, killing over a dozen before being slain themselves. On examination, locals recognised them as a band of adventurers who had entered the forest the year before seeking treasure and had not been heard from again... until that night.

The Bleak Moors occupy the central portion of the province, and include the Eerie Downs to the south. Both areas are thinly occupied, the towns and villages mostly clinging to the rivers. Within the Moors, sheep herding is common, though there are small herds of dairy cattle, too. Isolated farms and cottages are scattered across the landscape, the herdsmen and crofters living in them preferring their solitude and coming to town sometimes not even once a year.

The Eerie Downs is a special case, physically much like the Bleak Moors, but with a much weirder reputation. Close to the border of Sylvania, somewhere within the downs reputedly lies the location of a great battle against the Vampire Counts of Sylvania. The Vampire Count's forces won, and total slaughter ensued. The legend says that, while the bodies were raised to serve in the Count's armies, the souls were left behind, abandoned without hope of Morr's comfort. To this day, deep in the Downs, those who enter may see floating lights, which are the souls of those who died there. They try to trick travellers and lead them to their deaths, so they can steal their bodies and live again. The spirits of those whose bodies are stolen this way then join the lost souls of the Eerie Downs.

The Veldt is the name given to the grasslands of the northeast, great rolling plains between the Gryphon's Woods and the World's Edge Mountains. Here Ostermarkers raise herds of horses, the owners of each distinguished by their brands. Ostermarker horses are famous for their size and strength, and buyers come from afar to the horse market at Heffengen to add them to their stables. Under pressure from Kislevite refugees trying to settle in the Veldt, there are moves underway to convince Chancellor Hertwig and the Ostermark Council to expel them back to their own lands.

### The People of Ostermark

Ostermark has long been an avenue for conquest, whether by invaders attacking the Empire or Imperial armies on the march to Kislev. Originally settled by a minor tribe named the Ostagoths, Orcs, Goblins, and Trolls frequently raided Ostermark in the days before Sigmar founded the Empire. Stout defenders of their homes and fortified villages, the Ostagoths learned to value cooperation between the clans, realising that they were stronger together than apart. This made them open to Sigmar's call for unity, and the Ostagoths contributed a mighty force of axe-men to the army that fought at Black Fire Pass. The battle over, their leader Adelhard accepted the title of Elector Count with a laugh, remarking to Sigmar that theirs was a victory "foreseen in the stars." This banter is still recalled in the heraldry of the province – the Star and the crowned "Griffon Victorious."

Adelhard and his men took wives and mistresses from among the people of Averland, Stirland, and Talabecland upon their march home. These women were the first of many new bloodlines to come into the region, now named Ostermark, or the "Eastern March," for its presence on the frontier. To this mixture were added Ungol elements during the invasions of the mid 18th century, bringing a horse-raising culture to Ostermark's Veldt region. Kislevites would cross the border, too, though more as settlers than conquerors, fleeing the cruelties of the Tsar or natural disasters such as famine or drought. All these elements blended to form a people who, while still recognisably Imperial in culture and language, showed distinct differences from their more western cousins.

Ostermarkers tend to be stout and thickset, and their eyes often reveal an Eastern heritage brought by the Ungols long ago. Their men are given to wearing long, thick moustaches rather than beards, and a high-peaked fur hat replaces the more fashionable floppy headgear found elsewhere in the Empire. Women wear their hair loose if single, or in a long braid wound up at the back of the head if married. Because of the cold weather, Ostermarkers tend to wear several layers of clothing in a style that seems quaint or old-fashioned to others in the Empire.

At their best, Ostermarkers are vibrant souls, with a love of life, horses, vodka, and dancing. Their women in particular are known for their quick tempers and passionate nature. More than one Reiklander dandy has

been dumped semi-naked on the Veldt after attempting to seduce a maid of Ostermark – often by the maid herself.

Few Empire folk naturally think of this side of the Ostermark nature, however. Most claim that Ostermarkers are half Kislevite, half peasant and entirely morose. Famed for long drinking binges, elaborate funerals, and combinations of the two, many people fear to ask an Ostermarker how their day has been, for fear of a depressing monologue. At their worst Ostermarkers show an almost theatrical obsession with death and its trappings.

Women seldom remarry once widowed, for no Ostermark husband would stay in Morr's realm knowing another man was with his wife. Fear of hauntings makes exorcists and priests of Morr very welcome throughout Ostermark, whilst carpenters are very much in demand to carve the elaborate coffins that are so common in this province. To an Ostermarker, this tradition of flamboyant despair is natural. Coming from a province that is regularly raided, destroyed, and plundered, they understand that death is a common part of life.

The people of the League honour all the gods, but hold Ulric, Morr, Sigmar, and Taal and Rhya in highest regard. The stone circles of the Old Faith were long ago taken over by Taal's priests, and Bechafen is the site of the largest Sigmarite temple in the east after Wolfenburg.





Like the folk of Ostland, Ostermarkers have Kislevite tones to their speech. They speak Reikspiel with a distinct accent, the vowels heavily rounded and "th" sounds rendered almost as "d," something often used to make Ostermarkers the butt of many jokes. Unlike Ostlanders, they have a musical quality to their language. Archaic words forgotten by the rest of the Empire are in frequent use, as are borrowed Kislevite terms. The accent is easy to imitate as it is so distinctive, and is frequently used by drunken nobles as a "comedy" party piece.

### The Army of Ostermark

Other provinces mock Ostermarkers for their comparatively primitive existence, yet though they lack prosperity the people of the region are capable and courageous fighters. Like neighbouring Ostland, Ostermark forms a vital part of the Empire's frontier against invasion from the north. The troops of Ostermark regularly travel north to aid their neighbours in Kislev when Chaos worshipping tribes rampage southwards intent on spilling blood in the name of the dark gods. This makes them the most experienced Chaos fighters in The Empire. In the face of the Undead and Chaos incursions, the people of Ostermark have become stern and resolute.

The realm features bleak moors and endless, fog-shrouded marshes, where entire armies have been lost, never to be seen again. Rumours abound of ghouls, skaven, and even stranger creatures lurking within the damp mists, and that whole farmsteads and villages have vanished without a trace. While many of these stories are undoubtedly fanciful exaggerations, there is surely an element of truth, for the province is bounded by the towering Worlds Edge Mountains – home of slaving monsters and countless foul creatures. These terrors often roam down into the lands of Ostermark, forcing the people to defend their homes.

Their heraldry portrays images of great victories and military might – symbols of the human spirit conquering even the foulest adversaries. The State Troops of Ostermark, clad in reddish purple and yellow or white, have faced wyverns, ogres and giants, while the province's banner bears the emblem of a crowned manticore, famously remembering the tale of the first Elector Count of Ostermark's heroic defeat of such a beast near the World's Edge Mountains according to legend.

### OSTLAND

Ostland is a harsh and dangerous land. It lies on the frontier with the land of Kislev, a firm ally of the Empire. The frozen steppes of Kislev form the most direct route for any overland invasion by the marauding tribes of the north, and if the Kislevites cannot hold back an invading army then the province of Ostland invariably receives the brunt of the attack. Indeed, some incursions seem to deliberately avoid the cities and roving cavalry patrols of Kislev, intent on ravaging the rich lands of the south – a far greater

prize. The capital Wolfenburg, as well as Volganof, Kollengrad and Ferlangen have all been besieged at one time or other. Truly it can be said that Ostland is one of the provinces that form the front line in the defence of the Empire.

Shaped like an arm wrapped around the shoulders of the Middle Mountains, almost the whole of the province of Ostland is covered by the ominous Forest of Shadows. It is a haunted place filled with raiders, bandits and Chaos warbands – in fact it is said that there are more brigands than trees, and the Ostlanders live in constant danger from the bands of Orcs and Beastmen that habitually raid the province.

The province is also overshadowed by the Middle Mountains, which while technically are largely within Ostland's borders, are in fact considered more or less enemy territory. This range of jagged peaks is surrounded by impenetrable forest, and the rocky uplands are perilous in the extreme, and in its furthest reaches stand the towers and walls of the Brass Keep – once an Imperial fortress, now in the hands of the Warriors of Chaos.

Long ago, during the expansions of the first millennium, the Counts of Ostland pushed their boundaries deep into what would become Kislev, founding colonies to hold what they had taken. These efforts eventually failed, with Ostland forced to renounce her last claims to Kislevite territory at the time of the Ungol invasions, thanks to the treachery of the Talabheim Emperors. Now the only territory of Ostland not covered in forest is the wind-swept Northern March from Salkalten to the Kislev border.



### THE FIRELOQUES OF FERLANGEN

*The Fireloques of Ferlangen are a troop of deadly accurate handgunners that have fought throughout Ostland, often under the army banner of Elector Count von Raukov himself. Wearing the black and white of their home province, the Fireloques of Ferlangen bear no formal insignia, but superstitiously decorate their hats and uniforms with the bones of fallen comrades and other good luck charms. Even amongst the stubborn Ostlanders, the Fireloques of Ferlangen have gained a reputation for tenacity, holding their gun line and unleashing volley after volley of lire into approaching foes. Their refusal to surrender the flank against marauders from the north during the three-day Battle of the Littered Bones earned them the nickname of Skull Clubbers as without gunpowder for the entire last day they resorted to using their beloved handguns as blunt weapons to stem the tide of attackers.*

The Forest of Shadows, which runs southwest from the Nordland border to the river Talabec, is what most people think of when they think of Ostland. Dark, dreary, and overgrown, the Forest of Shadows is like a mad wizard's attic: Many bizarre secrets lie within it, some older than the Empire and best left undiscovered. It does not give up its secrets easily, and many residents of Ostland are sure the forest resents their presence, and that even after thousands of years, it has never adjusted to having Humans and their axes and fires under its eaves. Woodsmen and others who venture deep into the forest are sure that, sometimes, when they are not looking, the forest redraws the paths through it to confuse those who anger it, and perhaps even cause their deaths.

The Forest of Shadows not only is home to large amounts of game, such as deer and boar, but also fell creatures such as Giant Spiders, who wait for Men, Dwarfs, and Halflings to stumble into their sticky traps. Even the plant life can be deadly; amidst the thick undergrowth lurks Bloodsedge, a thorny bramble with animal intelligence that feeds on the blood of living things caught in its grasp.

Hiding also within the forest are creatures of Chaos, where tribes of Beastmen and Giant Spider-riding Goblins compete for food and spoils with outlaws fleeing the Count's justice. The greatest threat comes from bands ruled by the terrible Minotaur Ragush Bloody-Horns, who strike fear into the hearts of all who live in the area between Smallhof and Boven. Known for his insatiable tastes for flesh, Ragush once hung the corpses of the entire population of a village from the nearby trees for later snacking, calling it his "larder."

The Middle Mountains dominate the southwest of Ostland. Claimed by all the lands surrounding them, Ostland, Hochland, Middenland, and even Nordland, the Middle Mountains are dominated by none. It was once home to a kingdom of Dwarfs who broke away from the Dwarf Empire, Karaz Ankor, during the war

against the Elves. Soon after the Greenskins and Skaven fell on the Dwarf Empire and ravaged it, however, the Dwarfs of "Karaz Ghumzul" abandoned their hold and fled the Middle Mountains to return to Karaz Ankor. They sealed the doors, buried them under rock, and destroyed the roads that led to it. To this day, the Dwarfs will not say what drove their people from Karaz Ghumzul, but, as they left the mountains near where Castle Lenkster now stands, the Dwarf priests pronounced a curse on the mountains and everything within them. Since then, many prospectors and adventurers have searched for the lost Dwarf mines, but none have succeeded, unless they are among those who have never returned.


In northern Ostland lie the windswept grasslands of the Northern March, the only extended open area in Ostland. The Middenheim to Erengrad road crosses it, though little traffic travels along it these days. Few live here outside of some scattered towns and villages, though the Count of Nordland has an old claim to the area around Salkalten that has been recently revived.

### The People of Ostland

Ostlanders have a reputation for being bull-headed, and, among their Imperial brethren, it is an open question as to which would win in a contest of wills between a Dwarf and an Ostlander who has made up his mind on a matter. Descended from the ancient tribe of the Udoes, the Ostlanders have been known for mulishness since the earliest days of the Empire. When Sigmar called the tribes to arms at the Great Moot before the Battle of Black Fire Pass, it is said that it took him three days of argument to convince Wolfila, the Udosian chief, to join. And, when it became clear to everyone else early in the Second Millennium that the Kislevite territories could not be held, the Counts of Ostland insisted on spending blood and treasure to hold on, no matter how much it weakened them.

Notoriously thrifty, Ostlanders are known for their ability to survive. Said to be capable of eating anything, there are several mocking songs about the famous 'Stone soup of Ostland' They are so creative in their frugality that a common joke in the Empire claims that Ostlanders make 'stone soup' with only one stone, for fear of wasting good rocks. While an exaggeration, it is true that Ostlanders are skilled in getting the most use out of what they have to work with and for being loath to throw anything away that might still be useful. This conservatism has at times cost them, as when von Raukov's predecessors refused to adopt gunpowder weapons, because that would mean wasting perfectly good swords and spears.

At their best, Ostlanders are coolheaded in a crisis, practical, and not given to airs and graces. They are proud survivors, and teach their offspring to hold their heads high, despite the circumstances. This Ostlander stiff neck has stood them well in the face of war. Seen by the enemy as no more than a minor obstacle on the road to Middenheim, Count von Raukov's people fought savagely for every square inch. Often they



fought in a doomed cause, but sometimes their resistance forced the enemy to bypass them to maintain their schedule, as at Bohsenfels. These bloody victories have already passed into the proud military lore that Ostlanders love so much. Many toasts have been raised to the fallen, and many more will be made before the province is restored.

At their worst, Ostlanders are overly stubborn, proud, and intolerant. They hate waste of all sorts, as well as "needless ostentation." A strong streak of jealousy against the so-called "breadbasket" provinces of Reikland, Stirland, Averland, and the Moot rises up in drunken rages. The horrors of the war have only made this tendency worse. More than ever, stout soldiers are toasting old glories with Kislev Vodka, sinking into drunken stupors or violent rampages. Short shrift is also given to those who complain of hardship. With so many families going without at present, a careless noble's remark about "lack of facilities" is likely to be the spark that ignites a riot.

Ostlanders, like most Imperials, honour all the gods and celebrate their feast days. If one god is favoured over another, however, it is Sigmar, who is worshipped with a degree of devotion not often seen in the east of the Empire. Surrounded by lands that lean toward Ulric and Taal and Rhya, few know why this is so, though many offer explanations. Devout Ostlanders say it stems from the time when, soon after the founding of the Empire, a great dragon ravaged Ostland. The other electors and their armies were afraid to face the beast, so Sigmar came alone and killed it after a great fight alongside the Ostland Count. On the other hand, cynics suggest that Ostlanders are so devoted because their "poor cousin" Electors have to keep borrowing money from wealthy Reiklanders and thus need to keep them happy. Whatever the truth, it is a fact that even the smallest Ostlander village sports multiple shrines to Sigmar.

Ostlanders are known for the strange pacing and Kislevite tones of their speech. They frequently pause in the middle of a sentence. The Ostland accent is seldom imitated as it is associated with poverty.

### Army of Ostland

The people of Ostland are tough and tenacious, or common and coarse, depending on who you ask. Ostland's army renowned for its stubbornness and refusal to surrender, and also its dour, no-nonsense appearance. Their rangers are the most rugged of them all, and the state contributes many highly skilled scouts to the armies of Karl Franz. Fittingly, the bull of Ostland is a symbol of stubbornness and dependability, characteristics shared and perhaps inherited from its Kislevite neighbours. In years past, the provincial banner was a bull's head, but over time it has become grander and more embellished, and now the rearing bull represents the indefatigable spirit and strength of the region. The famed Dragon Bow of the Count, heirloom of the rulers of Ostland, is also used on regimental banners and shields of the province.

The Ostlanders themselves are somewhat contemptuous of the ostentatious finery they see being worn by regiments of other provinces, preferring their own well-worn and dusty black and white uniforms, a combination which lends itself to bold halved or quartered uniforms, while stripes, cheeks, and diamond patterns are popular on hose or sleeves.

The Ostland army consists primarily of infantry, as the deep forests that characterize the province make it difficult to feed and maintain cavalry. What mounted troops it does have tend to be provided by the neighbouring state of Kislev. Artillery and other war machines are also extremely rare, both because of the cost of buying such equipment, and because of its limited usefulness in forested terrain.

### REIKLAND

Foremost of the provinces is Reikland, sheltered by the Grey Mountains and carpeted by the Reikwald Forest. It is the westernmost of the Empire's Great Provinces, and it is the seat of the Imperial Government and the richest, most cosmopolitan province in the Empire – and not just because Reiklanders say so! From north to south, from the edge of the Wasteland to the borders with Wissenland, Reikland is blessed with fertile farmland, vineyards, and dairy fields that produce a surplus of products for export. The mines of the Grey Mountains yield many valuable ores and stones, from iron and gold to marble and gems, whilst the Reikwald Forest, generally safer than woods in other parts of the Empire, yields valuable timber that supports a thriving boat-building industry. Government patronage helps, too. The Emperors, who since Wilhelm overthrew Dieter in the 25th century have also been the Elector Counts of the Reikland, have lavished Imperial largesse on their home province. Canals, road-building, programs to improve the methods of farming, encouragement of the development of free towns and the mercantile classes – all these have served to make the Reikland a gem among the Empire's provinces.

The wide River Reik is the province's lifeblood, and a constant traffic of barges carry goods and people to and from every corner of the Empire. The Imperial capital, Altdorf, greatest city in the Old World, sits where the Talabec converges with the Reik. The Emperor, Karl Franz, Elector Count of Reikland, rules from here, a champion of Sigmar and embodiment of the Empire's might.

River travel is the most common way to get around the Reikland, since the majority of settlements are along the Reik itself. Several tributaries flow from the Grey Mountains to add their waters to the Reik, which carries commerce from the interior of the Empire to Marienburg and beyond, and back again. These rivers are also important to the many farms and towns between the forest and the mountains, a fertile area known as Vorbergland, or "foothill country." The Dwarfs of the Grey Mountains have, in the past, used this to their advantage, damming the rivers during a

serious dispute with the Elector Count over mining rights in 2211 IC. This led to the infamous "runwater" march of the peasants on Altdorf. Since then, the Electors and Emperors have been very careful to keep the Dwarfs of the Grey Mountain kingdoms happy.

Altdorf's coffers bulge from the passing trade, and many of the Reikland's towns and villages thrive. Trade flourishes with neighbouring Bretonnia and wealthy Marienburg, a city-port beyond the edge of the Empire where the Reik meets the sea. Nobles and merchants bask in their riches, and hardworking folk scratch a comfortable living, but the poorest Reiklanders teeter at the brink of the gutter. As a result, crime prospers – city gangs intimidate and steal, and rural brigands lurk in the forests. Roadwarden patrols offer some protection to travellers terrified of ambush on lonely roads.

Although most of the Reikland's trade travels by water, a significant amount goes by land over the two main passes across the Grey Mountains to Bretonnia, Axe-Bite Pass and the Grey Lady Pass. The passes are guarded by Imperial fortresses at Helmgart and Ubersreik, both to defend against Human and non-Human raiders living in the mountains, and to keep an eye on the Bretonnians, with whom relations have not always been friendly. The snows of winter close both passes regularly, and travellers are advised to cross them only well after the spring thaws.

Deep within the Reikwald Forest are two sets of hilly country, the Hagercrybs and the Skaag Hills. Both are used for sheep herding, though the Hagercrybs are popular with tomb robbers and other adventurers looking for burials of the pre-Imperial Unberogens, Sigmar's tribe. There are reports of Ghosts haunting the Hagercrybs, but these are dismissed as the ravings of shepherds enjoying too much hard cider.

Danger is ever present. Although the province is far from the threat of the northern Chaos hordes, the depths of the Reikwald are home to beastmen warherds, the terror of forest settlements. Those farms in the shadow of the mountains endure greenskin attacks, while isolated communities fear undead horrors that roam the night. In the cities, lost among the crowds, cultists plot and whisper. Altdorf is a hotbed of intrigue, and the servants of Chaos have infiltrated every niche of society, from disaffected slum dwellers to courtiers in the Imperial palace. The Emperor's agents struggle to maintain law and order against overwhelming odds.

### The People of Reikland

Reiklanders are generally descended from Sigmar's Unberogen tribe, which took the lead in founding the Empire. As a consequence, the modern Reiklanders consider themselves the natural leaders of the Empire and feel that the other provinces should defer to them. To their kinsmen in other parts of the Empire, Reiklanders instead appear as know-it-alls and


busybodies who cannot stop themselves from butting into other people's business.

At their best Reiklanders are friendly, sociable, and open minded. More so than most of the Empire, Reiklanders are optimists who believe that the best is yet to come. They point to several reasons for this: the natural bounty of their land, an educated and energetic population, and the fact that Sigmar was one of them. How could the future be dim for a land and people that once gave birth to a god?

Reiklanders have adopted Sigmar's message of Imperial unity wholeheartedly. They take a keen interest in the affairs of the other Provinces, and often point out that "something should be done" when terrible fates befall their neighbours. Robust supporters of the military, many young Reikland nobles enter the army to make their names and fortune. Considered natural "officer material," the chances of advancement are considerably better for those of Reikland birth, much to others' disgust.

Reiklanders almost always answer an Imperial call-to-arms in large numbers, and feel as if it is their duty to come to the aid of less-fortunate parts of the Empire. Indeed, among some Reiklanders the ideal of expansion as in the early days of the Empire lives on: Agitators in Übersreik and Altdorf press for war with Bretonnia to reclaim the "West March." Merchant






Guilds want to see the Emperor strengthened against the Electors, and therefore call for unitary trade laws overseen by Imperial officials, something the Electors fiercely resist.

Fashion plays a more important role in the Reikland's social life than in most other Provinces. The peasantry, of course, care little for such fripperies, but amongst the grasping middle classes the correct sleeves, shoes, and colours are matters of great import. The nobility tend to set the fashion for a season, leaving the merchants and other "grubby tradesmen" to copy their new styles as fast as they can. The presence of the Imperial court has only served to exacerbate this tendency. Recent vogues have included Bretonnian styles, "new rustic," and most recently a return to simple, militaristic clothing. Slashed sleeves, elaborate codpieces, and reliquary charms remain as fashionable as ever.

At their worst, Reiklanders are arrogant, overbearing, drunken slaves to fashion. Notorious for their ability to celebrate at the drop of a hat, the image of the beribboned Reikland sot is a popular stereotype amongst the rest of the Empire. In certain places the small black insects that plague an ill-kept taproom are known as "Reikflies" as they can detect the smallest amount of ale unerringly. Many provinces are suspicious of the fashionable, cosmopolitan nature of the Reikland male, claiming that they are effete and womanish to care so much about what they wear. Curiously, they also have a reputation as wife-stealing, pigbothering philanderers. More than one Talabecland husband has found his woman seduced by the charming words and dashing look of a Reikland dandy. Reikland women, meanwhile, are known to be beautiful but unbearably vain.



#### COMPANY OF HONOUR

*Altdorf's Company of Honour, also known as the Sons of the Reik, are a well-known sight throughout the city. The formation recruits exclusively from other Altdorf regiments, picking only the best and bravest troops out of the many units that garrison the city walls and watch. Other soldiers instantly recognize the yellow plume and black steel armour of the Altdorf Company of Honour for the regiment's reputation is well established, its battlefield history steeped in glory. Traditionally led by the youngest son of one of the city's noble houses, the current captain is Otto Helstein – a valiant warrior used to make his mark. Every Altdorf native knows the distinctive trumpet blast that announces when the regiment leaves the city gates on campaign and all offer praise to Sigmar to ensure the safe return of Altdorf's favoured sons.*

Loud, free, and often superior with their opinions, Reiklanders are traditionally known to be controlling and opinionated. Their lack of stamina is also cause for comment amongst other peoples. The Reiklander tendency to want to finish a task quickly and then come home is well known.

Although they honour all the gods, Reiklanders generally see Sigmar as their special patron, for he was once one of them. Other popular deities are Dyrath, a regional name for Rhya whom the Reiklanders of Vorbergland honour as the patroness of fertility, and Shallya, whose temples and hospices are frequent recipients of gifts and bequests from wealthy Reiklanders. Although tolerated and formally respected, the cult of Ulric is not popular in the Reikland because of the age-old rivalry between his cult and Sigmar's. Reiklanders quickly adopt words from foreign languages, and speak with a clear, almost upper class diction. Noble finishing schools often teach their students to speak with a Reikland accent, as it is acceptable anywhere.

#### The Army of Reikland

Its soldiers are well-armed, disciplined and valiant. The Emperor is able to provide his army with the finest equipment and training available. The uniform of the Reikland is white, though it is usually a fawn or off-white colour in practice. The state banner has changed over the last hundred years, and now features symbols of the province's dominance. The eagle is a common Empire symbol, and in this instance it represents the goddess Myrmidia, the patron deity of the arts of war, whose symbol is often used by highranking commanders. The crown is an obvious reference to the ruling Emperor, while the cross represents the unity of the Empire under his leadership, as does the hammer, which also symbolises devotion to Sigmar. Finally, the sword motif on a state banner usually represents the Runefang of the ruling Elector Count.

As the legendary birthplace of Sigmar himself, it is no surprise that the cult of Sigmar is highly popular in the Reikland. Soldiers from Reikland consider themselves to be superior to troops from other regions, which can occasionally lead to trouble on campaigns.

#### STIRLAND

Bounded by the World's Edge Mountains on the east and on the north, west, and south by the rivers Stir, Aver, and Reik, Stirland is a rugged province of highly mixed terrain. Stirland is the poorest province of The Empire, a situation not helped by their most fertile lands being given away to the halflings, centuries ago when the Moot was formed (which still causes bitterness and resentment).

Its reputation as a rural backwater is largely undeserved, for it has many towns of substantial size and it does a brisk trade with the Dwarfs of Zhufbar. Nevertheless, its location away from the centres of power and the presence of the dread lands of Sylvania make people think ill of Stirland.



The northern portions along the banks of the Stir are covered with the last reaches of the Great Forest. To the east, beyond Siegfriedhof, the forest thins and breaks up into separate woods, the feared Hunger and Grim woods, places of foul reputation. Past the Grim Wood, the dismal village marks the start of the Hel Fenn, where Imperial forces destroyed the army of Manfred von Carstein, one of the Vampire Counts of Sylvania.

The west is dominated by the Stirhügel, the hilly country that was the first home of the Styrigen tribe thousands of years ago. Crossed by the Old Dwarf Road and the Nuln Road, the hills are home mostly to villages of shepherders who trade in the markets of Flensburg and Wörden. Hidden amongst their winding track and foggy vales, however, are the tombs of the ancient chiefs of the Styrigen tribes. Dug into the hillsides or built as turf-covered barrows, these date from pre-Imperial times. Their entrances were well hidden by their builders, though sometimes an entrance will become exposed by rains or flooding. Locals consider these tombs cursed, and it seems every village has a tale of someone who has gone missing whilst investigating the final resting places of "the old kings." Still, treasure hunters and necromancers seek out the tombs of the Styrigen, each for their own reasons.

It is the east of Stirland that holds the rest of the province in genuine dread, however, for it is here that one finds benighted Sylvania. From the sombre town of Tempelhof, which has not had a resident priest of Morr in 800 years, to the foothills of the World's Edge Mountains between the Aver Reach and the Stir,

Stirland's largest region is a place of fear and gloom. It is said that Ghosts walk freely at night among the Haunted Hills, and the deep fogs of the Sylvanian woods are said to sometimes trap a soul within them, forced to wander forever. The eastern portion of the province is the bleakest, where ancient black castles sit on their craggy peaks like black vultures staring down on the towns below. Sylvania is a place most Stirlanders try to forget about, and the Elector Count's tax collectors come calling only when accompanied by a large armed guard. Even the Dwarfs of Zhuffbar avoid Sylvania, preferring the road south to Schramleben and then through the Moot if they wish to travel to Wurtbad.


### The People of Stirland

The Stirlanders are rustic people, and their strange customs and old-fashioned ways are the cause for many a sneer and snide comment from the citizens of Reikland and other more progressive provinces.

Descended from the Asoborn tribe of old, Stirlanders are a short, thickset people, much like their Ostermark neighbours. Dark of hair and suspicious of strangers, their bloodline has remained one of the most undiluted in the Empire. Some folk point out this is because they're inbred peasants, but, as the Stirland Nobility are keen to point out, even the most baseborn soul can trace their line back over many generations.

Famed for their superstition, Stirlanders are a cautious lot. Also said to be overly rural and backward, Stirlanders are often mocked by the rest of the Empire for their slow pace of life and speech. For their part, the folk of Stirland are proud of their preservation of ancient customs, and of their "long view" of life. At their best, Stirlanders are calm, thoughtful, and practised at taking their time about things. Fond of long, ribald tales, the local tavern is the heart of any Stirlander community. Here people gather to hear their favourite stories, the local gossip, and occasionally news from the outside world. Racing is also a firm favourite of the Stirland people – though not the traditional foot or horseback racing liked by the rest of the Empire. As most communities are based about arable farmlands, geese, cows, pigs, and ratted dogs are frequently raced against one another in local competitions. Usually held on a festival or market day, the winning beast is often awarded "ribbons and reprieve," meaning it will never be destined for the table.

At their worst, Stirlanders are isolationist, suspicious, and hidebound. Stirlanders, however, see themselves as simply keeping traditions: "They've worked in the past, so no sense in changing now," as Stirlanders like to say. They find it hard to make friends – often taking years to accept newcomers within their communities. Most of the Empire regards them as savages, simply for their custom of drinking hot ale. Taverns Stirland over have a large iron poker kept by the fire. Cold travellers and old soaks thrust the poker into the fire whilst awaiting their drink, and then plunge it into their



tankard – warming the drink and making an alcoholic cloud of steam. There are many other odd customs; for example, when strangers approach a village in the Stürhügels, children will throw pig droppings at them in the belief that this will drive away evil spirits. They believe that a person hit with tossed pig excrement is especially protected. In the villages near Sylvania, houses and windows are lined with an especially pungent strain of local garlic to ward of what are euphemistically called "the Count's Men." When someone vanishes, locals swear that the fault lies with old garlic, not that the folk belief itself is wrong.

Stirlanders in the central portion of the province are known for their dislike of Halflings, for they still resent the 1500-year-old decision that tore away their best farmlands and gave them to "the Shorties." Although this resentment rarely breaks out in violence, the belief that Halflings are thieves at heart is stronger here than in any other part of the Empire. In Wördern there is a tradition, when celebrating a child's birthday, to make a straw-man the size of a Halfling and stuff it with candies and treats he "stole" from the children. Then it is hung from a branch and the blindfolded children whack at it with sticks until it breaks and "gives them back" their candy. Locals deny that drunks have occasionally instead tied up a real Halfling.

The people of Sylvania are a dour lot, rarely smiling and not fond of talking to strangers. Doors are kept bolted and people regularly make a sign against the Evil Eye when something unsettling happens. They are also fatalistic, accepting that life has a dismal end in store for them. So resigned to their "destiny" are the Sylvanians that few ever leave the province – much to the relief of their neighbours.

Visitors often find it hard to get round the rustic accent and exceedingly slow speech of Stirlanders, for they often repeat questions, and usually spend a good deal of time pondering before answering. Their pronounced accents and colloquial phrases mean that travellers from Stirland find themselves endlessly repeating their words just to be understood by other people of the Empire. Mummies often use a mocking form of the Stirland accent when representing a slow or rural character in a play.

### The Army of Stirland

The nobility of Stirland constantly compete with those of the wealthier provinces, and the commanders of Stirland's armies have a reputation for rash bravery, perhaps feeling they have something to prove. This was never more exemplified than in 2145 by Prince Martin, the then Count of Stirland, who slew Manfred von Carstein at the Battle of Hel Fenn – an astounding feat for which he claimed the lands of Sylvania.

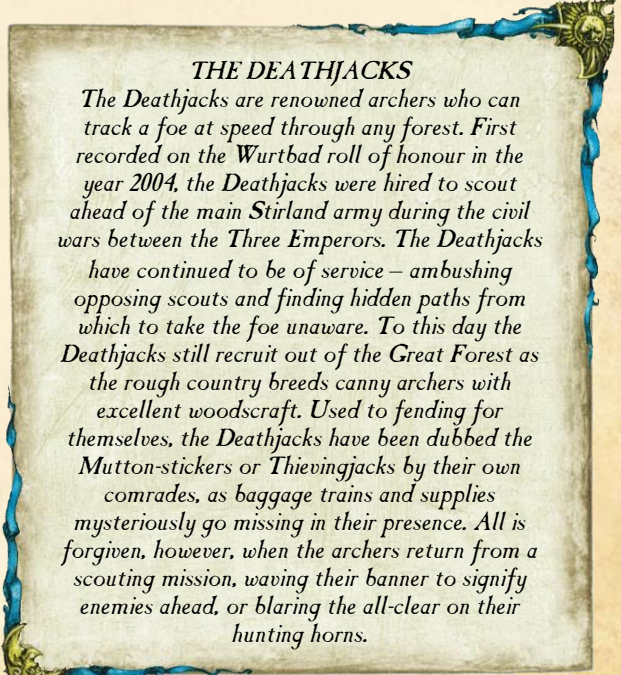
The realm of Sylvania is technically part of Stirland. However, this cursed land was blighted by the Vampire Counts of old and to this day the dead do not rest easy there. During the terrible wars against these dark lords, huge undead armies decimated the farms, villages and

towns of the province and the fallen only swelled the numbers of the shambling hordes. The population of Stirland remains rightly fearful of the walking dead, but is at least hardened to the evil of their existence. When mouldering zombies and ravening crypt ghouls stalk the lands, the brave Stirlanders stand ready to face the horror that assails them.

Stirland's armies tend to be equipped mostly with those weapons that are cheap and easy to produce, particularly spears and bows. However, they excel with these arms, and make proficient hunters besides. Their uniforms, if they can be called such, are rustic. Many of its soldiers bear simple arms and armour and there are many regiments that wear the Stirland colours of green and yellow only in a token fashion, their garb of often well-worn or patched over many times. A hunting horn adorns many shields, and their bearers fight all the harder to dispel any assumptions that Stirlanders are in any way inferior. In contrast some Stirland nobles overcompensate and equip their soldiers as lavishly as any city-state.

The warrior maiden depicted in the arms of Stirland regiments dates back to the founding of the Empire itself. The tribe that controlled the lands that bordered the Stir at the time of Sigmar were not ruled over by a chieftain, but by a fierce warrior-queen whose name is now unremembered. Though she died at Blackfire Pass, and her son took on the mantle of Elector when The Empire was forged, this ferocious leader is still honoured in ancient songs and in the banners of the province.

The Banner of Stirland shows a skeleton sounding a hunting horn, signifying a call to battle. The skeleton itself is a common symbol of the lands, an expression of both the Stirland battle cry "victory or death" and a grim reminder of the lands of Sylvania, ostensibly part of Stirland, but in reality a dangerous and near-deserted province where the dead notoriously do not rest.



#### THE DEATHJACKS

*The Deathjacks are renowned archers who can track a foe at speed through any forest. First recorded on the Wurtbad roll of honour in the year 2004, the Deathjacks were hired to scout ahead of the main Stirland army during the civil wars between the Three Emperors. The Deathjacks have continued to be of service – ambushing opposing scouts and finding hidden paths from which to take the foe unaware. To this day the Deathjacks still recruit out of the Great Forest as the rough country breeds canny archers with excellent woodcraft. Used to fending for themselves, the Deathjacks have been dubbed the Mutton-stickers or Thievingjacks by their own comrades, as baggage trains and supplies mysteriously go missing in their presence. All is forgiven, however, when the archers return from a scouting mission, waving their banner to signify enemies ahead, or blaring the all-clear on their hunting horns.*

## TALABECLAND

The largest province of The Empire, Talabecland is so called after Taal, god of beasts and wild places. It is an appropriate name, as most of the realm is covered by the ancient boughs of the Great Forest. Though large tracts have been cleared to form farmland, many of the felled trees have necessarily been used to build sturdy palisades, designed to keep the fierce creatures of the woods at bay. Despite the dangers of the forest, the sparse population has a strong affinity with nature and the wild. Talabeclanders are at home camping, tracking and hunting, although they are always vigilant and sure to post enough guards and watchmen.

Stretching more than 700 miles from east to west, Talabecland occupies the centre of the Empire, bordering on more Grand Provinces than any other. Consequently, it has become a major transit route for trade within the Empire, with traffic flowing up and down the rivers Stir and Talabec, and north-south trade making extensive use of the Old Forest Road from Hermsdorf to Talabheim. Elector Count Helmut Feuerbach rules it with an iron hand.

The dominant feature of Talabecland is the Great Forest, which stretches from end to end along the province's long axis. Less forbidding than the Forest of Shadows or the Drakwald, the Great Forest is nonetheless home to its share of dangers and mysteries. Although there are isolated villages scattered throughout the forest, and despite the Talabeclanders' skill as woodsmen, the interior of the Great Forest remains a fearful and mysterious place to many. Deep within it lurk bands of Beastmen and Greenskins, as well as maleficent things that have lived there since the dawn of time. The west in particular, in the region of the Barren Hills, is known for the number of Mutants encountered there.



Many of the folk of Talabecland make their living from the woods in one way or another, either as foresters, charcoal burners, or trappers. The woodlands themselves are of the same primordial forest that once covered all of the Empire. Formed of oak, birch, and beech in the south, moving towards darker evergreen pines in the north, the woods are pierced now and again with the occasional clearing or rock outcropping. It is in such places that the villages of the woodsfolk can be found.

A central spine of hills runs east to west in Talabecland, and cartographers divide them into three distinct regions. Near Ostermark are the Kölsa Hills, which are largely uninhabited but known for eldritch stone monuments atop many hills, apparently arranged like paths from hilltop to hilltop. Occasionally farmers clearing trees for land have discovered earthworks and odd mounds formed in strange, suggestive shapes. Their purpose is a mystery, but the hierarchy of the Cult of Taal and Rhya have claimed this land as a cult preserve for their own research.


The Färlic Hills in the middle are home to many clans of herdsmen who are also part-time bandits, preying on traffic along the Old Forest Road. The Elector Counts, therefore, maintain a large number of roadwardens along the road, and have even sent troops into the hills to punish the raiders. The road itself is of patchy repair. In some places stone flagging and gravel form a smooth surface, whilst in others, it is little better than a dirt path. Tollhouses, many abandoned now, are supposed to raise coin for the upkeep of the road. Many of these have been attacked and destroyed by forest beasts, and there are few brave or stupid enough to man them these days.

Talabeclanders fear the eastern Barren Hills, a land they consider cursed. More than 100 years ago, to hear country people tell it, the Chaos moon Morrslieb spat upon the world, its spittle landing on what were then called the Green Hills. Soon, most plants and animals within the area died. Those that did not mutated in horrible ways and had to be destroyed by the Elector Count's forces. Today the Barren Hills are shunned by all save a few, either treasure hunters following rumours of lost gold or magical items, or those who think they are protected from the curse.

### The People of Talabecland

Most of the people of Talabecland are descendants of the Taleuten tribe, to whom Sigmar gave rulership over all the lands between the Talabec and the Stir. After years of wandering the Great Forest, the Talabec found the Great Crater, a huge bowl in the earth surrounded by a natural wall. The wall itself was pierced by a tunnel. According to legend Krugar, the chief of the Talabec, decided this was a sign from Taal himself and ordered the building of a great city within the crater. Known first as Taalahim, later to become Talabheim, it is the largest city in the east and is considered impregnable.





A thickly forested place, Talabecland has a reputation for barbarism and ignorance amongst the other provinces. The folk of Talabecland ignore this nonsense, holding instead a private pride in their forest craft and practical skills. At their best, Talabeclanders are patient woodfolk, with a quiet intensity and honour. Reading, writing, and the scholastic arts are respected, but held in second place to the lore of the wilds. The men of Talabecland favour silence and deed over long speeches, but their womenfolk are considered suckers for a honeyed word. As a consequence, rakish types, poets, and Reiklanders are viewed with firm suspicion throughout the province – though in general Talabeclanders are more welcoming than their rural Stirland cousins.

The role of the father is considered especially important to the folk of the Great Woods. Even town-born men take their sons to the woods of a summer, and teach them how follow a trail, light a fire, and catch a meal. This is considered a matter of practicality, just like a Marienburger learning to swim. A lad without a father to patiently teach him the ways of the wood and the bow is considered unlucky indeed.

Talabeclanders, even their nobility, are unusually self-effacing. Their histories tell tales of great deeds while downplaying the role of persons involved. "It's the doing that counts, not who does it," is an old Talabecland saying. At the tournaments held every two years at Küsel, Talabecland knights wear the provincial colours on their shields, the only indication of their families being a small badge on their shoulders. Tradition considers the glory won to belong to the people as a whole.

They are also a religious people, revering all the gods of the Empire, but holding special reverence for Taal and Rhya. Indeed, Taal's greatest temple is found in the small woods outside Talabheim in the Great Crater. Ulric is also popular, for although not braggarts, Talabeclanders are known for their warlike ways. Talabheim itself was the home of the cult for a while in the Second Millennium, when the Ar-Ulric left Middenheim for Talabheim after a dispute with the Graf.

At their worst, Talabeclanders can be argumentative, primitive, hard drinking, and mean. And though they do not wear leaves, as others accuse them of doing, Talabeclanders generally eschew elaborate clothes and prefer practical garb that can stand up to rough handling. "Kitted like a Reiklander" is a popular expression for someone who dresses like a dandy. More than one effete stranger has been found tied upside-down to a tree, or worse. Talabeclander speech is smooth with slurred-together words, though the cultured elites of Talabheim prefer to speak "proper" Reikspiel. The rest of the Empire puts this curious speech down to the well-known Talabec tradition of brewing "moonshine" liquor in the woods. Many a prejudiced whisper speaks of wild parties held in the deeps of the woods, where semi-feral woodfolk gather

to drink liquor, hunt game, and clamber into reeking sweat lodges. Each year, curious Empire folk attempt to find and purchase some of the strange and varied alcohols to come out of Talabecland, with little success.

Talabeclanders resent any attempt to find out exactly how they worship Taal out in the woods. Indeed, freedom is very important to them. A man may think nothing of vanishing into the woods for weeks on end if the mood takes him. If that leaves behind a struggling wife and children, then so be it, for if Father Taal calls, one must answer.

### Army of Talabecland

Worship of Taal is especially prevalent in the province, among its citizens as well as visiting travellers. Taal is not overly concerned with the exploits of soldiers. However, regiments from near Taal's sacred river, the Talabec, will often dip their standard into its running waters to receive the blessing of the god, and in return will place one of his symbols upon the standard. Taal is often represented by an antlered head or skull, or by a twisted tree whose branches take the shape of antlers as on the banner of Talabecland. Though the eagle is usually representative of Myrmidia, on the standards and shields of the soldiers of Talabecland it represents the sharp eyes of Taal. Talabecland's colours are red and yellow while Talabheim's are red and white, and the state banner is a crowned eagle.

## WISSENLAND

The Southwestern-most of the Empire's provinces, Wissenland forms a triangle bounded by the Black and Grey Mountains on two sides and the River Reik on the third. Originally confined to the lands west of the Söll River, Wissenland in the 18th century absorbed what was left of Solland after the invasion of the Orc warlord Gorbad Ironclaw. Eight hundred years later, the people of Wissenland still often refer to the land east of the Söll as "old Solland" or "Sudenland," a modern derivation. It should be noted that certain descendants of the exiled Solland nobles, who fled and settled in Averland, still harbour a bitter resentment over their lost family estates and dream of refounding the lost province. The Wissenlanders themselves also suffered terribly at the hands of the greenskins, and their numbers have never entirely recovered.

Ruled by Countess Emmanuelle of Nuln, the rivalry between Wissenland and the Reikland is legendary. Reiklanders believe the folk of Wissenland to be dull (a reputation not helped by their ruler, Countess Emanuelle, spending more of her time entertaining in the cosmopolitan city of Nuln). However, this scorn is reciprocated by the Wissenlanders, who view the Reikland city-dwellers as effete fops.

Like the Reikland, western Wissenland is heavily watered by streams and rivers flowing from the mountains that feed the Söll, which in turn joins the Upper Reik at Pfeildorf. These tributaries are fed by

melting snow in the spring, leading to frequent flooding of the towns along their courses. Meissen itself was nearly wiped out in Great Flood of 2484.

The farmlands of Wissenland are fertile near the Reik, but as the land rolls towards the mountains it becomes steadily more dry and stony. Chunks of bluish grey flint are so common that many nobles claim the land is good for little but harvesting rocks. These stones are often seen heaped at the side of fields, or incorporated into local buildings. Many Wissenland children make their first pennies following the plough in spring, plucking the offending rocks from the lands. As a result, many become skilled at catching the odd crow or hare with a well-thrown flint.

Being so close to the mountains, western Wissenland has abandoned all but the barest subsistence farming, instead heavily depending on mining for its wealth. While the Dwarfs of Karak Norn and Karak Hirn claim large areas of the mountains for themselves, negotiations over centuries have secured rights for Humans to mine, too, though this does not stop illegal operations on Dwarf lands. The Dwarfs do not take kindly to what they see as theft, and more importantly, shoddy workmanship.

Overland trade is also important to Wissenland, and many passes cross the mountains from it to Bretonnia, Tilea, and the Border Princes. Almost all the pass roads

converge at Wusterburg, which has prospered from the business brought to its many inns and stables, some of them over a thousand years old. Many travellers take their time to sample the various fine Dwarf ales that are often sold in these places.

In the harsh depths of winter almost all the passes to and from Wissenland are cut off because of snow. This makes the underground river starting near Kreutzhofen and emerging near Miragliano in Tilea an invaluable source for year-round trade. Such is the value placed on keeping this "River of Echoes" open that the current Elector Countess's ancestors agreed that the Tileans should keep control of the 150-mile-long tunnel. The revenue they gain from goods passing through their lands more than compensates for relinquishing control of the tunnel.



East of the Söll, the land stretches out in rolling grasslands used for sheep-raising. This part of Wissenland, the old Solland, is famous for its high-quality wool and the fine furs its trappers bring out of the mountains. Wissenland sable is highly prized in fashionable circles in Nuln, Altdorf, and beyond.

There are, however, sad reminders of the past in this part of Wissenland. The ruins of many villages and towns destroyed by Ironclaw stand in silent witness to the devastation his horde wrought. Most people avoid these ruins, either out of respect for the dead, or from fear of their Ghosts. As a result, the province today is sparsely populated and is dotted with hundreds of abandoned, ruined and burnt out villages, farmsteads and towns.



#### THE STERNTOWER MARKSMEN

*The Sterntower Marksmen are a newly formed regiments out of Steingart. They are garrisoned as part of the line of sentry posts and signal towers that guard the low foothills of eastern Wissenland, under the shadow of the Black Mountains. Always at the ready to launch the signal flares to signify invasion, the watchtowers are essential for border defence. The region is rife with greenskins and monsters, and recently packs of Trolls have taken to wandering down in search of prey. The Marksmen share the Sterntower with several other regiments – halberdiers and spearmen – with whom they have established a front-line camaraderie. Sergeant-at-arms Hans Schwarzblut is the tower officer, in command of the Sterntower Marksmen and a unit each of halberdiers and spearmen. He is a veteran of many battles against marauding Orcs and his tight discipline keeps all the troops at high alert. Unwilling to sit and wait, Schwarzblut often orders patrols up into the narrow mountain passes.*

## The People of Wissenland

Wissenlanders are descendants of the Merogens, the tribe that settled the area in pre-Imperial days. Like the Unberogen to their north, the Merogens had good relations with the neighbouring Dwarfs, particularly the kingdom of Karak Norn, and they answered in great numbers when Sigmar issued the call to arms before the battle of Black Fire Pass. The influence of Dwarf culture is said to be the reason so many Wissenlanders are short and practical in their speech. Little time is given for flowery words or fancy phrases, and even less to artists, poets, and foppish Reiklanders.

The folk of Wissenland are known to be a dour lot. The fall of Solland was a dark chapter in Imperial history, and Wissenlanders seem to carry this shame with them. They are a hardy people, given to few words and little emotion. Their stony implacability is known to soften when they are in their cups, and on rare occasions they might break into "The Lament of Solland" or other such lonesome ballad. At their best, Wissenlanders are stoic, dependable, and willing to endure hardship should it be needful. At their worst, they are depressing, dull, and obsessed with the gods.

For all their earthy practicality, Wissenlanders are religiously devout, their towns and villages hosting multiple shrines, chapels, and temples to all the recognised gods, as well as local spirits. Many Wissenlanders take a few minutes each day to visit a temple or shrine, working their way through the gods over the course of a week. The people of Wissenland claim this is simple devotion on their part, while cynics elsewhere cannot decide if they are show-offs or trying to cover all the angles – or both.

While all the gods are honoured in Wissenland, Sigmar and Taal and Rhya have special prominence. Sigmar's cult centres in the west, where contact with the Dwarfs is greatest. Both Wissenburg and Meissen have large temples that host shrines for the Dwarfs to worship



their own deities, whilst upriver from Geschburg in the foothills of the Grey Mountains lies the shrine of Sigmar Protector, a popular pilgrimage spot. It was here in the 14th century that a force of the Elector Count was trapped by marauding Orcs. Their destruction looked certain. According to that legend, at the height of the fighting a great horn was heard, and from nowhere a powerful warrior wielding a hammer appeared to lead the Wissenlanders to victory. Revealing himself as Sigmar, the warrior promised he would always protect their people in their times of need. A monastery has since been built on the spot, and the monks are only too happy to give out pious icons, artefacts, and illuminated prayers in return for "donations."

East of the Söll, the dual cult of Taal and Rhya is more popular, as it was in the days of Solland. To the north Rhya is called "Dyrath," a sign of Reiklander influence. There are rumours of ancient dark cults that still survive in the remote areas of Wissenland, in towns and villages where strangers are looked at with suspicion and the people are even more taciturn than usual. Standing stones and stone circles are frequent in these areas, some guarded by the cult of Taal and Rhya, and others unclaimed by man or beast.

Wissenlanders soften Reikspiel, and deliver it in a monotone that some folk find exceedingly depressing. Tales of death, liturgies, and mournful plays are sometimes delivered in a Wissenland accent, to heighten the feeling of the piece. This heavy, plain speaking, and practical nature is reflected in the cuisine of Wissenland. Whilst they are known to have excellent Tilean or Bretonnian wines at the table, they are also infamous for their flat, glutinous bread, thick mutton stews, and heavy "flinter" dumplings.

### GRÜNDEL'S DEFENDERS

*Gründel's Defenders was first raised after the disastrous battles of the year 2421 when Goblin Warlord Grom the Paunch of Misty Mountain led an invasion through Blackfire Pass and savagely ransacked NuIn before sweeping through the heart of the Empire. Better coordination was needed between artillery and infantry, and in the wake of the devastation new regiments were formed into battalions that trained and fought together. Baron Albrecht Gründel first named and the equipped those under his command and his sons have continued the tradition to this day. Tasked with protecting the batteries of cannon and mortar from the enemy, Gründel's Defenders have never failed in their honoured duty. Discounting witchcraft and a few ill-fated misfires, Gründel's Defenders have yet to lose one of their precious war machines to foe – a matter of great pride to the regiment.*

## The Army of Wissenland

Recent invasions by Orcs, Goblins and other attackers out of the Black Mountains have kept the province on the back foot, and its population is constantly rebuilding shattered towns, repairing defences and re-seeding ravaged farmland.

Such a grim existence has led Wissenlanders to cling to religion for succour in their time of hardship. They have become devout worshippers of the entire pantheon of gods of the Empire. Shrines and temples are well maintained (or at least the first things to be rebuilt after an attack), and priests can always find willing ears to listen to the divine words of their cult. Warrior Priests are a common sight in the province, stirring the Wissenlanders to defend what remains of their homes and instilling the fires of vengeance and fury.



Many lose all hope and ultimately lose their sanity in the face of so much war and hopelessness. These poor souls abandon their squalid lives to join the roving bands of flagellants. These doomfilled fanatics wander the land, seeking penitence in the fires of battle. They hurl themselves at the enemy in a lunatic frenzy – utterly convinced that the end of the world has arrived.

Wissenland regiments from the southerly region continue to uphold the tradition of using the symbol of Solland, the sun, in their banners and on shields. The fall of Solland is one of the darkest stories in Imperial history, and it is said in the Lament of Solland that the "Light Doth Shine No More" in the ruined province.

The colours of Wissenland are grey and white, with many state regiments distinguishing themselves with differently coloured plumes, ribbons, or shield designs. The state banner is a white lion carrying a pennant with a sun, a nod to the heritage of Solland, although there are some nobles who dispute this and maintain the older design with the twin-tailed comet on the lion's banner. There are few symbols of Sigmar on Wissenland heraldry, as the twin aspects of the nature gods, Taal and Rhya, are highly venerated in the province.

## THE MOOT

There are other large towns and innumerable smaller settlements in the Empire. Of particular interest is the area around the upper reaches of the Aver known as the Moot. This province is the homeland of the Halflings, where they live under their own government and laws. The Mootland comprises areas that once belonged to Stirland and Averland, but was gifted to the peace-loving Halflings by Emperor Ludwig the Fat in a fit of pique. They are part of the Empire in name, and provide troops for the Imperial army when required. The Moot is close enough to the mountains to suffer occasional raids by Night Goblins and so the Halflings maintain a vigilant force of border guards and watchmen who double as warriors in time of war. It is oft overlooked as a province by most Imperial citizens, though its Elder, Hisme Stoutheart, is an Elector.

"Get the bloody carriage into position!" yelled Sergeant Mörser. His red-faced gun crew, little more than boys, strained to haul the great gun into position behind the barricade. Already, they could hear the sounds of cannon fire from the eastern shore.

"Grom and his greenskins are trying to take the bridge. If they break our defences on the other side of the river, they will NOT find us unprepared. Now, heave!" With a final push, the lads maneuverer the cannon behind the emplacement. Mörser grunted "Now load and prime." The gun crew rushed to complete their orders and struggled with the enormous cannonball.

Mörser risked a glance back at the city. Many of its inhabitants, including Emperor Dieter, had already fled NuIn in hopes of escaping the wrath of Grom, the rampaging Goblin Warboss. A sharp crack and the sound of an explosion snapped Mörser's attention around to the far end of the bridge. One of the guns on the other side of the river had exploded. Already, a plume of black smoke was coiling into the evening air. Mörser's crew winced as several more clouds of smoke appeared on the far side of the bridge.

"Spyglass," ordered the Sergeant. Almost immediately a telescope was in his hand. As he peered at die far end of the bridge. Mörser could see men jumping off the bridge to almost certain death. A moment later, war chariots charged across the bridge. Mörser noticed that the horses that pulled the chariots moved with a strange loping gate. Not horses - thought Mörser - wolves. Scanning to his right, Mörser could also see Orcs launching crude rafts to cross the river. The figures looked tiny, but even at this distance, he could see enormous creatures – Trolls, must be, thought Mörser – wading into the water and becoming little more than dark shadows under the surface. They've broken through, he thought, resigned. "Alright men," bellowed Mörser. "They're coming. Stand ready to fire!"

Elector Count Otto Schepke knelt beside the body of his faithful Griffon, Brightwing, and gently stroked its feathered head. The mighty creature had carried him faithfully into battle these last five years, and Otto felt the loss keenly. The Goblin Fanatic's whirling ball had smashed Brightwing's rib cage, crushing his valiant heart and killing him almost instantly.

Otto knew that he must not forget the high cost of this morning's battle. His captains had not yet brought him the butcher's bill, but looking around the bloody field he feared the worst. Makeshift surgeries had been set up in the centre of the battlefield and the screams of wounded men were clear and sharp. The Greenskin corpses, crude Orc idols and the whole camp would be burned. Otto would leave nothing standing that belonged to the Orcs. He owed the dead that much.



They had driven the Orcs off, but would the cost of that success prove too high? Grimgor's forces in this region had been beaten, but Grimgor himself had escaped, breaking through the Knights of the White Wolf and vanishing into the depths of the Great Forest. The leader of the knights had wept as he accepted responsibility for the Warlord's escape. Otto could not condemn him though, there were few men alive who could stand against such a foe and even fewer who could have defeated him. He had men scouring the surrounding forest and had sent runners to every village nearby to be on the lookout for Grimgor. Without his army, the Warlord was at a disadvantage, and this would be their best chance of finally destroying him.

Otto rose and stretched, his muscles protesting, and took a deep breath. The air was laden with the scent of death and high above he could see the carrion birds gathering. He walked stiffly to a campfire where a group of bloodstained Halberdiers were gathered. It was not yet midday, but the men were passing a bottle of brandy around, their eyes dulled by the day's bloody work as well as the alcohol. As he approached, they made room for him, and a bearded veteran wordlessly offered him the bottle. He drank deeply, and felt the fiery liquid burn its way into his belly. It was cheap rotgut, but at that moment it was good to feel its angry heat. He passed the bottle onto a young lad to his left. Otto recognised the boy's face. He had fought alongside Otto when the Halberdiers had come to his aid. He'd been hard pressed by the vile greenskins and but for their bravery Otto knew he would be dead.

The boy looked barely old enough to shave, let alone carry a halberd into battle. He reminded Otto of his own son, Matthias, back in Talabheim.

"What's your name, son?" asked Otto.

"Leopold Diets, my lord," replied the boy.

"And how old are you Leopold? Sixteen? Seventeen?"

"Sixteen, my lord."

Sixteen! His own son was the same age. About now he would be at his desk in the castle library learning the mysteries of algebra or the intricacies of ancient Reikspeil. Then he would have his fencing lessons and probably go on a hunt in the afternoon. They were alike in ages, but nothing else.

"You fought well today, Leopold. You all did. And I thank you for it," said Otto. He wanted to say more, about how the blood they had shed was appreciated by the Empire and how much honour they had brought to their regiment, but he felt like he would choke on the words. The men seemed to understand his sentiments and nodded respectfully, pleased at the compliment. Praise like this meant far more to the ordinary soldier than such empty words as honour and glory.

Otto Schepke sat with the Halberdiers for the rest of the morning until his scouts emerged from the eastern treeline. From their faces he could see that they had not found Grimgor Ironhide and his heart sank. This battle had bought the Empire some time, nothing more. Otto had no doubt that they would have to face the Black Orc Warlord's wrath again. Sooner rather than later. Today's slaughter was a prelude to the battles that would be sure to come. Otto had never felt so weary in all his life.





The opening of the recruiting station at Stichenloch, Drakwald, offering 'The Soldier's Schilling'.

# CITIZENS OF THE EMPIRE

Once, the only political divisions in the Empire were the provinces but, over the years, the largest cities have grown in importance and power, becoming self-governing and sitting equally amongst the provinces as new city-states. The cities of the Empire are undoubtedly the jewels in the nation's crown, where the pinnacles of human achievement are clear for all to see. Glorious palaces are surrounded by many wonders such as ancient temples, the gilded minarets of arcane universities, and the flag-swathed keeps of military institutions founded at the dawn of the nation. Despite the shady neighbourhoods and corruption found in any urban environments, the cities are still havens for many citizens seeking knowledge, supplies or protection from the perils of the wilderness.

The cities and towns within the Empire are built in a variety of styles from many different materials. The western towns tend to be the richest and the oldest, and here the gothic architecture tends to be rendered in gloriously carved stone. In the east, wood is often used instead, and the border settlements of Ostland and Ostermark are often constructed from solid logs hewn from the surrounding forests. The city-states are ruled by powerful Burgomeisters, who are responsible for raising and maintaining armies in the same way as the counts of the provinces. The largest and most important cities, which have become city-states, are Altdorf, Nuln, Talabheim and Middenheim.

## A HOSTILE LAND

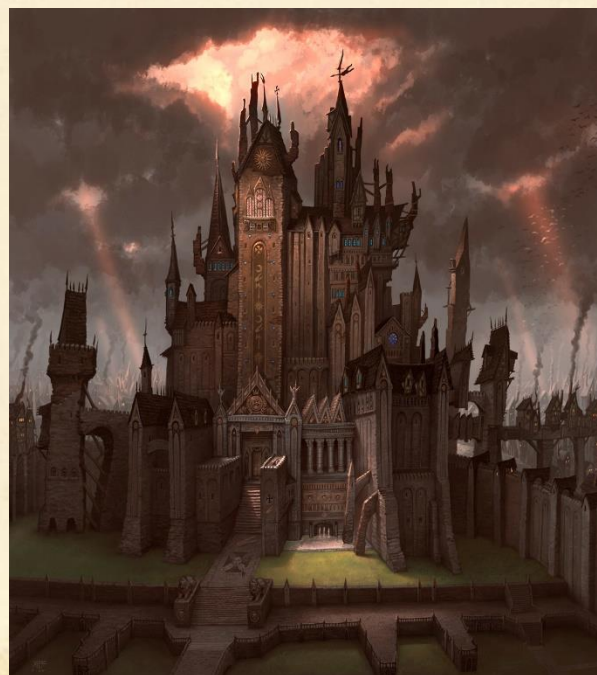
*While the proud cities of the Empire are centres of progress and enlightenment, havens of relative safety (except in times of invasion), this state of affairs does not extend far beyond the city limits. The vast miles of the realm are largely blanketed in dense, forbidding forests – unmapped and untamed. These shadowy eaves are home to all manner of hostile creatures: mutant outcasts, Chaos-worshipping cultists and murderous brigands, skulking goblin tribes and marauding orc warbands, the restless dead summoned from their graves to serve the wicked intent of necromancers, hideous unnamed monsters, and thousands, perhaps millions, of beastmen prowling the trees with malice in their hearts, eager for the taste of flesh.*

*Travellers through the forests, even on the main routes, must go well protected should they wish to reach their destination. Farms, villages, and even small towns must keep vigilant watch and plentiful guards lest they be suddenly overrun in the night. It is not uncommon for such settlements to disappear, inhabitants slaughtered or devoured, and buildings burnt. The trees reclaim the earth with unnatural speed, so roads that once led to such places often seem to peter out into the depths of the forest. Those who know the dangers often warn that the Empire's cities lie in the heart of enemy territory.*

## ALTDORF, SEAT OF THE EMPEROR

Altdorf is the seat of Emperor Karl Franz, and it has been the Imperial capital since the accession of Wilhelm III, Prince of Altdorf, almost a hundred years ago. Although Altdorf is often called the capital of the Empire, this is actually a misnomer, since Sigmar's realm has no fixed capital city as such. Since the Emperor is chosen from amongst the Elector Counts, the capital is wherever the current Emperor has his court. As such, the Empire's capital has changed many times over the centuries. With the election of Mandred Ratslayer following the Skaven wars, the Imperial court moved from Altdorf to Middenheim. After Mandred's death, numerous claimants vied for superiority and there were several 'capitals' in the anarchy of the Time of Three Emperors. The ascension of Magnus the Pious, the so-called Griffon Emperor, ended this division and the Imperial court came to Nuln. With the election of the Reikland Princes following the Marienburg scandal, the Imperial court once again took up residence in Altdorf. Many people (not least the Prince of Altdorf) view Altdorf as the first city of the Empire anyway, since it is built on the site of the Unberogen settlement of Reikdorf, the birthplace of Sigmar.

Home to the Emperor in his twin roles as ruler of the Empire and Elector Count of the Reikland, Altdorf is one of the most important cities in the Old World. Diplomats come from all the known lands to conduct negotiations here, whilst nobles and wealthy commoners send their children here to be educated and find a suitable spouse. As the current seat of the Imperial Court, Altdorf supports a flourishing economy, which attracts all kinds of people. It is a bustling city with a substantial community of



merchants, adventures, mercenaries and fortune seekers from all across the Old World. Altdorf is one of the commercial centres of the Empire, and its counting houses and merchants have grown wealthy because of all the trade that must pass through their port.

Altdorf has its darker side too, behind the glitter of the Imperial Palace and the majesty of the Cathedral of Sigmar. The wealth passing through Altdorf's gates and the political intrigues that unfold within its courts support a rotten underbelly, a den for thieves, corrupt city officials and assassins. There are certain streets that even the city watch avoids at night for fear of finding a dagger stuck between their shoulder blades. Grinding poverty exists along the waterfront and other areas, where workers and beggars scratch out a bare living as their work makes fat merchants and corrupt government officials wealthy. Many trapped here and in other poor areas seek release in drugs and alcohol. In the fortress palace of the witch hunters, suspected worshippers of Chaos and their victims alike are tortured for what they can reveal; too often, the black nets of the Order catch the innocent, too. Along the Street of a Thousand Taverns, behind the festive lanterns and inviting smells, conspirators and cultists—not all of them Human – plot and scheme crimes ranging from the banal to the grandiose. For the new arrival, Altdorf is a city of opportunity and danger.



Altdorf stands on a series of islands amongst the broad mud flats which surround the confluence of the rivers Reik and Talabec. At this point the river is divided into three main channels and there are numerous bridges crossing these waterways throughout the city. Many of these bridges were designed by the Imperial Engineers School, and are equipped with hissing steam-driven pistons that raise and lower them in all manner of unusual ways, allowing the many trade ships to travel further up the Reik. However, as is always the way, with contraptions designed by the engineers, they can be somewhat temperamental and often activate when least expected – a fact the current Emperor is well acquainted with after his infamous dunking in 2518. The three channels reunite to the north of Altdorf, where a large deep water harbour has been built. This is the Reiksport, home of the Imperial navy, where ocean-going ships can unload their cargos. The Reiksport is the furthest point that these really big ships can travel from the coast. The narrow channels around Altdorf itself are impassable to ocean-going ships, although once beyond Altdorf the Reik and the Talabec broaden out again.

The city is renowned as a centre of learning and the University of Altdorf is the most highly respected academic institution in the Empire, where lords and princes from many lands come to sit at the feet of Mankind's foremost thinkers. Altdorf is also home to some of the most important organisations in the Old World such as the Colleges of Magic – the centres of magical lore and learning that are justly famous throughout the Empire and beyond. The majestic wizards' towers of the Colleges of Magic rise above Altdorf, glittering needles of stone and brick from which the wizards observe currents in the Winds of Magic. It is here that the Old World's finest mages learn their art, and where the Empire's deadly Battle Wizards are trained.

Another great institution is the Imperial Engineers School, founded by the Tilean genius Leonardo of Miragliano, inventor of the Steam Tank and pioneer of heavier-than-air flight (a fatal obsession which led to his early demise and the destruction of many of the original Engineers School buildings). This school, which has been rebuilt on no less than a dozen separate occasions, following misguided experiments and catastrophic malfunctions, attracts inventors from all over the Old World and is responsible for most of the Empire's technical innovations over the past few centuries. Many of the Engineers are Dwarfs. Some of them are renegades from the Dwarf Engineers Guild which frowns upon innovation and regards much of the Empire's new technology as a heinous break with ancient tradition. The Engineers School has provided the Empire with a number of experimental weapons, from repeating muskets and pistols, multiple-barrelled cannons, mobile battle-towers called War Wagons, and the formidable Steam Tank.

The city also boasts the famous Imperial Zoo which houses large and fearsome monsters as well as



curiosities and abominations from the Northern Wastes, some of which are trained and harnessed as beasts of war. The zoo has a practical function, because its stables also house the Emperor's war monsters: the Griffons, Pegasi and other creatures he rides to battle. These monsters are collected from the most dangerous parts of the Old World by adventurers who hope to be well rewarded for their efforts. Thanks to the extraordinary daring of these individuals the collection has grown considerably since its inception by the Emperor Dieter IV.

As well as its human population, Altdorf is also home to many Dwarfs whose ancestors settled there when their mountain strongholds fell to enemy attack. These Dwarfs are capable smiths and keen-minded merchants, and their presence is one of the reasons why Altdorf has become the dominant city in the Empire.

The Altdorf colours are red and blue and the city-state flag bears icons befitting the ruling home of the Emperor: the crown, the Hammer of Sigmar, the Runefang, and the griffon, in reference to their service to the Emperor's capital. These symbols are commonly repeated in various forms by many Altdorf regiments, who tack righteous pride in being the pre-eminent city. The deathly figure of the standard of Altdorf is a celebration of the victory over the Von Carsteins in the Vampire Wars, during which the city was besieged twice. It is a symbol of defiance against the Undead, and evil magic in general. The lavish uniforms and spit-and-polish of many units has earned the city-state a reputation. Detractors are quick to point out the many parade drill-marches, but the storied history of Altdorf regiments in many battles throughout the whole of the Empire tells a tale of well-disciplined bravery. Many regiments celebrate their famous victories with commemorative medals or seals.

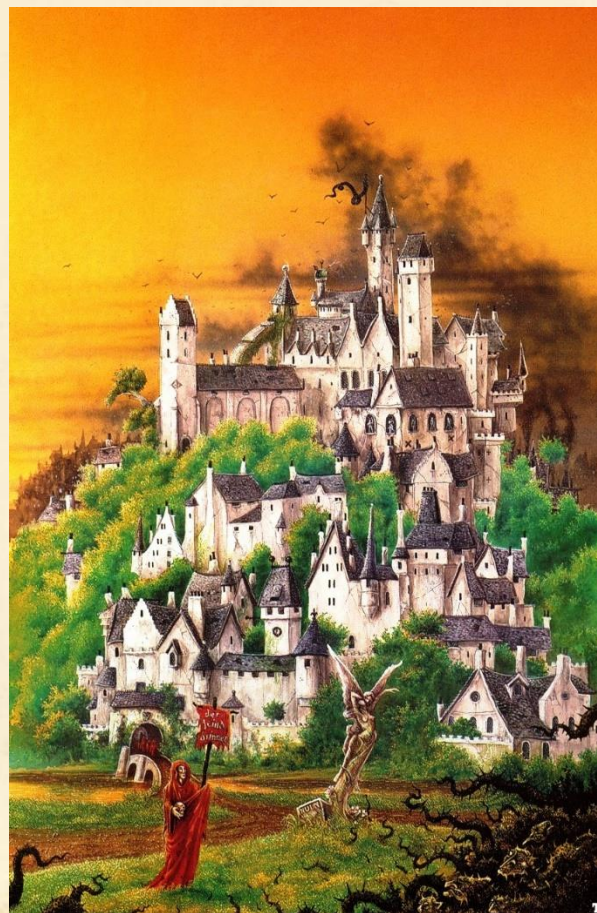
## NULN, BASTION OF THE SOUTH

Situated on the crossroads of Reikland, Wissenland and Averland, Nuln is The Empire's second city in terms of size, but the first in terms of social life and the arts. Sometimes called "the crown that glitters with a thousand jewels", it stands as an imposing bastion, its fortified walls bristling with enough heavy artillery emplacements to arm a fleet of war galleons. In previous times, Nuln was home to the court of the Emperor, though its reputation as a seat of learning has since been overshadowed by Altdorf in the last few centuries. Its universities are still favoured by the more academic and old-fashioned. The University of Nuln is an ancient institution, dating back to the earliest days of the Empire. Its scholars are regarded as among the finest in the world, and wealthy parents send their children from as far away as Araby to study here. Today it remains Altdorf's largest rival, both politically and economically.

Nuln is the focus of the entire economy of the southern Reikland, where travellers from Wissenland, Stirland, Averland and further east converge. North of Nuln the

Reik is too wide to bridge, so the city forms a natural meeting point for traders and adventurers travelling from east to west. The bridge at Nuln is the last bridge before the sea, although there are ferries which cross the Reik at various points. There are also bridges at Altdorf where the Reik divides into a number of lesser channels; hence none of the bridges at Altdorf can be said to span the entire width of the mighty Reik. This is a point of some pride in Nuln where the bridge is seen as one of the great marvels of the Old World. Its wooden centre section can be raised and lowered through an ingenious mechanism to form a defensive barrier.

Nuln is a city-state, technically free of Wissenland, but still owing allegiance to its Elector Count. This poses little problem for the freewheeling people of the city, for the Elector of Wissenland is also Countess of Nuln. Emmanuelle von Liebwitz, still beautiful in her middle age, loves Nuln and spends almost all her time there, giving grand balls and hosting dinners that last for days. She barely conceals her contempt for the "po-faced burghers" and the utter boredom that tortures her when she has to attend to provincial business. To rid herself of dreary Wissenland, Countess von Liebwitz is negotiating with the Emperor to completely separate Nuln and Wissenland. She would retain Nuln and her electoral vote, whilst the province would be given to the Toppenheimer family, which would also receive an electoral vote. All this would be done in return for large loans to the Emperor's war coffers, a strategy she is coordinating with her colleague in Talabheim.



"I have unshakeable faith in the percussive power of the Imperial battery. Yet there are things out there, dark and twisted things, that make me wish they fired just a little faster..."

- *Martin Fortberg,*  
*Chief Powderjack at the Imperial Gunnery School*

Nulners are very different from Wissenlanders, being much more expressive and excitable than their rural cousins and prone to talk with their hands, perhaps an influence of the large Tilean population here. They are said to be fond of garish clothes and jewellery; the Elector Countess herself is said to have over 10,000 complete outfits. The Nulner accent varies from Wissenlander by having shorter vowel sounds and often ending sentences on an up-note.

Nuln is most famed for being the home of the Imperial Gunnery School, a sprawling network of forges and smelteries where veteran gunsmiths manufacture and maintain the Imperial artillery trains. Steam-powered air pumps (developed by the Dwarfs for circulating fresh air to deep mines below the mountains) work night and day to vent the acrid fumes of the blazing foundries, and portions of Nuln are forever wreathed in palls of choking soot and black smoke. Indeed, the dark smog clouds hanging over Nuln are such a permanent feature that many travellers use them to navigate. Many counts send their artillerymen to the Imperial Gunnery School to learn the art of ballistics, and crews trained in Nuln are highly valued. Thanks to their efforts the Empire is served by a large and efficient corps of cannons which is far superior to anything outside its borders.

The uniforms of soldiers from Nuln are black, although whether this is by age-old design or more practical needs to hide the soot from fighting alongside so many cannons (or from the polluted city itself) is uncertain. The city banner of Nuln depicts a golden lion holding the scales of judgment – a symbol of Verena, goddess of learning. A blindfolded maiden carrying scales is another popular motif amongst many units of Nuln. Other symbols which appear frequently on regimental shields and banners, are cannons, the famous bridge of Nuln, and variations of the lion, which is usually used in The Empire to represent courage, pride and great achievements.

## MIDDENHEIM, CITY OF THE WHITE WOLF

Middenheim is the City of the White Wolf, the symbol of Ulric – the god of wolves and winter, and patron deity of the city and its territories. Central to the city is its identity as the home of the chief temple of the Cult of Ulric and its High Priest, the Ar-Ulric, one of the electors of the Empire. As the cult of Ulric is afforded an electoral vote in addition to the Elector Count's, the province has two votes, making it a powerful realm indeed. The cult's Great Temple dominates the centre

of the city, itself a fortress within a fortress that attracts many pilgrims. Its battlements are not just for show, and the Templars of the White Wolf who live in the attached barracks are not just for parades. The eternal flame burns bright within its sanctum, and the temple will be the last place to fall should Middenheim's walls fail.

Founded before the Empire was born, this great and impregnable fortress stands atop the Fauschlag or Ulricsberg, a sheer-sided pinnacle of white rock that rears from the surrounding forest like the fang of a great wolf. It towers high above the surrounding Drakwald, like an island rising in a sea of green. Four wide highways built on towering viaducts climb from the forest floor and provide the main access to the city, connecting Middenheim with the roads to Marienburg, Kislev, Talabheim, and Altdorf. Wooden drawbridges connect the city gates with these highways, and these can be raised to isolate the city in times of war or plague. From its ramparts cannon point in all directions, showing the willingness of the people of the White Wolf to do battle anytime, anywhere. In addition there are numerous cranes, chairlifts and rope ladders, which are used to pull goods (and sometimes people) up the side of the cliffs. The Ulricsberg itself is riddled with tunnels, ancient tombs and catacombs but, after several incidents involving mutants and reports of mysterious ratmen, access to them is limited to the town guard and certain licensed adventurers who are permitted to search for ancient treasures. From Middenheim's many tall towers it is possible to look out over the Great Forest to the south and the Drakwald to the west, a carpet of treetops stretching in every direction save eastwards, where the rising Middle Mountains burst from the forest floor, tall and jagged, and the colour of thunder clouds.



A powerful army, clothed in the city-state colours of blue and white, garrisons the nigh-impregnable walls and tirelessly patrols the roads leading to the Ulricsberg. And so it is, for the Drakwald is dark, dangerous, and synonymous with peril. The Middenheim banner depicts the White Wolf standing guard over the fortress walls and gates into the city – a sign of Ulric protecting his own.

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"Proud Middenheim juts out of the forest atop the Ulricsberg, a proud white lupine fang, defiant. It dares any who would denounce Ulric to try their might; it goads their inevitable failure."

- Ivan Steinmann, Quartermaster, Middenland Garrison

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## TALABHEIM, THE EYE OF THE FOREST

Talabheim lies deep in the Great Forest and for this reason it is sometimes known as the Eye of the Forest where, like the eye of a storm, all is calm amidst the surrounding danger. The city lies on the main trade route between the Reikland and lands further west, and the Kislevites to the north.

Once the capital of Talabecland and the seat of the Elector Counts, Talabheim has for several centuries been a chartered Free City under the rule of the Feuerbach-Untern family and a powerful parliament of nobles. Hide-bound by tradition, Talabheim is known as a city of laws. There are laws governing all aspects of life and behaviour, many dating back to the city's foundation. The confusing morass of often contradictory and capriciously applied laws drives even natives to distraction, making the Litigant's Guild very wealthy and influential.



Talabheim is built within a huge shallow crater, many miles across, whose outer edge forms a rocky rim and a natural wall. This wall has been built up and fortified with many tall gun towers and effectively marks the boundary of the town. The imposing towers and fortifications around the crater wall of Talabheim bristle with an array of formidable weaponry. In addition to the more recognisable artillery pieces, such as Great Cannons and Mortars, can be found some of the experimental workings of the College of Engineers. The land inside is extensive and includes farmlands as well as the city itself.



The River Talabec flows around the outside of the crater, and where it flows past the southern edge of the wall, there is a fortified settlement named Talagaad and a deep harbour. A run-down pest hole inhabited by the poorest of the poor, alcoholism and crime are rampant here. From the fortress of Talagaad, a narrow road climbs the ridge of the crater and enters the city via a tunnel carved through the rock of the rim wall. This tunnel is the only entrance to the city, and a massive, fortified gateway at each end of the passage makes Talabheim one of the strongest and most well-protected cities in the Empire. However, this protection is bought at a high cost, for the city's civilian populace lives in grim poverty to support Talabheim's demanding military and an unforgiving martial law is in force at all times. Talabheim is also home to some of the most notorious criminal elements in the Empire, plagued by gangs who survive by preying upon the oppressed populace.

It is said that Taal himself formed the great crater that rings Talabheim when he fought and cast down a gigantic Wurm, its fiery trail blazing like the fabled comet of Sigmar itself. So it pleased Taal greatly to see people settle in safety in the crater he had made.

The Talabheim colours are red and white and since the year 1111 the state banner has been depicted as a warrior maiden bearing an icon of the Imperial Griffon holding the Hammer of Sigmar. As the tales go, it was such a maiden, a healer, who took up arms and rallied the defenders to save the plague-ridden city from being taken by Chaos Ratmen. She died a hero, but her legend as saviour of the city lives on in the form of numerous shield and banner designs. The motto of that defence, 'None Shall Pass' is still used by many of the soldiers responsible for the defence of the crater wall.

## MARIENBURG, CITYPORT OF MERCHANTS

At the mouth of the River Reik stands Marienburg, the world's marketplace – the largest, richest, most corrupt and most dangerous cityport in the Old World. It is a den of pirates, assassins and black marketeers. Here, everything is for sale, and nothing is without a price. Marienburg is often known as the City of Gold, which alone conveys a good idea of the wealth of this sprawling, cosmopolitan city. Nowhere else can exotic goods from as far away as the Elven kingdoms of Ulthuan or distant Cathay be found so readily. Long ago, Marienburg was a city of the Empire, but in 2429, the city's Burgomeisters colluded with Emperor Dieter IV to secure their independence in return for a massive donation of gold to the Imperial coffers. When this scandalous affair came to light, Dieter was quickly deposed and Wilhelm III of Altdorf became the new Emperor. Numerous attempts over the past decades to restore Marienburg to the Empire have all failed, and the city remains so fiercely independent that Theoderic Gausser of Nordland (nominally the ruler of Marienburg) is forbidden to return under pain of an excruciatingly hideous death.

The Marienburg colours are red, blue and yellow, and sumptuous showy uniforms are commonplace.

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"They say of Marienburg that a man can find whatever he wants amongst the madding throngs. They also say that a man will almost certainly find what he does not want as part of the bargain..."

- *Christof Gamboldini, Official Chronicler of the Vespero's Vendetta Free Company of Tilea*

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## MORDHEIM, CITY OF THE DAMNED

Mordheim was once the greatest city of the Ostermark, but corruption and madness ran riot within its walls as the second millennium since Sigmar's coronation drew to a close. A twin-tailed comet appeared in the sky on the first day of the year, growing ever closer as the final day of the millennium approached. A depraved festival atmosphere grew in the city, and it is said that Daemons crept from the shadows, crying joyously and cavorting with man and woman alike. As the clocks struck midnight, the comet smashed down upon the city like a hammer from the heavens. Sigmar had judged Mordheim lacking and those unfortunates who survived mutated and died in withering agony. Mordheim, had become the City of the Damned, cursed forever to be a place of ill fortune and misery until its eventual destruction at the hands of the Grand Theogonist and a combined force of Knightly Orders.



## BOGENHAFEN

A successful market town near the base of the Grey Mountains, Bögenhafen is now one of the wealthiest places in the Reikland. It sits astride the River Bögen, at the highest point of the river that is still navigable by large sailing vessels. Goods from Altdorf, Marienburg, and Nuln come to Bögenhafen by river and are traded for local wool and wine. Lead and silver are brought down from the mountains and then shipped here for distribution to all parts of the Empire.

Since Bögenhafen's interests have always been commercial, the mercantile elite have always run the town. For most of the town's history, this has meant the Merchants' Guild and the families that control it. For many generations the guild – and thus the town – was dominated by four merchant families: Haagen, Ruggbroder, Steinhäger, and Teugen. They were able to control the town council and make sure that the politics and trade of Bögenhafen were favourable to the Merchants' Guild in general and their families in particular.

Persistent bandit attacks have forced the Burgomeisters to maintain a large town militia, who have earned a reputation as tough and disciplined troops. The militia are clothed in white and purple – a flagrant display of wealth, as purple is the most expensive dye to produce. Famously, Kurt Helborg wears a cloak of Bögenhafen purple, gifted to him by the town's leaders.



Fay Bonner

From out of the ranks of the Chaos army the creature toppled forward like a pile of warm offal. It was impossible to describe what manner of beast it might have once been. If it ever had legs then they were smothered beneath the undulating layers of glistening fat which propelled the thing forward like a gigantic slug.

Muscular ventricles opened and closed in its sides as the creature moved, blowing acrid clouds from its innards with an unhealthy wheezing noise. A multitude of long and gangling arms sprouted from it. These obscene limbs were encased in armour of pink and purple shell. In its clawed appendages the creature bore an assortment of weapons snatched at random from the battlefield: discarded clubs and maces, broken swords, long bones and other debris.

The advance of the Reiksguard faltered for a moment. The proudest Knights of the Empire stood aghast at the unbridled horror that bore down upon them. Horses whinnied and shuffled nervously, uncertain whether their riders would press them forward or retreat before the monstrosity.

"Chaos Spawn... Hold your ranks Reiksguard," shouted Captain Helborg. With a flash of bright steel the Reiksmarshal brought his command to order. Seeing the look of grim determination in his face the Reiksguard Knights tightened their grip upon their long lances.

As the Chaos Spawn drove relentlessly forward the horses caught its noxious stench. Such was their terror that they kicked blindly in the air and at their neighbours. Their riders fought hard to keep the wild-eyed mounts from running. Now the monster was close enough to see its head, broad and powerful, yet obscenely tiny compared to the mass of its sprawling lower body.

There was some semblance of humanity about it, enough to betray a vestige of intelligence, a mind corrupted and broken by the body's many vile mutations. From its face there sprouted long twisting stalks bearing iridescent insectile eyes. Its mouth gaped in a bestial scream of agony revealing a mouth full of long pointed teeth. Blood gurgled from its lips and spat its head in scarlet raindrops.

With a piercing screech of rage the thing threw itself upon the Knights. One horseman fell at once under the Spawn's formless hulk. His horse, borne over backwards by the thing's sudden turn of speed, lay thrashing and kicking upon the floor, its hack broken by the impact. The Knights were thrown into disarray, and it was all they could do to keep their mounts from fleeing in terror. The creature's gangling arms thrashed wildly, striking randomly about but finding many targets amongst the milling mass.

"Don't try to fight it," cried the Reiksmarshal, "Open your ranks and let it through." His blade whirled through the air faster than a mortal eye could follow. Already he had severed several of the creature's limbs, but the thing seemed impervious to pain and near impossible to harm.

Without warning the creature was through the Knights' formation, blundering into the open space beyond. The Reiksguard had taken a severe beating and several Knights lay dead or dying. Broken lances and discarded shields littered the ground. Few of the men had escaped altogether without

injury. Captain Helborg was bleeding from a long gash across his forehead and his armour was discoloured with the bubbling green ooze that served the creature for blood.

"Reform... Sound the order," harked the Reiksmarshal, and the Knights drew hack into battle formation once more. There were fewer now to meet the Chaos hordes, but their determination was not lessened.

The Chaos Spawn found itself and its arms thrashed uncertainly, its stalked eyes twisting and turning desperately. Green slime oozed from a dozen deep wounds in its side and noxious gasses bubbled and gurgled from rents in its body. Dark blood spewed from the Spawn's gaping mouth and down its glistening torso.

Then a crossbow bolt struck it cleanly below its jaw. The Spawn screamed and reared up, its arms heating the air frantically. A dozen bolts thudded into its white underbelly and more followed, some sinking so far into the soft flesh that their black flights vanished altogether. Another regiment moved into range and its soldiers poured fire into the Spawn as fast as they were able.

The creature made no attempt to move but writhed and screamed in its death throes. With a final cry it collapsed into a spreading pile of blubbery flesh. A green vapour formed around it as its internal organs expelled noxious last remnants from the thing's innards. As all movement ceased a great cheer went up from the Empire's ranks.

Reiksmarshal Captain Kurt Helborg turned from the sight and gave the signal to advance upon the Chaos horde.





# GODS OF THE EMPIRE

The Empire is steeped in religion and superstition. Life is short, brutal and often absurd. The Gods offer a sliver of hope in a world of war, darkness and danger. The folk of the Old World see the influence of the Gods all around them, as well as the movements of unseen spirits, and the dark touch of Chaos. Only fools ignore the Heavens – that, or the bravest of heretics.

Every part of life is watched over by a God. From birth to death an Empire citizen will honour many deities and visit many temples. Most folk only make occasional offerings, but some are religious enough to make regular sacrifices to all of the Gods. A rarer few choose to honour one God in particular – these usually go on to become part of the Priesthood for that deity. All hope that the Heavens will bless them with

miracles or intervention; however, the Gods are whimsical in the extreme. There seems neither rhyme nor reason to their dabblings in mortal life. They can bless a person, or strike them down in an instant. Due to this, most are viewed with a mixture of awe and fear. Sometimes an answered prayer is the worst thing that can happen to a person.

The worship, and fear, of these Gods draws the Empire together. From Altdorf to Averland shared legends and rituals bind the people in a common understanding. The various Priesthoods reinforce this message, working to strengthen order and stability, for there are other Gods besides those of the Empire – Dark Gods whose worship is strictly forbidden. These Ruinous Powers bring death and discord to the tenuous balance of the Empire. Many secret cults do the work of these proscribed Gods, and despite all that officials do, they seem an eternal part of the Empire's underbelly.

Each God is known by a variety of names and symbols. The following section describes the most common understanding of each deity, but these will vary from place to place. Devout characters, such as Priests, may like to display the symbol of their favoured Gods, and would certainly strive to keep the strictures of their chosen patron. To break these would incur heavenly wrath, and would require at least a good firm bagging to make amends.

## Sigmar Heldenhammer – God of the Empire

As might be surmised from the size of the Empire, religious practices vary enormously from place to place, with one God held more highly than others in one region, and only particularly noted on his holy days in another. There is one notable exception. In all corners of the Empire, Sigmar is worshipped with particular reverence and awe. He is the guardian of its people, their shield and their hammer. His name holds for them the hope that the eternal ravages of Chaos will never unravel the Empire.

Sigmar is the deified, legendary founder of the Empire. Befitting a great warrior king, Sigmar is worshipped both for his military might, and as the great unifier – the synthesis of all the conflicting interests of the various power groups within the Empire. Statues and paintings usually depict him as a muscular, bearded giant of a man, with long, blond hair. He invariably bears a massive, two-handed Dwarfen warhammer, and is often shown seated on a simple throne with piles of Goblin heads at his feet.

The cult of Sigmar is usually associated with two symbols: a stylized Dwarfen warhammer and a twin-tailed comet. The former symbol refers, of course, to Sigmar's magic warhammer, Ghal Maraz, while the latter represents the comet that heralded Sigmar's birth





long ago. Less-used symbols, often found embedded in the architecture of Sigmar's holiest sites, are the griffon and the gold crown. Both are earthly symbols of Sigmar's dominion over the Empire as Man and God. The jade griffon is a Sigmarite symbol reserved for the Grand Theonist, the cult's leader. This mark appearing at the bottom of a letter is enough to pass through any town or city in the Empire unmolested.



Although considered a lesser, regional deity in other parts of the Old World, Sigmar is worshipped throughout the Empire. In every town, village, and city across the Empire, his temples are the grandest and most numerous, with two exceptions: in the city state of Middenheim, the site of the chief temple to Ulric, that God's temples outnumber Sigmar's, and in Talabheim, where temples of Taal (who is revered there as the all-important river God) are found in equal number to those of Sigmar.

There is hardly a village that does not have a temple or shrine dedicated to him. Crowds of not only devout Sigmarites but also common folk flood the streets in every corner of the Empire on his holy days. Even in the basest, most common tavern, a toast "To Sigmar!" is raised near hourly. From the commonest peasant to the mightiest Elector Count, the people of the Empire revere Sigmar and hold his name holy. Outside the Empire, however, worship is limited to a handful of exiles and immigrants.

Sigmar is a vengeful God. He lights fires in the hearts of his followers and, like in the Dwarfen smithies of old where his hammer was formed, forges them into weapons against the machinations of Chaos.

#### SIGMAR'S HEIRS

*As saviour and founder of the Empire, Sigmar is often considered to be symbolic of the entire realm. As such, the priesthood of Sigmar has a long-founded and enduring bond with the state and Imperial family, something many worshippers deplore as an unwelcome imposition upon their personal god. As a result many sects have grown up that worship Sigmar in their own way and, of all the gods, Sigmar inspires by far the most theosophical discussion and variation of belief and practice. In addition to the principal Holy Temple of Sigmar there are a great many splinter groups and several branches of Sigmarite theology. As dark times engulf the Empire once again, these differences of theology have given rise to a score of bizarre beliefs, birthing cults of mendicants, raving stylites, isolationist hermits, violent iconoclasts and wandering bands of apocalyptic flagellants. Each preaches a warped, self-sacrificing version of Sigmar's vision.*



#### Ulric – God of Wolves, Battle, and Winter

Tall men, and fierce, the worshippers of Ulric preserve the spirit and traditions of their ancestors who founded the Empire. The cult of Ulric as it is currently constituted dates back over three thousand years, with its leader able to trace his succession across millennia. When the forefathers of the Teutogen tribe crossed the frozen and terrible mountains of the Old World to come to the land that is now the Empire, it was Ulric who guided them, sending wolves to protect them on the way. These men erected no monuments and forged no steel. They were wild men. The cult of Ulric maintains that primal spirit from which the Empire arose, even in this later age of black powder and other wonders.

Ulric is the God of battle and destruction, the patron of wolves and the spirit of Winter. Most scholars understand him to be the brother of Taal. Ulric is portrayed as a massive warrior alike in form and armament to the barbarians who founded the Empire: his long hair flows unbound; his thick, black beard is silvered by hoar frost; on his back is a silver-grey wolf-skin cloak. He wields a giant two-handed hammer and goes into battle without a helm to show his bravery. Ulric is also represented from time to time as a huge silver-grey wolf. He despises weakness, cowardice and trickery, and expects his followers to always take the direct approach to solving a problem.

Ulric was the patron God of the Teutogens, one of the twelve great Human tribes and the people from whom Sigmar himself sprang. Like his God, Sigmar wielded a two-handed hammer and went into battle without a helm. After many adventures, Sigmar eventually unified the tribes into the Empire. Since then, the state religion of the Empire has become the cult of Sigmar, supplanting Ulric's place of importance in the Empire.

The symbol of Ulric is the wolf; wolf-head medallions are worn by many of his followers, and the design is also used as decoration on weapons and armour. Some followers of Ulric wear wolf-skins as cloaks. Priests wear black robes with white wolf-head emblems on the breast and trimmed with wolf-skin. Dedicated worshippers of Ulric usually go unshaven and do not trim their hair, so that they might be as close in likeness to Ulric as possible.

Ulric is mainly venerated in the north of the Empire and Middenland in particular, but his cult is also found in other parts of the Old World, especially among warriors. Knightly orders, soldiers, mercenaries and most anyone who fights for a living will have a shrine dedicated to Ulric near them at all times.

In Middenheim particularly, the cult of Ulric is the dominant force, both politically and spiritually. Only there is the cult highly organized, with massive temples and complexes housing thousands upon thousands of clergy and other cult members. Only there in the Empire does Ulric easily eclipse the importance of Sigmar; Ulric is the most common name for boys in Middenheim, and most men there go unshaven as a sign of devotion.

While professional warriors throughout the Old World pray to Ulric, often on a daily basis, these sorts of folk rarely rely on temples or clergy to communicate with their God. While it is true, therefore, that the highly organized cult of Ulric is limited to Middenheim, let there be no mistake: Ulric is a powerful and important God, prayed to by every man or woman who has to do battle. In the Old World, sooner or later, that's everyone.

Ulric is considered to be indifferent. He is a distant, harsh and unforgiving God, who expects his followers to stand on their own two feet, putting their faith in martial prowess.

### Taal and Rhya – Lord of Nature, Mother of the Earth

When mortals first turned to the Gods and prayed to be spared the worst storms, to have bountiful hunts and harvests, and to understand the cycles of the natural world, they formed the cult of Taal and Rhya, king and queen of nature. In the beginning, the two were worshipped as a single God, Ishernos, who had a feminine face in Spring and Autumn and a masculine face in Summer and Winter. Over time, Winter became the domain of Ulric and the two faces of Ishernos became two Gods in worshippers' imaginations, yet the cult has remained one. Some theologians speculate that Ulric was once a part of Ishernos as well, forming a triad, which would explain the triskeles etched into the megaliths in Taal and Rhya's oldest stone circles.

Taal is the power behind gales and downpours, waterfalls and rapids, avalanches and landslides. He is

the lord of beasts, forests, and mountains. The wild areas of the Old World are his domains. Rhya is the power behind zephyrs and gentle rains. She is the midwife when animals are born and plants sprout, and she is the huntress who provides for her kin. Cultivated lands are her domains, as are love and procreation. When farmers pray to her for springtime rains, lads and lasses entreat her to turn the hearts of their beloved ones toward them. In art and story, Taal is normally a powerfully built man with long, wild hair crowned with the skull of a great stag. He wears animal skins, and golden leaves flutter from his beard. In some tales, he manifests as one of his totems: a stag or bear. Rhya is usually depicted as a lovely, motherly woman, her hair a tangle of flowers and branches and her gown a weave of evergreen leaves and fragrant herbs, or she appears as a doe, her primary totem.

The symbol for Taal and Rhya together is the Coil of Life, a spiral representing nature's annual turn from birth to maturity to death to rebirth. This symbol is also used by Jade Wizards. By himself, Taal is symbolized by stag antlers or a stone axe, with which he is said to cause thunder, lightning, and avalanches by striking mountaintops. Rhya is symbolized by a sheaf of grain or a bow and arrow, representing her hunter aspect and the dart of love. The Gods' Priests generally wear simple robes of grey, brown, or green, which they adorn with leaves and flowers for festivals.

Wherever people are concerned about the weather, the harvest, the wilderness, or love, Taal and Rhya are worshipped. Taal is especially venerated in the north and east of the Old World, among the great forests and mountains of the Empire. Most of his followers are rangers, woodsmen, and Amber Wizards. Rhya's most devoted followers are farmers and hunters. Many Jade Wizards are devoted to the Gods as Ishernos. While Taal is not usually revered in cities, in Talabheim, which was founded on river trade, he is called the Father of Rivers and is the city's chief God.



Taal is viewed as an indifferent God. Like a mountain or storm, he is unmoved by mortal concerns. Rhya, in contrast, gracefully nurtures the world by providing sustenance and natural beauty.

### Myrmidia – Goddess of War

Her statues are on nearly every street corner in the cities of Tilea and Estalia. Her name is invoked by the people of the South as a ward against everything from illness to death at the hands of Beastmen. As devout as the people of the Empire are in their love of Sigmar, it is almost subdued when compared to the wild and devoted love of the Southern people of Tilea and Estalia for their lady, their champion, their Goddess, Myrmidia.



Myrmidia's role in the pantheon is subject to debate – and passionate argument – across the Old World. In the Empire, scholars believe she was a mortal hero who rose in either Tilea or Estalia and protected those people against invasion from the barbarians to their north (the forefathers of the Empire), Arabian invaders from across the sea, and Goblins pouring out of the mountains to their east. Having saved her people, Myrmidia was to be crowned queen but was shot at her coronation with a poisoned dart from an unknown assailant. She was so strong that the poison could not kill her, though, and as she lay dying she commanded that a great ship be constructed. She was loaded onto the vessel and sailed West, where she ascended to Godhood. In the Empire she is believed to be a regional God only, and while people respect her, most do not especially worship her – no more than they worship the regional Gods of Kislev or Bretonnia.

This vision of Myrmidia as the maiden warrior who rose up and saved her people persists to this day in every legend, but in Tilea and Estalia, the rest of the story is very different. They claim that Myrmidia was the daughter of Verena and Morr who was given to mortal parents to raise. In Tilea, they insist Tileans raised her. In Estalia, her parents were of course Estalian. In either case, the baby grew to be a powerful maiden warrior who rallied the people of both lands against all enemies. To this day she is loved and revered as the patron of both nations, but also as a Goddess born of two great Gods.

Apart from being a regional God, the people of the southlands believe Myrmidia has an essential role as

one of the Gods of civilization. She is, they say, the patron Goddess of Soldiers and Strategists. Where Ulric stands for strength of combat and the fury of battle, Myrmidia stands for the art and science of war. Myrmidia is commonly portrayed as a tall, well-proportioned, young woman armed and equipped in the style of the soldiers of the southern Old World. She can also take the form of an eagle.

The symbol of Myrmidia is a spear behind a shield. This design is worn as a pendant by the majority of her followers, who believe it will bring them luck in battle. Her Priests wear blue cowls over white robes with red edging, with her symbol either sewn onto the left breast or worn as a cloak-clasp.

Myrmidia is followed with fanatical devotion across the southern Old World, especially Tilea and Estalia. In other parts of the Old World, warriors who find Ulric's ways of battle to be too brutal are turning to the worship Myrmidia. This is particularly true of those who use black powder, which is proscribed by the Ulrican faith. These new adherents accept the belief that Myrmidia is the daughter of Verena and Morr and do not consider her a regional God.

Myrmidia is a God of the southern people of the Old World, hearing their prayers and protecting them from invasion. However, as her faith has spread to other regions, she is generally thought by other cultures to be a vengeful God. Unlike Ulric, who watches over battles and lets men live or die by their own skill, Myrmidia actually steels hearts and drives the righteous to destroy the wicked.

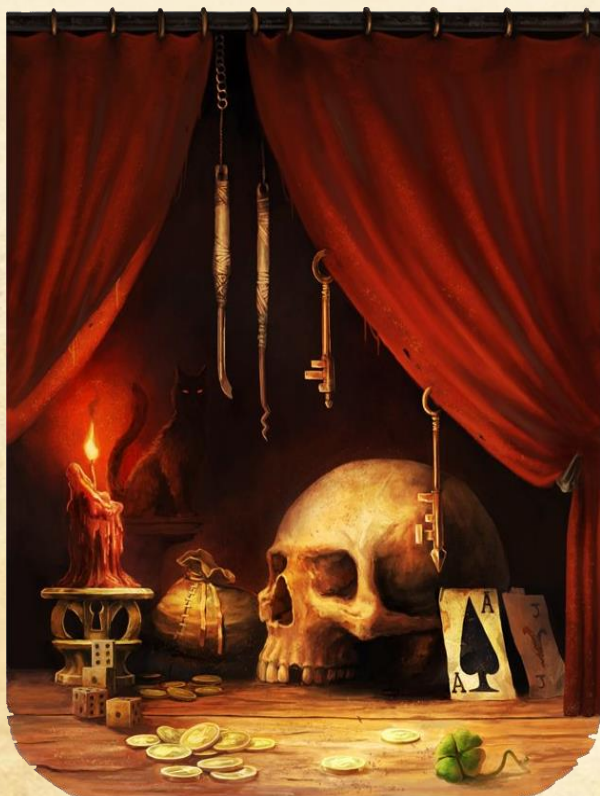


## Ranald – God of Tricksters

Ranald is rarely worshipped in temples. His followers invoke his name in whispers or by praying at private shrines. Beloved by merchants, gamblers, thieves, and all those whose daily tasks revolve around money, Ranald is a far more popular God than one could determine by counting temples in the street. Indeed, anyone who seeks wealth, feels they have been cheated or downtrodden, desires to break a string of bad luck, or simply wishes to hold on to what riches they have already accumulated, prays to Ranald.

He is spoken of by the orthodox leaders of other cults as the wicked trickster God, a patron of rogues and gamblers and other "base personages." The authorities of the Empire think little of the cult of Ranald and do not embrace its clergy as they do the clergy of other cults. Whilst authority figures loathe the worship of Ranald, to the masses he is a hero. Revered across the Old World, common folk pray to Ranald whenever they need something. Unlike most other Gods, it is believed that if you pray enough to Ranald, he will hear you and you will receive. He is the God of the weak, the forgotten, those who need a change in fortune.

Ranald is portrayed as a Human male, usually a charming rogue with a wicked smile. He can also take the form of a crow, magpie or black cat. He is a roguish trickster, happy to pull down the lofty and raise the low. Rather than being evil or malicious, he is ruled largely by his irrepressible sense of humour. Because he so loves to see the mighty fall, powerful merchants who got where they are by prayer to Ranald are sure to donate a great deal of their wealth to his cult. Ranald abhors violence of all kinds, and would never condone violent crime, murder or torture.



Ranald is represented by the sign of the crossed index and second finger. Making the sign is a sort of silent invocation or prayer, and is supposed to bring luck. In his shrines and temples, he is represented with the crow and the cat. For obvious reasons, in many parts of the Old World Priests of Ranald do not wear any distinctive forms of clothing or holy symbols. Some followers may have a cleverly hidden, repeating "X" design worked into their clothes. A metal pendant with an ornate "X" design is a common good luck charm in the Old World. So many people wear one that it is a clear sign of Ranald's popularity as a folk God. However, it is so common that it does not invite suspicion except where official suppression of Ranald's worship has assumed the proportions of a witch-hunt. In any case, these charms are seldom worn openly; it is generally believed that the effect of the charm is lessened if it is openly displayed.

Ranald is worshipped throughout the Old World, generally in larger towns and cities. His worshippers are normally struggling merchants, rogues, gamblers and the lower classes.

Devout worshippers of Ranald believe if they really need something and pray to him enough, he will give it to them. Those who point out that his worshippers are poor and miserable wretches who shovel pig excrement for a living – and no amount of praying seems to change that – are usually written off as cynics. Sometimes they are beaten by angry mobs of pig excrement shovellers.



## Shallya – Goddess of Healing, Mercy and Childbirth

The daughter of mercy, the mother of mothers; these are a few of the names given Shallya, the most beneficent of all the Gods. Her temples are places of quiet and comfort – for the sick, for the dying, for those without homes. Her Priests aid the sick and weary and bring children into the world, for the Shallyans know the arts of midwifery better than any others. Many of the people of the Empire were born in a temple of Shallya; most of them return when they are ill or dying. In the end, it is to the temple of Shallya's father they go. Shallya is the daughter of Verena and Morr. She is normally portrayed as a young and beautiful maiden whose eyes are perpetually welling with tears, but she can also take the form of a white dove. She is an exceptionally important Goddess throughout the Old World. People visit her temples regularly, particularly when their children are born, get sick or are hurt. Old Worlders pray to Shallya all the time: when they are laid up with an illness that keeps them from their work, when they are hoping to have children, when they need mercy because their life has grown too hard. Of all the Gods, she is the only one who most people agree really listens.

Shallya is normally symbolized by a dove or by a heart and a drop of blood. Her Priests, most of whom are female, wear white robes, often hooded, with a heart symbol embroidered in gold thread on the left breast.

Shallya is worshipped throughout the Old World by people from all walks of life. She is particularly popular as a patron deity of pregnant women, as it is believed that she protects against miscarriages and eases the pain of childbirth. However, only the most blessed person goes through life without ever getting seriously ill or injured. Eventually every person prays with quiet desperation to Shallya for a healthy recovery.

Shallya is reputed to hear the prayers of those in the greatest need and helping them, for her love is so great. However, those whose children get sick and die suddenly, despite their prayers, are not so sure. Legends say she used to help everyone, but her father, Morr, who is the God of death, insisted that she might aid only one person per moment lest his kingdom suffer.

### Verena – Goddess of Learning and Justice

Verena is the Goddess of Wisdom, Reason, and Justice. She is especially popular among the learned and studious. In her aspect as the Goddess of Justice she is concerned with fairness, rather than with the letter of the law; she opposes tyranny and oppression as much as crime. Verena is generally portrayed as a tall and beautiful woman, dignified and serious. In legends, she sometimes takes the form of an owl or a venerable sage of either sex. She is said to be the wife of Morr. While he is the lord of the shadowy knowledge of dreams and the future, she is the lady of knowledge of the past and present.



Verena's symbol is the owl, a traditional symbol of wisdom. Her followers and Priests often wear medallions bearing the design of an owl or an owl's head. The Priests' robes are white, representing the light of knowledge and reason. A pair of scales is used to symbolize Verena in her aspect as Goddess of justice. It is sometimes combined with the owl design. A sword, with the point downwards, represents the weapon she is said to use to redress injustice in her more martial aspect.

Verena is worshipped throughout the Old World, especially in university towns like Altdorf and Nuln, where there are great temples in her honour. She has smaller temples in most towns and cities of any size, generally in the administrative districts, and all academies and places of learning have a chapel or shrine to her. Private shrines are also commonly found in the homes of magistrates, administrators, diplomats, and academics, including many magicians. Some of her most faithful adherents are Celestial Wizards.

Her greatest wishes are that mortals increase in knowledge and justice and throw off tyranny. Rather than the providing direct revelation, she inspires people to discover truth for themselves.

### Manann – God of the Sea

Feared and venerated by sailors and coastal folk, Manann is lord of the seas and the creatures within them. He controls tides and currents and is as unpredictable as the sea itself. He is as well known for wrath as mirth. The offspring of Taal and Rhya, he is usually portrayed as a huge bare-chested merman, wearing a spiked crown of black iron and flowing seaweed. He also takes the form of a whirlpool or waterspout, or a huge sea monster.



Manann is most commonly represented by an abstract wave design, a symbol he shares with several lesser water deities. His five-pointed crown is also a common symbol, as are the trident and the stylized albatross. His Priests normally wear robes of greenish blue or bluish grey, sometimes trimmed with a wave pattern in blue on white.

Manann is worshipped chiefly by those who depend on the sea: sailors, fisher folk, and the like. It is customary for people about to embark on a sea voyage to make a small sacrifice to him in the hope of a good crossing. He is also worshipped by the pirates of Sartosa and other places, who see him as a ferocious and warlike deity, quick to attack those who trespass in his watery domain.

Like Taal, his father, Manann is indifferent to mortal cares. Unlike Taal, Manann seems to take pleasure in his indifference. Some sages of Verena interpret this as a species of evil, but Manann's Priests dismiss this notion as shortsighted. They believe their God's indifference and capriciousness have some ultimate design that only a divine perspective can discern.

### Morr – God of Death and Dreams

Morr is the God of Death and the ruler of the underworld. He is normally depicted as a tall man of aristocratic bearing, with a detached, slightly brooding aspect. The souls of the dead belong to him, and he makes sure they are guided safely to his dark realm. He is the enemy of undeath in all its forms, for the creation of the undead is a raid on his domain. He is also the God of dreams and portents. He oversees dreamers' wanderings in the dream lands, which border the realm of the dead, and sends portents to visionaries and the mad. Morr is said to be Verena's husband, and in many tales, he seeks her counsel.

### ANCIENT WORSHIP

*Some scholars believe they can trace the origins of many gods and religious practices back to ancient tribal times. Little is known about this "Old Faith" other than a few scratched runes and strange inscriptions. Believed to be a primitive form of nature worship, traces of this elder religion can still be seen, if one knows where to look. Some scholars point to common threads of myth and lore that span much of the Old World as proof that this old way was once a widespread religion. Certainly, the weird stone circles in which they were said to perform their blood soaked sacrifices can be found throughout the Empire. Most cults dismiss this dead faith, and actively seek to subvert any "elder meaning" held by the monoliths and circles. Only the priests of Taal and Rhya, together with the Jade and Amber Order, see any value in these eldritch and ancient standing stones.*

The most common symbols of Morr are the black rose, the raven and the stone portal. His Priests wear black, hooded robes, without any symbols or adornment.

Morr is known throughout the Old World. He is not an everyday God; he is worshipped mainly by the bereaved, who offer up prayers and sacrifices in the hope that their departed will reach his kingdom safely and prosper there. Interpreters of dreams and those who wish to be free of nightmares also invoke him. In addition, many Amethyst Wizards consider Morr to be their patron.

On the surface, Morr seems an indifferent God, pulling all of the living into his domains, but his Priests know that, at heart, he is a God of grace, for he protects dreamers and the dead, securing them in his kingdoms. His opposition to necromancy and his provision of portents are both signs of his grace.





Ten thousand flagellants dragging the automorial of Middenheim Delivered from the Darkness.

# THE COLLEGES OF MAGIC

In former times the people of the Empire had little to do with magic, believing all sorcery to be inherently evil. The Priests of Sigmar taught that magic was the stuff of Chaos, responsible for the existence of mutants and the source of all the world's ills. So it was that for many hundreds of years wizards and witches were sought out and burned, and many innocents were slain in this way as well as many genuine practitioners of the secret arts. In the countryside it was still possible to find local herbalists, fortune-tellers and such kinds of primitive magicians as thrive upon superstition and ignorance. Yet even these folk were not safe from the zealots amongst them, and many found themselves driven from village to village, or tortured and burned by the Witch Hunters.

Those educated men who studied the lore of magic and the dark gods did so in great secrecy. These were likely to be rich and powerful men who hoped to gain by the powers of darkness some advantage in business, politics, or war. So it was that in every city there grew up covens whose members practised the debased rites of sorcery in hidden places at the dead of night.

Such things changed a great deal in the time of the Great War against Chaos, which began more than two hundred years ago. During that terrible war the dark gods rose in the north and cast their minions upon the world, engulfing the lands of the Kislevites. So great was the threat to all the world that the free peoples made common cause to fight the armies of Chaos and for the first time Men, Elves, and Dwarfs lent their efforts to overthrow the dark enemy. At this time the renowned Elven Sorcerer Teclis travelled to the Old World at the request of Magnus the Pious. There he

and his companions fought side by side with the armies of Men and Dwarfs and the courage and might of the Elves did much to win the trust of Magnus.

One of Teclis' deeds was to find such low sorcerers and hedge wizards as existed in the Empire and teach them a few rudimentary spells of fire, lightning bolts, and thunderous noises, which they employed against the minions of Chaos. These new Battle Wizards proved an invaluable, if not entirely trusted, addition to Magnus' armies. Many Witch Hunters were aghast that Sigmar's folk should embrace the secrets arts, but the wise counsel and undoubted learning of Teclis won over the majority. Soon, the new breeds of wizards were hailed as saviours of the Empire alongside Magnus the Pious himself, who became Emperor of all the land of Sigmar.

## THE CREATION OF THE COLLEGES

Upon his ascension to the throne Magnus asked Teclis and Finreir to help him create an institution whereby wizards might be properly trained in the full secrets of magic and spellcraft. The new Emperor had witnessed firsthand the usefulness of controlled magic driving back the forces of Chaos on the battlefield. He stated the Empire could not allow itself to abandon an asset as valuable as magic, especially in the face of his uncertainty as to whether the forces of Chaos had truly been defeated or just driven back temporarily.

At first, Finreir advised against this, claiming the secrets of magic and spellcraft were not meant for Humans. Humans and Elves had come to blows in the past and would probably do so again. Teclis, however, took a longer view. He reasoned the safety or doom of the Old World lay in the hands of the Humans of the Empire, for their lands were the most populated and they held the greatest kingdoms and mightiest armies on the continent. As even grudging allies to the Elves, the Humans could prove an important safeguard in any future war against the Chaos Gods and their minions. The Elves no longer had the strength to win such a war alone. Even more importantly, Teclis told Finreir, if the Humans were unable to resist the physical and spiritual predations of Chaos, they might also fall to the Dark Gods one day, and what then? Ulthuan, and perhaps even the entire globe, would be finished.

After much private debate on the matter, Teclis' wisdom eventually prevailed, and so he and Finreir founded the Eight Orders of Magic in Altdorf per Magnus' request. For the good of the Empire, Altdorf was chosen as it was close enough to Magnus' seat of power in Nuln for him to keep an eye on the budding Orders, but not so close to him that should they implode they would drag him down with them before he could react.







Teclis taught how all magic was derived from Chaos and was inevitably tainted by it, but could be controlled and purified by a trained practitioner. Men learned how the raw power of magic blew from the northern realms of Chaos in the form of eight sorcerous winds that represented unique types of magic. For this reason, the sign of all magic is the symbol of Chaos itself – the eight-pointed star. For each wind Teclis founded a separate school of magic and taught its first Masters. He judged the mind of Man inadequate to the mastery of all the eight Winds of Chaos but, with care and study, he believed that humans were able to contain the power of one of them. These became known as the Colleges of Magic, and they were the foremost schools of magic in the Old World.

In the Summer of 2304 IC, Magnus announced that Altdorf would house the new Orders of Magic under the protection of the Prince of that city, and Teclis taught the first Masters and laid down the laws by which they were to study before he returned to the Elven kingdoms of Ulthuan.

Riots erupted on the streets and people fled when the High Elves worked their arts to alter the nature of Altdorf to accommodate the new College buildings. Though people would eventually return, they found their city much as it always was, but also vastly different.

The magic used to alter the fabric of the city made the city unmappable, and Altdorfers were left to navigate its labyrinthine streets by relying on landmarks rather than a sense of direction. This led to further rioting, but martial law ensured the populace, though grudgingly, accepted the new order.

Once established, the new Orders of Magic began courting the Guilds and their leaders. It seemed the

Wizards wasted no time in getting involved in the complexities of Altdorf politics. The Grand Prince, who distrusted these new developments, established a separate state of citizenry, the 'Magister,' to curb the growing power, while complex trade laws, voting rights, and rules of land ownership served as a stopgap measure to control the Wizards' alarming influence in the city.

Over the next several years, the Wizards and the nobility of the city jockeyed for control, engaging in a complex dance of negotiation and intrigue. Though with each decade, the Orders carved a little more power for themselves, and even now, it is fashionable among the city's elite to keep a Wizard in their courts. It remains to be seen what the future holds for this impressive political force, for many Wizards have the ears of the most mighty and powerful, moving through all levels of society, unimpeded.

Thus today there are eight Colleges, each of which forms the headquarters of one of the Orders of Magic in the Empire. Each has its own Masters, and specialises in the teaching of a single type of Battle Magic to the exclusion of all others, and has its own distinct sorceries, eccentricities, obsessions and unique sets of traditions, according to the nature of the magical energy they harness. yet all are aspects of that great and potent source of magic that is Chaos itself.

The master of the Colleges of Magic is known as the Supreme Patriarch, and throughout the Empire, his word is law in all matters magical. Though his edict is broad, the Supreme Patriarch retains a fierce loyalty to his own Order. Indeed, it has become traditional for an incumbent's first decree to be the realignment of the Wheel of Magic – the revered symbol of all the Colleges – so that his own Order's symbol stands pre-eminent at the wheel's zenith.

## THE LIGHT ORDER

The wizards of the Light Order are sometimes known as the White Wizards or Hierophants. Their especial study is knowledge and for this reason they are also called the Order of the Wise. The Lore of Light lies under the province of the First Lore of Magic, which is called the Wind of Hysh. The symbols of the First Lore are many, and the most important is the Serpent of Light. There are many other arcane symbols to be seen in the mystical pictures and statues in the College of Light of which the Tree of Learning, the Tower of Isolation, the Candle and the Pillar of Wisdom are the most common. The colour of the robes of the Order is white, and a serpentine staff is often carried.

Rumours has it that many of the teaching of the Light College came from a source other than Ulthuan, and indeed many of their trapping, titles and rituals of the Light Wizards seem to echo the magical practices of lands far to the south.

The college's rune is itself a curiosity, for it little resembles the serpent that it represents. For Light Wizards, its form underpins their belief that they are the most accomplished and learned of wizards, for the rune seems to indicate one pre-eminent lore atop the Wheel of magic. Whilst this belief might at first seem to be conceit of the highest order, there is a kernel of truth at its heart. Light Magic is particularly effuse and evasive, hard to detect and ever harder to master. Alone of the colleges, light Wizards must commonly act in concert with one another to harness the energy of Hysh and to best their gods.

The magical energies of Hysh are the most effusive of all kinds of magic and quickly penetrate solid things and soak away even into the very rocks that lie beneath the ground. For this reason, the spells that bind the Wind of Hysh are especially elaborate and ritualistic and Light Magic is reckoned the most difficult of all to master. Because of this there are many acolytes and lowly wizards whose duties are to keep up the chorus of incantations and various spells of purity which are sung constantly night and day each day of the year. They must also ensure that the thousands of candles and lamps are kept ever alight, that the incense burners are full of their pungent offerings, and that the proper chimes and bells are all struck at the appointed ritual hours.

The magic of the Order has many potent applications and is most renowned for its powers of healing and protection. Yet the Order also has mastery of light and brightness to a fearsome degree and wizards can cast blinding lights of great power that can burn and consume. The Wizards of the Order of Light are reckoned the wisest of Men and rulers often seek their counsel from distant lands.

The principle building of the College of Light lies at a mystic conjunction within the bounds of the city of Altdorf, yet, like many of the magical colleges, its

whereabouts goes largely unrecognised by those around. Thanks to its clever positioning upon lines of arcane convergence, an ordinary mortal will never chance upon it. It exists within a secret space within a space, a plot of land parallel to but separate from the mundane world.

To those who do discover its whereabouts, the building presents an aspect unlike any other in Altdorf or, indeed, the Old World. The College forms a gigantic pyramid whose shape retains and concentrates the power of the Wind of Hysh. Within its walls, hundreds of minor wizards maintain the ritual incantations that go on eternally, so that the entire building hums and drones with radiant arcane power. Because of the high levels of Hysh energy, the stone walls appear translucent and the thousands of lights that burn within make the whole pyramid glow with light. It is an awesome and strange sight indeed and one that few of Altdorf's inhabitants would imagine lies within their city.

Deep in the darkest dungeons of the College, beneath the pyramid, and protected by many twisting tunnels, traps and magical fields, lies the greatest magical treasure house in the Old World. This was created by the Elven mage Teclis as a repository and prison for many of the sorcerous objects and creatures of power captured during the Great War against Chaos. It is the sacred duty of the Guardians of the Light, an arcane society to which only the most powerful Wizards of the Order belong, to keep these powerful evils safely locked away from the world.



## THE GOLDEN ORDER

The Wizards of the Golden Order study the Lore of Metal, or Alchemy, that lies under the province of the Second Lore of Magic, which is called the Wind of Chamon. The symbol of the Second Lore is the soaring eagle and the colour of the robes worn by wizards of the Order is yellow. The Second Lore is the Lore of Metals and alchemical change and, due to the nature of their studies, Gold Wizards often bear the traces of their experiments. Their robes may be stained or sooty and their beards singed or marked with vivid chemical spills.

The Gold College chose a soaring eagle as their symbol of their magical wind. It is an odd choice in many ways, for whilst soar high above the world, Gold Magic is heavy and dense, and quickly sinks into the ground. Yet the eagle was ever a symbol of power and nobility to the Elves of Ulthuan from whom the knowledge of Gold Magic was learnt, and it is this tradition that the Gold College claims to follow.

For outsiders (who are often less than inclined to be charitable about the Gold College) the soaring eagle is considered more an indication of the wizards' aloofness, and their assumed superiority over their fellow men. In truth, Gold Wizards are egotistical in the extreme and their action of little to dispel such beliefs. There is some speculation that the Gold Wizards indulge in intellectual vanity by way of compensation for their marred physique. Constant tinkering with acids and molten metals has left many a Gold Wizard heavily scarred, burned and mutilated, leaving only their minds with any claims of perfection.

The magical energy of the Wind of Chamon is heavy and very dense. It is attracted to metal as metal itself is attracted to a magnet, except that it is most attracted to the heaviest of elements and most especially to gold. It is said that this alone accounts for the most intelligent races, inciting greed, violence, and sometimes even war.

The Wizards of the Golden Order are the most accomplished alchemists of all Men in the Old World. They practise the transmutation of metals as well as spells of forging and runic inscription. In this last mentioned they are far inferior to Dwarf Runesmiths, but they are less affected by the madding power of gold that metal has over Dwarfkind and so have the mastery of many spells which no Dwarf would dare to learn. Though much of their magic is of this nature, Gold Wizards are able to conjure molten metals which scorch and consume and they can also cast spells to corrode and weaken iron in the blink of an eye.

The buildings of the Golden Order are like no other. They are neither rich nor ostentatious but are more along the lines of a great forge with many furnaces and tall chimneys that belch multi-coloured glowing smoke into the air. It is much to the relief of the citizens of Altdorf that this College lies not near the centre of the



city but upon its edge by the River Reik, whose waters cool the forges and which periodically run with fantastical colours following some great experiment. Unlike many of the Colleges of Magic, that of the Golden College is not hidden from view, but few go near it owing to the evil smells and thick smoke which surround it and to which the Gold Wizards themselves appear impervious.

## THE JADE ORDER

The Wizards of the Jade Order study the Lore of Life that lies under the province of the Third Lore of Magic, which is called the Wind of Ghyran. The symbol of the Third Order is the Coil of Life and the colour of the robes worn by wizards of the Order is green. This rune embodies the cyclical flow of life in all its forms and can be seen again and again in the traditions and vestments of the jade Wizards, from the coiled sickles and wreaths many carry, to the ancient cyclopean circles where many perform their moonlit rituals of equinox and solstice.

To Jade Wizards, the Coil of Life also serves as a reminder of the continual shift of reality. Just as the season change from summer to winter and back again, or as living being die, only for life to be born anew from their mouldering flesh, so does the circle of apex and zenith dictate every facet of existence. So it is that Jade Wizards are least perturbed by a storm of a magic's onset. For every storm that wreaks havoc, there is an inevitable period of comparatively calm. Thus to



Jade Wizards, a storm of magic is merely another part – albeit an unpredictable one – of the endless cycles that govern the world.

In addition to the Coil of Life, which may be recognised as a spiral, these wizards also show such symbols as the triskele and the oak leaf, and they often go about barefoot so that they can feel the Wind of Ghyran upon their feet. Each wizard carries a sickle, small or large, which is the badge of attainment amongst his kind.

The magical energies of Ghyran precipitate like rain upon the earth, forming pools and eddies which only those attuned to the sight of magic can see. These magical pools flow into natural watercourses and, for this reason, the power of Ghyran is closely bound up with water and thence with vegetation and living things. When the winds of Chaos blow most strongly it is said that the very streets become awash with the power of magic flowing like streams, yet of this the common man sees and suspects nothing.

Jade Wizards are, of all wizards, the most attuned to nature and the least likely to be found within the confines of cities. They love nature and living things, for their studies teach them about the harmony of nature and the balance between all living things. Jade Wizards roam the forests and wild places of the Empire where the power of magic flows through the world most freely. Because they are so closely tied to the power of nature their own powers tend to wax and

wane with the seasons, being vigorous in spring, most powerful in the summer, waning over the fall to become weakest over winter. Jade Wizards have power over nature and can cast spells, which cause thorns and briars to spring out of the earth, woods to appear, or mighty winds to suddenly bowl over their enemies. At his command a Jade Wizard can bring rain out of a cloudless sky or cause the very rocks of the earth to fly into the air.

The Jade College is the centre of the Order, but few wizards abide there, and even those who would learn the Lore of Life are likely to do so under the stars. Throughout the Empire there are many hidden forest groves where the Jade Wizards conduct their rituals and keep many of their secret treasures. These take the form of circles of stone and often lie at the confluence of three streams, for such places are powerful in the magical lore of Ghyran. Within the city of Aldorf itself, the College takes the form of a walled enclosure, plain and unimposing to the outside world, yet hidden within is a living College of trees whose boughs form the beams and pillars of mighty halls. Glittering pools and streams flow amongst the glades of this hidden world and at its centre is a wondrous silver lake where the power of Ghyran collects and whose enchanted waters are said to be able to cure all maladies.

## THE GREY ORDER

The Wizards of the Grey Order study the Lore of Shadow that lies under the province of the Fifth Lore of Magic, which is called the Wind of Ulgu, the symbols of the Fifth Lore is the Sword of Judgement and the colour of the robes worn by wizards of the Order is grey. It is in equal parts promise and threat, for a sword can be wielded in defence or in judgement, and the Grey Wizards are deep in the prosecution of both. The orientation of the sword, its point directed downwards, is no accident. It serves as a reminder both to noble and peasant that the justice of the Grey Wizards hangs ever over their heads, ready to descend at a moment's notice. True to their Order's symbol they usually carry swords, though often concealed beneath their robes.

There are many further meanings to the Sword, and the Grey Wizards use pre-eminently to mark meeting places, ritual circles and other places of power. Even the slightest alteration of the symbol's rendering can significantly alter the message it conveys – provided one is privy to the details of the code. However, few men outside the confines of the Grey College can claim to know more than a handful of iterations, and most of those scraps of knowledge are likely mere deceptions carefully set by the Grey Wizards to lead other astray.

Of all the Orders of wizards they are the most secretive and least easily recognised, and are not widely trusted or liked by common folk, who believe them to be sinister and scheming. For this reason they are sometimes called Trickster Wizards in scorn, though they call themselves the Grey Guardians.

The magical energies of Ulgu boil across the ground like a shifting mist, visible to those attuned to magic, evoking only a sense of mistrust and concealment to ordinary folk. It is most affected by the mortal winds, which blow across the earth and it rears into mighty clouds beneath the influence of storms and gales. Yet it is at its most potent in the still, dank, and threatening fogs and mists that bring a chill to the air and hide everything in a cloak of shadow.

Grey Wizards are wanderers by nature whose journeys, often undertaken in darkness, always seem to imply some great or sinister purpose. Yet they do not talk easily of their deeds, or of other matters much, for they are aware of the distrust of their fellow men and prefer to remain inconspicuous. Their powers, though considerable, do not lend themselves well to the favour of ordinary folk, being bound up in spells of concealment, illusion, and death by a number of sinister and unseen ways.

The Grey College itself is a worn and shabby stone building ill-positioned in the back alleys of Altdorf's poorest and most disreputable district. Even the town watch prefer to keep out of this area, and no honest citizen would ordinarily risk entering such a den of rogues and cut-throats. The building is not large and its appearance is in no way dissimilar to those beside it. Grey Wizards come and go by any number of secret entrances situated in the surrounding streets, and it is suggested that a network of tunnels extend beneath the building and throughout the city. What goes on within its crumbling halls is anyone's guess.



## THE CELESTIAL ORDER

The Wizards of the Celestial Order study the Lore of the Heavens, or Astromancy, that lies under the province of the Fourth Lore of Magic which is known as the Wind of Azyr. The symbol of the Fourth Lore is the Comet of Power and the colour of the robes worn by wizards of the Order is blue. It is perhaps the most direct of all the Colleges of Magic's iconography, for the power of the Celestial Wizards floats on the Wind of Azyr among the stars. Every aspect of celestial lore is rooted in the movement of heavenly bodies and their influence upon the world. And it is therefore little wonder that Celestial Wizards so openly display the source of power to which they are bound.

### THE COMET OF KELLHOFER

*Heinrich Schweinkopf was angry. Very angry. Ever since graduating from the Celestial College, he had been steward of the ancient observatory in the Eerie Downs, east of Bechafen. He was a powerful Astronancer, a diviner of the past, present and future. But he hadn't seen this coming... His past, it seemed, had caught up with him.*

*Steffrik von Kellhofer was a Wizard of the Amethyst College and the two of them were bitter rivals. Six months earlier, Heinrich had been rudely awoken by Dwarfen craftsmen laying foundation for a huge tower, not ten paces from his observatory. Von Kellhofer, it seemed, had hired the Dwarfs to build a tower of his own right next door. Von Kellhofer had then held a grand, pompous opening ceremony whilst Heinrich sat brooding in his tower.*

*But whilst von Kellhofer fancied that he'd had the last laugh, Heinrich had been plotting his revenge, which was currently plummeting through the heavens on a collision course with his rival's tower.*

*The 'Comet of Kellhofer', as Heinrich had named it, was on its way, though his rash actions had inadvertent consequences. Deeming it a sign from the Great Maw, a migrating tribe of Ogres followed the comet and came upon the Astronancers tower. But Heinrich had foreseen their approach and summoned aid from an army from Talabheim garrisoned nearby, who arrived in time to do battle with the marauding Ogre Tribe.*

*Despite being the Wizard responsible for calling down the Comet of Kellhofer – and accidentally luring the migrating Ogre horde to ravage the surrounding area – Heinrich Schweinkopf spent much of the battle aiding the Empire soldiers doing battle at the foot of his tower. As much as it pained him to be fighting on the same side as von Kellhofer, Schweinkopf wanted to be alive and well when the comet hit.*

*Despite saving the day almost single-handedly with a succession of devastating spells, von Kellhofer failed to notice his doom approaching until it was too late. The comet struck home, felling his tower and burying the poor wizard beneath the rubble.*



Yet there are subtleties to the Comet of Power that are lost to the casual observer. The narrow tail and broadening head of the comet mirrors the ever-expanding knowledge of the Celestial College. Furthermore, the comet is usually depicted with its head reaching skyward, symbolising the transcendent ambition of the Celestial Wizards. Only on robes of mourning, worn in reverence to a departed senior fellow of the college, is the symbol inverted, in this case commemorating a great man fallen, in death, to the level of common folk.

As well as the comet, which is their special symbol, they employ such heavenly signs as stars and crescent moons by which they might easily be recognised by even the most ignorant of men.

The magical energies of Azyr are light and insubstantial and quickly dissipate into the upper portion of the heavens where they form a backdrop of drifting blue cloud. This layer is visible to wizards and creatures with magical insight but, like all the Winds of Magic, invisible to ordinary folk. This layer of cloud is said to distort the light of celestial bodies such as the stars, moons, and planets in different ways. As the Winds of Chaos blow from immaterial realms where time has no meaning, it is possible by the manner in which celestial bodies are distorted by the drifting cloud layer.

In former times the people of the Empire into the night skies and plotting the movements of astral bodies on trans-chronological charts, the complexity of which is baffling to the uninitiated. To this end they are expert in the use and manufacture of precise instruments of calculation such as astrolabes and telescopes. By such means they can foretell of danger and disaster, and so the advice of the Celestial Order is valued above that of all others in times of war or hardship.

Celestial Wizards have some ability to shift the fate of Men by manipulating the course of the Winds of Magic. They can also command the powers of the heavens to call down lightning, thunderbolts, and comets upon the heads of their enemies. For this reason, Celestial Wizards are often sought out as fortune tellers and augers, but they are equally respected for the awesome powers that lie at their disposal.

The buildings of the Celestial College lie close to the centre of Altdorf. None but those with magical sight would know of this, for cunning spells of concealment shield the buildings of the Celestial College from the curiosity of passers-by. As a result, few know that they pass the College's doors each day, and few maps show the true extent of the College, whilst many do not show it at all. It may come as a surprise to many, therefore, to discover that the towers of the Celestial College are the tallest of all buildings in the city, overlooking the Temples of Sigmar and rising far above the Palace of the Princes of Altdorf. There are sixteen of these tall, elegant towers, which is four times four, four being the number of Azyr in the lore of sorcery. Each tower is topped by a glass dome from which the Wizards of the Celestial Order observe the night sky, and from these observatories the Wizards of the Celestial Order plot the movements of the heavens. Information gathered from the towers is fed into a magical astrolabe at the heart of the College that spins on the head of a silver needle and from which the Celestial Wizards read the myriad potential futures.

## THE AMETHYST ORDER

The Wizards of the Amethyst Order study the Lore of Death, that some call Necromancy or Spirit Lore. This Lore lies under the province of the Sixth Lore of Magic, which is called the Wind of Shyish. The symbol of the Sixth Lore is the scythe and the colour of the robes worn by wizards of the Order is purple. Wizards of this order often carry a scythe by way of a staff, and in this they may be easily recognised. As well as this symbol of their Order, they also favour designs of skulls and bones, the hourglass, and the thorned rose, by which images all people in the Empire recognise the symbols of the grave.

For wizards of the Amethyst College, the grim aspect of death hangs heavy about them. To be a practitioner of Death Magic is a weighty burden, for an Amethyst Wizard will never be entirely trusted by those around him. The suspicious dread is only fuelled by the silent

and sombre nature of Amethyst Wizards, who prefer to communicate with one another through means of telepathy rather than speech, and whose little-used voice therefore have dusty tones more suited to the long dead rather than the living. Even other wizards – whose own oddities and habits are nothing short of peculiar to outsiders – find something eminently distasteful about the morbid obsessions of the Amethyst Wizards.

For this reason, the Scythe is always portrayed as a scythe inverted, to represent a heavy burden propped against the ground. Occasionally, an Amethyst Wizard will carve a tomb with a pair of overlaid and reversed Shyish runes. Only a fool enters such a place, for thus symbol warns of great evil slumbering therein and acts as a ward against its escape.

The magical energies of Shyish are the most difficult to see of all the winds of Magic, they blow through past, present and future, weaving through the time stream, following the undetectable currents of fate. Many say that the Wind of Shyish blows strongly where death lies most heavily, that its energies are drawn to death and that doom follows in its wake. It blows over battlefields and mortuaries, it clings around charnel pits and graveyards, and falls over the gibbet like a shadow.

Wizards of the Amethyst Order are shunned by the folk of Altdorf and there is reason to see why. Yet even so there are many who secretly crave contact with the spirit world, with departed loved ones, and with those dead whose secrets they wish to learn. The Wizards of the Amethyst Order can contact the spirit world and the dead can speak through them, for they have mastery



over spirits of all kinds both benign and otherwise. It is said that they can also cause the dead to rise from their tombs and have the power to bend the dead to their will.

As the Wizards of the Amethyst Order have power over the dead so they also have the power to deal death. It is said that a wizard can steal the soul of his enemy or suck his life from him leaving nought but a husk. They can cast a wind of death that dries and destroys flesh, or envelop their foes in a black shroud of unending, suicidal despair. Such tricks are as nothing compared to the nightmarish sorceries of the Undead, yet they are of a similar nature, and the Amethyst Wizards will be forever tainted in the eyes of their fellow Men by their association with the powers of darkness.

The College building of the Amethyst Order is dark and sepulchral, shuttered against the light and only dimly illuminated even in the dead of night. Within its silent halls the dust lies thick where it is dragged by the Winds of Shyish from all the ages, bringing with it the stench of eternal decay. Though the citizens of Altdorf are fully aware of this building, none dare approach it for fear of damning their immortal soul forever. Its crooked towers are the abode of bats and carrion birds, and its cellars crawl with all manner of verminous creatures.

The Amethyst College overlooks the infamous haunted Cemetery of Old Altdorf, where thousands were interred in mass graves after the ravages of the Red Plague. The cemetery itself is associated with all manner of foul rumour, and the Amethyst Order's proximity to it is taken by many as proof of unholy practices by the secretive Wizards. True evidence of such deeds has yet to come to light, but still the good citizens of Altdorf give both the cemetery and College a wide berth, leaving the Order to their secrets.

## THE BRIGHT ORDER

The Wizards of the Bright Order study the Lore of Fire or Pyromancy, that lies under the province of the Seventh Lore of Magic, which is called the Wind of Aqshy. The symbol of the Seventh Lore is the Key of Secrets and the colour of the robes worn by wizards of the Order is red or orange. The Key of Secrets represents the unlocking of hidden knowledge, and wizards of the College may carry keys as a sign of their authority. Indeed, progression through the eight ranks of the Bright College is marked at every transition by the aspirant's passage through a filigreed gate, each larger and more imposing than the last. The Key of Secrets is central to every tradition and ritual performed by Bright Wizards, and indeed is used as a badge of rank by many of the order. The more keys a wizard carries, and the heavier the chains with which they are bound, the greater his power and the higher his standing within the ord. this is not to say that the Key of Secrets is purely figurative symbol of power. Bright Wizards commonly joke that just as their knowledge is



the key to power, their power grants them the key to any door. After all, they are few gates or portals able to withstand the focussed fury of a determined Fire Wizard.

The Masters of the College have, as part of their ceremonial regalia, a bunch of seven keys of differing metals. Other symbols associated with the pyromancers are the flame and the burning torch. Wizards of this Order are often ruddy of skin and some have hair that is red and wild that betrays their fiery nature. Wizards skilled in the pyromantic arts wear red tattoos upon their arms and faces. These are said to writhe and change form to make the spells of fire.

The magical energies of Aqshy are like a hot dry wind; it gutters like flame in the breeze and runs wild over hot sands and sun-baked fields. It is powerful where there is flame and fire, and is whipped into a frenzy as it swirls over the volcanoes of the Worlds edge Mountains. All flame becomes a vortex for Aqshy magic and the rites of the Bright College are rites of fire. By means of their powers, the Bright Wizards control both magic and flame, and theirs is one of the most spectacular and impressive of all sorceries.

Bright Wizards are held above all others when it comes to battle. They know many spells of destruction, and their ability to cast flames and fiery blasts is a very visible reminder of their great power. A Bright Wizard can wield flame like a sword, hurl fireballs and raise searing walls of fire to burn his enemies. Such powers

are highly visible and very destructive, and few ordinary folk would wish to seek the assistance of a Bright Wizard in any trivial matter. The powers of the pyromancers are not well suited to subtle tasks, and where they bend their powers, ruin and destruction is sure to follow, whatever is intended.

The College of the Bright Wizards lies behind a barrier of magic that makes it invisible to ordinary folk of Altdorf. It is sometimes said to appear in the heat of summer, as a shimmering haze or mirage, glittering above the city. But ordinarily its buildings appear only as dark and splintering ruins surrounded by an ancient fire-blackened plaza. It is commonly supposed that warren of streets stood there before fire consumed part of the city, leaving the College intact in a sea of ruin. Afterward the Bright Wizards cast their spell of concealment, but even so none of Altdorf's inhabitants have deemed it wise to build too closely to the headquarters of the Bright Order. Were that spell to be removed it would be possible to see the spectacular fire-topped towers that rises from the College, not as tall as those of the Celestial College, but infinitely more awesome. Behind its barrier of sorcery it is always dark, with not even the light of stars to illuminate the towers of the College. Instead the towers are topped by a gigantic beacon that burns both day and night, casting an eerie red glow over the entire College and illuminating the sorcerous inner realm that is the Bright College. Within its fiery depths are the conjurations of the Bright Order conceived.

## THE AMBER ORDER

The Wizards of the Amber Order study the Lore of Beasts that lies under the province of the Eighth Lore of Magic, called the Wind of Ghur. The symbol of the Eighth Lore is the Arrow and the colour of the robes worn by wizards of the Order is brown. The Arrow is the mark of Taal, god of wild places and the hunt. Therefore, it was naturally chosen as the symbol of Amber Colleges and wind of Ghur. Just as the Arrow is straight and unswerving, so are those who bear it as their mark. Amber Wizards are famously plainspoken and have little patience for those who would conceal their actions beneath fine words or false praise.

Just as they abhor evasion in conversation, Amber Wizards are wont to direct action and matters martial. Not for them is the careful gathering of power behind the scenes, of subtle manoeuvre until the opportune hour. Rather the foes must be opposed directly, and with all speed – particularly if that foe is being circumspect in his actions. Amber Wizards believe that to prevaricate is to brazenly display the weakness in indecision, which in turn daws in further foes like carrion. Best to stand firm from a position of strength, think they, than to scabble around in search of a victory already forfeit through delay.

The members of this, the last and wildest of all the Orders of wizards, can be easily recognised by their savage appearance. As well as the arrow, which is the



sign of the hunter and woodsman, they wear talismans of teeth, claw and feather, and carry charms of herbs in small leather pouches that hang about their necks. Their clothes are often those of the wild woods rather than those of other wizards and they are grizzled and weatherworn in appearance and often carry bows. They are called Shamans by some and Brown Wizards by others.

The magical energies of Ghur are those of beasts and wild places most inimicable to man. It is a sharp wind that is like a claw or tooth. It is said to be a merciless and inhuman magic that cares little for the ways of Mankind and other civilised creatures. It resides most strongly in the minds of wild animals, and to learn the ways of the Amber Order is to open one's mind to the raw and savage power of the wild.

It is small wonder then that Amber Wizards are often solitary individuals, preferring the company of wild beasts to that of their fellow men. They avoid human settlement unless they have some pressing need that draws them from their mountains or forests. With wild unkempt hair they often appear more like animals than men and it is commonly supposed that they can change into animals and travel through the eyes of the wild creatures and far-travelling birds.

The powers of the Amber Wizards give them control over beasts of all kinds as well as the ability to induce states of bestial terror in others. Amber Wizards have



mastery over the savage heart that lies under the cultivation and learning that adorns every human soul and masks its animal nature. They can also assume the powers of great beasts, such as bears, to attack their enemies tossing them aside like autumn leaves.

Of all the Orders of Wizardry, the Amber College is the only one which has no buildings or representation within Altdorf. Instead, the Masters of the Order inhabit a number of caves that lie beyond the city amongst the Amber Hills beyond the city, which are named after them. These are rocky and wooded, unsuitable for agriculture or other purposes. These refuges are not easily found and visitors are not welcomed. Other lairs are said to exist throughout the Empire in the depths of forests and high on mountaintops, but monstrous bears or other powerful wild beasts guard these solitary caves and it is a brave individual who dares disturb an Amber Wizard.

#### THE HALL OF DUELS

*The master of the Colleges of Magic is known as the Supreme Patriarch and his word is law in all matters magical throughout the Empire. The Winds of Magic blow strongest for the Supreme Patriarch's Order and fellow Wizards of that order find their powers greatly enhanced during his reign, while the other colleges will find their magic dimmed. Every eight years, representatives of the eight magical colleges in Altdorf meet, and a Wizard who has proved himself worthy may challenge the current Supreme Patriarch to a magical combat held in the Hall of Duels to decide which of them will reign as the Supreme Patriarch for the next eight years. This octagonal chamber contains the Staff of Volans at its centre and the Wizard who is able to grasp this ancient artefact will become the new Supreme Patriarch of the Colleges of Magic.*

*The competition to determine the dominant College of Magic takes the form of a violent contest of magic in which gladiator wizards and their followers battle to defeat their rivals. As soon as the duel commences, mighty spells of great power and cunning are unleashed in a magical conflict that can only be safely contained by the combined powers of a dozen or more Master Wizards. Tradition demands that the duel is not fought to the death, though on more than one occasion the magical feedback has left little of the loser to be buried, and even the victor is likely to nurse a scar or two as a reminder. More worrisome, but fortunately much rarer, are those occasions when there is a cataclysmic failure of the magical wards about the duel and a roiling cloud of uncontrolled magic escapes, wreaking havoc as it courses through the streets of Altdorf.*

*In years past this contest was unregulated and often resulted in the destruction of large parts of Altdorf and widespread carnage amongst the civilian population. Today the contest is held within the strict bounds of the hallowed Obsidian Hall and has become one of the most exotic spectacles in the Imperial calendar.*

# NIGHT OF A THOUSAND ARCANE DUELS

Every eight years representatives of the Colleges of Magic in Altdorf meet to decide which of them will reign as the Supreme Patriarch. This takes the form of a fierce contest finagle in which gladiator wizards have to defeat their rivals. During one such contest, the rivalries between the Colleges of Magic turned into outright violence and a storm of magic was unleashed that brought Altdorf to the brink of annihilation.

During the year 2415, the resentment and mistrust that existed between the different Orders of Magic reached breaking point. Indeed, the Emperor of the Time – the incompetent Dieter – purposefully stoked the fires of paranoia and jealousy between the orders, finding the petty squabbles between wizards to be a most entertaining pastime. So it was that when the octannual contest of magic commenced, hundreds of wizards took up their staffs to settle scores with those they believed had given insult against them. With so many challengers, the contests were not confined to the Hall of Duels alone, and as tempers flared many Battle Wizards sought to gain all advantage by fighting from fulcrums of power within their College grounds. Nor was arcane battle limited to duels between different Orders. Indeed, through a cunning coup the Patriarch of the Light Order was usurped and imprisoned within a crystal labyrinth by High Luminary Horx – later known as the White Pretender – who assumed the title of patriarch for himself. Drunk on power Horx thirsted for the means to challenge Supreme Patriarch Alric in his desperation he broke into the vaults beneath the Hall of Duels and opened the Book of Volans to glean the secrets of undiluted magic. In an instant his sanity was shattered, and a raging Storm of magic broke above Altdorf.

Sorcery rained from the sky. Eldritch bolts of power scoured furrows through Altdorf and pillars of liquid balefire wreaked havoc across the Colleges of Magic. Believing they were under attack from their rivals, the Orders of Magic responded with every scrap of lore at their disposal. Spells, artefacts and war machines that had not seen use in a generation were brought to bear and soon the skies were alight with fireballs, lightning bolts and multi-coloured gashes of light. No longer was this a test of skill, but an all-out war of magic. Whole quarters of Altdorf burned as the fire-wreathed Bright Wizards hurled sheets of flame and Luminarks of Hysh sent beams of searing light lancing across the city. As if rebelling against the conflagration, the Jade College itself seemed to come to life, trees reaching out to strangle any rival Wizard who dared approach. Amber Wizards descended upon the Celestial College's towering spires from atop Griffons been as their earth-bound kin shackled creatures from the depths of the Drakwald to their will and assaulted the Azure Gates from below. The Astromancers fought back with the fury of the heavens, smiting beast, monster and wizard alike with raging tempests and hurtling meteors.

As the night drew on, the Colleges became ever more desperate. Gold Wizards transmuted entire streets into silver, using gilded cobblestones to bribe mercenaries and brigands to fight for them. The Knights of Judgement, who owed oaths of allegiance to the Grey Order, rode forth at the behest of their Patriarch, the arcane sigils branded in their

armour transforming them into avatars of smoke and shadow. Albrecht Hauptman of the Amethyst Order even summoned forth Undead spectres to fight his foes, but many within his Order labelled him a Necromancer, and as the College was engulfed with infighting, wraiths and ghosts ran amok in the streets, feeding on the souls of Altdorf's cowering populace.

Viktor Helmgart, the Grand Theogonist, knew that unless this madness was stopped soon, there would be nothing left of Altdorf to save. Taking matters into his own hands, he gathered every able-bodied soldier he could and marched upon the Hall of Duels. Helmgart sundered the great arcane doors to the hall with a single blow of his warhammer and as the Theogonist and his warriors poured into the hall they saw Horx, gibbering insanely as all eight Winds of Magic danced between his fingertips. The first soldiers to move forward to apprehend Horx were engulfed in a corona of magic as the White Wizard unleashed the full spectrum of magic against them. Every second that passed left a score more of Helmgart's soldiers dead and only when Helmgart stepped before the wizard and, summoning every ounce of his faith, uttered a single word of justice in the booming voice of Sigmar himself, was Horx's magical onslaught halted. The White Pretender was taken aback for a split second, and in that pause a loud crack resounded throughout the Hall of Duels and Horx slumped to the ground as a Witch Hunter's enchanted bullet blew out the back of his head.

A vast pillar of magic erupted forth from Horx's corpse that tore through the roof of the Hall of Duels before separating and engulfing the fulcrums of power on which the duelling Patriarchs stand. Most were slain outright, their bodies torn asunder under the maelstrom. Only Alric and the imprisoned Patriarch of the Light Order survived the magical backlash, and under the scrupulous gaze of the Grand Theogonist they set about rebuilding the Colleges of Magic, introducing safeguards to prevent the cataclysmic events of the Night of a Thousand Arcane Duels from ever happening again.





The thaumodivinator of the Colleges of Magic on the eve of the Altdorf Mage Riots of 2217.

# THE IMPERIAL SCHOOL OF ENGINEERS

The engineers of the Empire are known amongst the peoples of the Old World as forward thinking, technologically advanced men of learning and progress. They are also known as eccentric (some would say mad) geniuses, forever risking their lives with preposterous, unfeasible, insane and downright dangerous inventions.

The Engineers School of Altdorf is a hive of invention and development where ever more complex weapons of war are created for the Imperial arsenals. Engineers toil sleeplessly in their workshops to develop deadlier weapons, or to improve existing ones. As well as the larger weapons of destruction, the Engineers have devised many cunning types of swords, clubs, maces and handguns. The Imperial School of Engineers in Altdorf is famed for its bizarre inventions, which can be most useful if they manage to function correctly. Most are eccentric in the extreme and have improbable and rather grandiose names like Von Tropp's Spring-assisted Chain Lasso and Kurstein's Whirling Blade of Doom. None of these more ambitious weapons actually work very well and they are sensibly avoided by the military.

Disorganisation is endemic among engineers. Suspicious of plagiarism, they scribble notes in indecipherable code. Blueprints are often lost in the explosions that frequently gut their workshops, or are discarded when a new idea obsesses them. The pursuit to rediscover lost inventions can be as much of a drive as the creation of new ones.

## THE MAD TILEAN


Founded over 500 years ago in 2012, the Stephan Franz School of Engineering Excellence, as it was known then, was the brainchild of Leonardo of Miragliano, a mad genius from the fractious land of Tilea. Coming from humble and obscure origins in the winding streets of Miragliano, Leonardo was an apprentice to that city's prince and was engaged in the works to rebuild the city when he came to the attention of Prince Cosimo himself, who, recognising the young man's talent, immediately placed him in charge of the entire project! After completely rebuilding the city in new and impregnable ways, Leonardo became court inventor to Cosimo, and it did not take long for news of his genius to spread to the other princes of Tilea. Eventually, Leonardo's travels took him to the Empire, a land riven with discord and war - notably due to the Vampire Count Vlad von Carstein.

The Empire as a nation had effectively ceased to exist at this point, with several of the crown princes of the various provinces declaring themselves Emperor, though none had the strength of arms to claim the

position outright. With the Vampire Wars raging, Leonardo of Miragliano was employed by the Reik Prince Stephan Franz of Altdorf to found an Engineering School to bolster his attempts to gain the Imperial Throne and stave off the legions of Undead that plagued his lands. Leonardo presided over this establishment and created many new war machines while he was there, most notable of all being the dreaded Imperial Steam Tanks. Twelve these armoured behemoths were created, though only eight now survive, maintained and developed by the engineers still.

This institution attracted many young, forward thinking individuals, eager to develop new and exciting technologies. They were at ease only when tinkering with hissing pistons and clanking gears within the diagram scrawled walls of their workshops. Inventors and enthusiasts flocked to the college's illustrious halls, but entry was admitted only to those who display the required talent and verve. Usually, only Imperial citizens are admitted. However, in honour of the genius Leonardo da Miragliano, who helped found the college, the School of Engineers welcomes many of his countrymen (Tileans have a reputation for being progressive freethinkers – a dangerous trait in the minds of most Imperial folk).





Over the years, the Engineer School grew larger, even attracting renegade Dwarf engineers cast out of their halls for dangerous ideas, such as trying to 'improve' on tried and tested Dwarf technology. Many of the Imperial Engineers are Dwarfs, often imaginative Master Guildsmen whose ideas are ignored or even outlawed by the very traditionally minded Dwarf Engineers Guild. The most well-known of these is the Dwarf Master Engineer Sven Hesselriesan. Sven was expelled from the Guild for his experiments with vapour powered devices and what was regarded as an unhealthy fixation with ships. He fled to the Empire where he subsequently invented a steam powered boat before taking it and a company of adventurers into the largely unexplored western continent in search of fame and fortune.

Leonardo eventually vanished without trace and there are many fantastical tales surrounding his disappearance, including that a rival of the Prince of Altdorf had him murdered, that he had departed on one of his insane undersea/heavier than air machines, or even that he had blown himself up in an ill-advised attempt to perfect the infamous Herstel-Wenckler Pigeon Bomb and mistakenly used a homing pigeon. Others say that Leonardo met his untimely death observing the inaugural test flight of a heavier than air flying machine, and that the machine crashed right on top of Leonardo whereupon its alcohol powered engine exploded demolishing part of the Engineering School itself. Whatever happened to Leonardo, his sketchbooks were lost with him and have become much sought after. Many of the devices he sketched in them cannot yet be made with the technology available in the Old World, but even so, such plans change hands for vast amounts of gold and are eagerly sought by mercenary princes.

#### LEONARDO OF MIRAGLIANO

*Leonardo designed an enormous number of strange and potentially very effective war machines in his illustrious career. Many of these are doodles on scraps of parchment or on the back of maps or military messages that Leonardo made to while away the time in camp when on campaign. He would give these doodles to the various mercenary princes he served on the off chance that they would actually ask him to make the machine so he could try it out. Usually his patrons were too busy with waging war and just stashed the plans for use later on, though most never went beyond the purely theoretical. One of Leonardo's favourite hobbies, and intellectual exercises, was to design leaning towers. He would set himself the problem of designing a tower that would stay up despite the most exaggerated angle of inclination. Soon princes of Tilea were in rivalry with each other to acquire Leonardo's latest design for the most outrageous and gravity defying tower! Gathered together at the Imperial School of Engineers in Altdorf they pursue their obsessions with a reckless disregard for their own personal safety. Though much of what the Engineers school produces is largely theoretical. They do occasionally come up with some of the most incredibly dangerous machines of war ever devised. Dangerous to whom is often a matter concern for the soldiers of the Empire armies they accompany, but when the inventions do work, they are spectacular.*

## THE IMPERIAL SCHOOL OF ENGINEERS

Until the time of Magnus the Pious, the Engineers School was under the patronage of the Reik Princes of Altdorf, working to devise even more ingenious machines of war. When the forces of the Dark Gods surged south from the Northern Wastes in 2302, the lands of the Empire were in danger of being completely destroyed until Magnus the Pious was able to unite the leaders of the disparate provinces under his banner to march north to meet the hordes of Chaos on the field of battle. The prince of Altdorf answered the call and many of the most lethal contraptions of the Engineering School went north with Magnus's army. The armies of Chaos were defeated outside the walls of Kislev and, with Magnus's subsequent crowning as Emperor, a dark time in the Empire's history was ended and the nation united under a single leader.

At this time, the capital of the Empire was in Nuln and, along with the founding of the Colleges of Magic, Magnus recognised the value of the Altdorf facility. Granted the title of Imperial College of Engineers (or more fully the Imperial College of Engineers and Stephan Franz School of Mechanical Expertise) it became an officially recognised Imperial establishment. In addition, the large number of foundries that the Reik Princes had constructed in Nuln became the Imperial Gunnery School. While the Gunnery School was built to refine existing technology and is more of a gigantic industrial complex than a research establishment (better and bigger cannons, more efficient blackpowder etc), the College of Engineers is a place of invention.

## BAD AND DANGEROUS TO BE AROUND

Nowadays, the principal work of the Imperial College of Engineers is coming up with new ideas to combat threats to the Empire – anti-flyer weapons, tunnelling machines, ice rays, alchemical bombs and other weird devices. Unlike the Colleges of Magic, which are each separate institutions, the College of Engineers mixes alchemists, mechanics, biologists, astronomers (as opposed to Celestial College astrologers) and all sorts of other deranged geniuses in a single place. It is a sprawling complex of firing ranges, bunkers for testing explosives, well-equipped laboratories and large open areas where failed experiments have levelled the surrounding buildings. Indeed, a great many of the buildings around the College of Engineers are new and the Fire Watch of Altdorf maintain a constant vigil over the Engineers for fear they may burn the entire city to the ground. The College is staffed by worried-looking porters, harried and soot-stained runners, and is a thriving hub of intellectual badinage, with engineers moving from mad project to mad project as their whim and finances takes them. Though some misguided engineers have tried to blend the power of magic and science together, engineers are first and foremost scientists, and the light of reason and method, not superstition, illuminates their genius! The College of

Engineers uses 'enlightened' technology alone, hence the difference between an Alchemist engineer and a Gold College Wizard (in fact, there is a degree of antipathy towards magic and other superstitious nonsense, and enmity between the two institutions).

## THE MARCH OF TECHNOLOGY

While the Imperial College of Engineers reputation grows ever more eccentric and fearsome, it continues to develop new, and ever more dangerous devices, though whether any will ever be as lethal as Leonardo's Steam Tanks remains to be seen. However, what is certain is that the manic geniuses will keep at it until they either succeed or blow themselves up trying.

Below is a selection of some the most famous (if not always very successful) inventions created by the School of Engineers.

### Von Brunel's Magnificent Sub-hydro Velocipator of Proven Durability

After floating adrift for several days in a barrel after an unfortunate incident involving a mistimed pigeon bomb fuse and an angry ship's captain, Engineer von Brunel wondered if there might not be some mileage in developing such a humble conveyance into something more ingenious. After much persistence, Brunel was able to convince the Prince of Altdorf that he could develop a system whereby a man could travel beneath the waves in such a device and, if equipped with a drill, punch holes in the hulls of enemy ships. Working in conjunction with the city's finest coopers, Brunel fashioned an undersea Velocipator that could travel for nearly a hundred yards before the breathless pilot was forced to surface. A system of pipes and tubes was introduced to allow the pilot to breathe, but further attempts to perfect the device were abandoned after Brunel himself piloted the Velocipator and it flooded, the wood having warped after such continued immersion, and sent him to the bottom of the Reik.



### Leon Todmeister's Fantabulously Far-reaching Harquebus of Unforeseeable and Unperceived Bereavement

Developed by Leon Todmeister after witnessing how accurate the long rifle employed by the huntsmen of the province of Hochland could be, this intricate long musket is carried by some Engineers to prove they are more than mere scholars and they embrace the purpose for which the majority of their creations are developed. The range of the 'improved' weapon is greater than a normal handgun thanks to a spiralling groove on the inside of the barrel, and a complex arrangement of lenses and sights that allow the shooter to pick out targets that would normally be too small to be shot at with any degree of accuracy. Todmeister himself claimed to be able to hollow out a gold piece at a range of up to 400 yards, though tales abound of how his vault was said to carry a purse full of pre-holed coins. Regardless of Todmeister's skill with the rifle, in the hands of a skilled marksman the Hochland long rifle is a feared weapon, with no enemy safe from the lead bullet of an Empire sharpshooter.

### Herstel-Wenckler Pigeon Bomb

An idea devised by engineers Karl Herstel and Stefan Wenckler after arching a meeting of the Street of a Thousand Taverns' Pigeon Fanciers Hundred Leagues race. The engineers wondered if it might be possible to train a bird to deliver an explosive device into the heart of the enemy before returning safely. Initial experiments with this concept were unsuccessful, with the original bombs proving too heavy and the overloaded pigeons plummeting to the street before exploding. Some simply flew off and exploded in the air, while others, obeying their homing instincts returned the bomb to their unfortunate owners, resulting in several rooftop coops being blown sky-high. Eventually, a determined cadre of pigeons were trained to fly away from the owner, and fitted with a bomb where the fuse was wrapped around a light metal harness that, when it burned to a certain point, fell away from the bird. The explosives were packed in a spiked casing that would stick to whatever it hit. In time, these pigeons developed a fearsome reputation... until they were employed against a contingent of recalcitrant Elves, who simply shot the birds from the sky Herstel and Wenckler have since moved on to other projects, and without their guidance, the enthusiasm to train up a new contingent of bomb-carrying pigeons soon faded.

### Auvork's Phantasmagorical Aerial Splendiferousness Enable

It has long been man's fervent wish to take to the air as the birds do, and this was the inspiration behind this incredible device. After much study of the anatomy and structure of a bird's wings, Rauvork built machine after machine with a singular lack of success. Fortunately, Rauvork was not cursed with the belief that his devices could never fail and attempted his first flights from comparatively low heights. Developments gleaned from rogue Dwarf Engineers' descriptions of

Gyrocopters enabled Rauvork to perfect his flying machine to the level where it could travel nearly a hundred yards through the air, but its application was limited due to the fact that the pilot would be exhausted from pedalling frantically to keep the device in the air. Plans for a two-man version of the Aerial Splendiferousness Enabler were proposed, but never built due to the difficulty in finding two people willing to leap from a tall building on such a temperamental device.



### Ferrara's Astounding Subterranean Drilling Momentum Facilitator

Obsessed with tales of the ratmen who supposedly dwelt beneath the surface of the Old World, Avel Ferrara decided to find out for himself whether or not such a race of creatures existed. Assisted by his sons, he developed a larger form of drill bit and began attempting to explore the world beneath the streets using his Facilitator.

Ferrara never found any evidence of these ratmen, but the military applications of his device were quickly realised when whole swathes of city streets subsequently collapsed along his route of travel. Several of Ferrara's devices were constructed to take part in the sieges of a number of castles in the Border Princes. These proved extremely successful, bringing down the walls of three castles within a week of the siege beginning. Unfortunately all three devices were lost and Ferrara had, by this time, moved onto other devices to help him realise his dream of proving that the foul ratmen actually do exist.

#### JOSEF BAZALGETTE

*The ingenious Empire Engineer, Josef Bazalgette, a man for whom the disease-ridden cities of the Empire were a national disgrace, spent many years designing and building the sewers beneath Kislev, a system that is one of the greatest engineering marvels of the north, and effectively eliminated the scourge of cholera from the Kislevite capital. Mile upon mile of twisting tunnels extend in a labyrinthine maze beneath the streets like the tunnels beneath the Fauschlag of Middenheim – though these tunnels are formed of bricks and mortar rather than from the natural rock. Though the benefits of his work in the cold north city were clear, the College of Engineers were unwilling to fund his work for a similar scheme in the Empire capital when there was so much work to be done in developing new and more devastating methods of war to stave off the never-ending tide of enemies of the Empire. Bazalgette spent the remainder of his time with the College of Engineers putting his considerable expertise into the science of siege warfare, helping to fortify many an Empire noble's castle or bringing to ruin the fortresses of the Emperor's enemies.*

### Helblaster Wagon

The Helblaster wagon is a new addition to the war machinery available to the Empire armies. The Helblaster Wagon is the mastermind of one of the lesser known Imperial Engineers; Luigi Giovanni. Giovanni prefers to work in a small hamlet deep within the Forest of Shadows, where his work can't be disturbed by his more excitable brethren at the Engineers Institute in Altdorf. Giovanni had ordered a volley gun be brought to him, so that he could affect some improvements on the weapon. The volley gun arrived at his workshop blasted to pieces. The wagoneers had been ambushed by gobbo raiders and the volley gun had been pressed into service.

It had blown up like they usually do. But the sight of the weapon on top of the wagon, even in its ruined and crippled state inspired Giovanni and the seed of an idea was planted. Giovanni sent the Wagoneer back to Altdorf with a list of essential supplies to start his new project. After working dawn to dusk for months Giovanni was finally finished. Together with three of his colleagues from Altdorf, Giovanni set off from his secluded workshop in the Forest of Shadows and wondered how long it would be before a bunch of gobbo's decided that a lone wagon was easy game.

The Helblaster wagon is in use all over the Empire escorting Wagon trains carrying vital goods, Imperial Mail coaches and important dignitaries along the roads of the Empire. It is designed to look like just another wagon carrying various cargoes to and from the important cities of the Old World. The truth of the matter is that the Helblaster Wagon carries one of the most deadly War Machines in the Old World. Mounted in the back of the wagon on a rotating platform is one Helblaster Volley Gun, fully loaded and ready to roll. Any bandits or goblin raiders foolish enough to attempt to ambush a Wagon train containing a Helblaster Wagon, will at first be rather intrigued to see one of the wagons throwing its load out of the back and stripping away the awning over the top. Then rather alarmed to suddenly find nine barrels of destruction facing them This is usually enough to send even the most desperate cut-throat's hot footing it to the hills, but not before a few of them have marked the trail.



Suddenly, for one brief instant, all was silence. Not even the screams of the wounded and the moans of the dying broke the hush. The roar of cannon halted. No warcry rang out. The whole world held its breath and waited, sensing that the battle had reached a crucial juncture. It was one of those rare moments when the clamour of war receded, the smoke cleared and a wise man could take stock of the situation quickly, accurately, and with some hope of certainty.

The Chevalier Roget d'Armaniac twisted in the saddle to survey the battlefield. Before him lay a pile of dead Tilean crossbowmen, polluting the sacred soil of Bretonnia with their inferior foreign blood. Their brethren had fled screaming from the battlefield. They were unworthy of pursuit. By all the Gods he had showed those peasant scum. How dare they believe that they could stand before the flower of Bretonnian chivalry! Well, he had taught them a swift, certain lesson: that no ten hired lackeys of the Emperor Karl Franz were a match for a single noble son of Bretonnia. Ten, a hundred. A thousand. Bring them on! He would kill them all, like the true knight he was.

He took a second to raise the visor of his leonine helmet. Gods, how those clods had wailed when they had seen his proud lion-masked visage! There, that was better. Now he could see more clearly. Yes, it was true, the Bretonnians were winning, he could tell. True, there were a few pockets of stubborn resistance, where the Reiksguard refused to fall back in the face of certain defeat or where the thunder of Imperial arquebuses had shattered the Bretonnian infantry. Still, what could you expect? The infantry were peasants, coddled, soft and fat. You simply could not expect them to know how to fight properly. They did not understand the nature of honour or how to win glory in battle.

Roget's heart leapt. He could see the Imperial banner fluttering on the nearby hilltop. There was nothing to protect it save a company of disreputable rabble and a small strange looking nine-barrelled cannon. Yes – this was his moment. Now, he would bring renown to the house of d'Armaniac. Bards would sing of this moment for a thousand years. Down the generations the tale would be told of how bold Sir Roget had led the pride of Bretonnia to glorious victory. He spat contemptuously at the thought of the Imperial halberdiers. That little Imperial bang-box held no terrors for him.

Such things were typical of the Imperial troops. They did not rely on mighty sinews and glittering steel as a true warrior should. They were always looking for some cowardly advantage. Well, it would do them no good. He turned and waved to his fellows then gestured towards the hill.

His brother knights lined up beside him, ready for the charge. Their great plumed helmets nodded. Here were some of the most renowned chevaliers in all Bretonnia. He recognised the boar's head helm of Marcel d'Ume, and the carp-helm of Lucien de Noir. The sight of them filled him with pride. It was almost unfair, he thought: ten true Bretonnians versus a mere thirty peasants and their puny gunpowder weapon.

"Are you sure this is wise. Sir Roget?" asked young Sir Edouard. "I have heard dire rumours of the Helblaster volley gun."

Roget cursed loudly. What could you expect from a pup with a mere nine peacock feathers in his eagle helmet's crest? "Are you a man or mouse, boy? Where is your honour?"

This was too much for young Edouard. He dug his spurs into his horse's flanks and, without waiting for the others, raced towards the hill. With a great cry the knights followed him.

Exhilaration filled Roget as he thundered forward. He dropped his lance into its rest. He had already picked his target. He didn't like the look of that rascal who was touching a taper to the base of the gun. He was grinning and smirking too much by far. It was almost as if the peasant couldn't believe his luck, the cheek of him.

Not far now. Soon he would have the Imperial standard in his hand. He could picture himself at the court of King Louis, accepting the thanks of his grateful monarch. Suddenly a great cloud of smoke billowed out from the gun. For a moment, it was like being in hell. There were several huge bangs. Bright muzzle flashes were visible even through the murk. The reports echoed deafeningly within his helmet. Clods of earth were thrown up all round him. Shrapnel pattered off his shield. The smell of gunpowder filled his nostrils. Something wet and red splashed his face. He ticked his lips and tasted the salt tang of someone else's blood. He ducked as something heavy whizzed past his head. Behind him he heard Sir Leon scream in pain.

Roget's steed reared and whinnied in terror. How dare they scare the beast like that! He would make them pay. The cloud of smoke dissipated. Roget halted and waited for his fellow knights to form up again.

"For Bretonnia and King Louis!" he cried and waited for the response. He glanced swiftly around and was horror-struck. There were no other Bretonnians near. They had all gone! What vile magic was this? Surely that gun could not have wreaked this havoc! No, it was evil sorcery.

Grinning triumphantly the Imperial halberdiers advanced towards him.











# SOLDIERS OF THE EMPIRE

*The Empire has managed to survive centuries of bloodshed and turmoil thanks to the bravery and martial skill of its armies. The backbone of the Empire's diverse army is its regiments of well-drilled infantry; serried ranks of disciplined state troops that fight shoulder to shoulder to defend the Empire. These brave soldiers are ably supported by fully armoured Knights, potent Battle Wizards, pious Warrior Priests, blackpowder artillery and courageous heroes riding atop noble Imperial Griffons.*

*In this section, you will find details for all the different troops, heroes, monsters and war machines used in an Empire army. It provides the descriptions, imagery, characteristics profiles and special rules necessary to use all the elements of the Empire army, from Core units to Special Characters, and from magic items to the experimental weapons of the Imperial Armoury.*

# ARMY SPECIAL RULES

This section of the book describes all the different units used in an Empire army, along with any rules necessary to use them in your games of Warhammer. Where a model has a special rule that is explained in the *Warhammer* rulebook, only the name of that rule is given. If a model has a special rule that is unique to it, that rule is detailed alongside its description. However, there are a number of commonly recurring 'army special rules' that apply to several Empire units, and these are detailed here.

## FULL PLATE ARMOUR

*These all-enclosing suits of armour, as worn by the finest knights and affluent officers, are crafted by Dwarven smiths and kept in great honour in the armouries of the Emperor and the Knightly Orders' chapter houses. These suits of armour are very rare, but undoubtedly offer the best protection available to the warriors of Mankind.*

Full plate armour has the following armour profile:

Combat:	Missile:	Special Rules:
+4/3+	+4/3+	-

## STATE TROOPS

*The soldiers of the Empire train every day to fight with specialised tactics that rely on their legendary discipline. Regiments of State Troops remain close to each other in order to protect their vulnerable flanks and offer support, either by using missile weapons or by employing close combat weapons to threaten an enemy's exposed flanks. A favoured combination is to have two smaller units supporting a larger one, one armed with ranged weapons, the other armed with close combat weapons. The detachment armed with missile weapons fires as the enemy advances – and should the enemy charge them, they will flee. This draws the attackers onto the blades of the close combat specialists or leaves them struggling in front of the main body of the regiment, ready to be charged in return.*

State Troops are trained to support and protect each other in battle. If an enemy unit declares a charge against a State Troop unit, and the State Troops do not flee as a charge reaction, then all unengaged State Troop units within 3" can make either a **Support Fire** or a **Counter Charge** action. These actions are declared immediately after their State Troops' charge reaction. If the charged State Troops unit does not get a charge reaction for any reason then the other State Troops units within range cannot make a Support Fire or a Counter Charge action.

Additionally, a State Troop unit can only declare one Support Fire action, one Stand and Shoot reaction or one Counter Charge action per turn.

- **Support Fire:** A State Troop unit can only declare a Support Fire action if at least one model in the unit is armed with a missile weapon and the range between the charging unit and the charged State Troops unit is greater than the charging unit's Movement characteristic.

If a Support Fire action is declared, the unit makes an immediate, out of sequence shooting attack, resolved as if it had just declared a Stand and Shoot charge reaction against the charging unit. All unsaved Wounds from the units' Stand and Shoot charge reaction and/or Support Fire actions, are combined when determining if the charging unit is required to take a Heavy Casualties Panic test.

- **Counter Charge:** If a Counter Charge action is declared, the unit makes an out of sequence move that is resolved as it had just declared a charge against the charging unit. This move is made after your opponent has moved all of his charging units, as long as one or more enemy units has successfully completed a charge against the charged State Troop unit. The enemy does not get to make any charge reactions against a Counter Charge, but otherwise all the normal charging rules and bonuses apply.



# EXPERIMENTAL WEAPONS

In this section, you will find the descriptions and rules for a number of weapons and upgrades that are available to several units and characters within the Empire army, including some of the more 'reliable' experimental creations of the Engineers (with their proper names, as recommended by the Engineers' Guild).

## HOCHLAND LONG RIFLE

*"Leon Todmeister's Fantabulously Far-reaching Harquebus of Unforeseeable and Unperceived Bereavement."*

In the Duchy of Hochland, a place famous for its hunters, engineers devised a firearm that has an improved range over the blunderbuss and the handgun. These weapons were developed from the long-barrelled hunting weapons used in Hochland, and their long barrels make them very accurate. While this weapon is superior to most other firearms in the Empire, it is rare, and so prized that those who have them almost never sell them. For now, knowledge of their construction is limited to Hochland. A rifleman armed with the deadly Hochland Long Rifle can pick off individual enemy amongst the opposing army. It is the terror of enemy commanders and unit leaders.

A Hochland Long Rifle is a Handgun with a range of 36" and the Sniper special rule.

## REPEATER HANDGUN

*"Von Meinkopt's Whirling Cavalcade of Death"*

The repeater handgun is a recent innovation, a deadly weapon with a high rate of fire. It is a bizarre, multi-barrelled contraption that spits a torrent of bullets at its enemies. This unusual weapon has a heavy revolving chamber with six separate barrels. The barrels are spun round and heavy firing pins ignite each charge in turn, unleashing a volley of fire.

A Repeater Handgun is a Handgun with the Multiple Shots (3) special rule.

## REPEATER PISTOL

*"Von Meinkopt's Micro-Mainspring of Multitudinous Precipitation of Pernicious Lead"*

The Repeater Pistol is a smaller version of the Repeater Hand Gun, and is fired in one hand, leaving the other free to wield a sword. The weapon has a shorter range than the Repeater Hand Gun but it has the advantage that it can also be used in hand-to-hand fighting. It is favoured by senior members of the Engineers School such as Steam Tank Commanders. The repeater pistol is a very effective side arm.

A Repeater Pistol is a Pistol with the Multiple Shots (3) special rule. It can be combined with a normal pistol following the brace of pistols rule, in which case you may fire Multiple Shots (4) in total.

## GRENADE LAUNCHING BLUNDERBUSS

*"Pfielmann's Incendiary Projector of Explosive Misfortune."*

Developed by taking the concept of the gamekeeper's blunderbuss and marrying it to the technologies of pistons and explosives, this unusual weapon fires a small explosive charge was designed to knock out heavily armoured enemy Knights and can punch through the thickest suit of armour.

Range:	Strength:	Special Rules:
18"	6	Armour Piercing (1), Move or Fire, Slow to Fire

## PIGEON BOMBS

*"Herstel-Wenckler Pigeon Bomb"*

Herstel-Wenckler was the first Engineer to successfully train a determined cadre of homing pigeons to fly away from the carrier and towards the oncoming foe. Each bird is fitted with a bomb on a light metal harness, designed to fall away from the bird when the fuse burns to a certain point.

Range:	Strength:	Special Rules:
∞	4	Armour Piercing (1), Slow to Fire

When a Master Engineer declares he will be using Pigeon Bombs, nominate any enemy model within Line of Sight, roll a D6 and consult the following chart:

D6	Result
1	<b>Oops!</b> The confused pigeon returns to its handler! Centre the small round template over the Master Engineer and resolve the explosion.
2-4	<b>Boom!</b> A poorly cut fuse means the bomb explodes harmlessly in mid-air (harmlessly for everyone except for the pigeon!). The Pigeon Bomb has no effect this turn.
5-6	<b>Huzzah!</b> The pigeon lands exactly on the head of its target just before the bomb detonates. Centre the small round template over the target model and resolve the explosion.

## MECHANICAL STEED

*"Meikle's Equine Effigy of Dynamic Locomotion"*

In order to create her 'carriage-less horse', Frau Meikle – the first woman to be (somewhat reluctantly) admitted to the College of Engineers – built this mechanical marvel in conjunction with her frazzled assistant. The mechanical steed is one of the more dubious inventions produced by the Imperial School of Engineers. Its clockwork mechanism must be regularly wound lest the contraption grind to a halt. This is a risky and time-consuming process, and several Engineers have met with injury after the winding spring has failed and they have been flung into the air by a bucking metal horse. However; when a Mechanical Steed operates properly, anything caught in its path is likely to be demolished by the impact. The machine's legs are linked to an accumulator which is in turn connected to a pair of brass globes attached to the 'horse's' head. When the contraption charges into battle, the Engineer mounted upon it can unleash this stored energy as a lightning arc powerful enough to roast the foe alive.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Mechanical Steed	7	1	0	4	4	1	1	1	-

**TROOP TYPE:** War Beast.

**SPECIAL RULES:** Impact Hits (D3), Natural Armour (6+).

# GENERALS OF THE EMPIRE

To command an army requires the courage to send soldiers to what may be their deaths without doubt or hesitation. The armies of the Empire are led by warriors who have been trained to direct their forces as effortlessly as a swordsman wields a blade. First and foremost amongst these great leaders are the Elector Counts, inspirational and famous individuals whose mere presence can steady a wavering battle line. The knowledge that their count is personally fighting beside them is enough to embolden the courage of a province's soldiers and strengthen their resolve.

The commanders of the Empire differ greatly in skill and bravery. The Elector Count of Middenland, Boris Todbringer, for example, is a ferocious commander, and though his boldness and skill at arms is beyond doubt, his impetuous battle plans are sometimes costly. On the other hand, there are commanders such as Baron Kurt von Steinburg, of Stirland, who has famously never won a single duel in his life, but who possess one of the shrewdest tactical minds in the Empire. There are also, unfortunately, a small minority of Empire commanders who are little more than effete fops. They tend to be petty aristocrats who owe their rank more to ancestral titles and politicking at court than to any actual experience of leading men on the field of war.

The Empire is a dangerous land, with marauding Beastmen, Orc tribes or even rival nobles pillaging its towns and slaughtering its people. The Elector Counts must fight such foes, though in practice it is unfeasible for them to command every force that must be despatched.



Often command is delegated to a trusted soldier considered to be an honourable leader of Men, and this officer will lead the province's forces in battle. Of course there are always exceptions, and some of the more bellicose counts (such as Valmir von Raukov of Ostland) have an unhealthy love for the clash of swords or the thunder of cannon and take to the field of battle whenever they can.

Many of the Men appointed by the Elector Count will also be nobles of the Empire, such as Aldebrand Ludenhof of Hochland, educated in martial pursuits from an early age - hunting Beastmen in the forests, falconry and swordsmanship. Others have risen through the ranks, having first stood in the battle line with a bloody halberd in their hands. These officers vary greatly in rank, depending on the size of the force they lead, and can be known as captains, marshals, generals or simply commanders. Regardless of their station, they will be tried and tested veterans of many years who understand the craft of soldiering better than anyone, having spent most of their lives fighting in defence of their homeland.

The castles of these generals are hung with banners from ancient times that were once borne aloft by their illustrious forefathers. Particularly wealthy nobles may even own a banner woven with potent enchantments, and these banners are proudly carried into battle.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
General	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	9

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry (Character).

## SPECIAL RULES:

**Hold the Line!** If a model with this special rule is in a unit of State Troops, the unit rolls 3D6 for any Break tests and uses the two lowest scores.

### THE PRIDE OF THE EMPIRE

*The soldiers of each Imperial province take pride in their regimental histories, bragging of their heroes and former glories whilst belittling the meagre accomplishments of neighbouring states. Every professional fighter in Ostland has heard tales of the battle prowess of their Elector Count, Valmir von Raukov, and those provinces whose leaders are better known as statesmen and diplomats are disparaged as soft southerners. Warriors Middenheim are apt to praise the Order of the Knights of the White Wolf recounting their howling charges and how they maul foes with heavy hammers. To true Middenlanders, fighters who use shields, which the White Wolves disdain, are seen as somewhat less manly. Men of Stirland espouse the marksmanship of their archers - able, by claim, to stick a Beastman in the eye at two hundred paces, whilst the folk of rival states roll their eyes in disbelief. Those citizens who hail from Reikland hold pride of Fiore, for their well-equipped soldiery has saced many battles and they can also boast of being home to some of the most famous warriors to lift a blade, including the Reiksmarshal Kurt Helborg. Despite the posturing and pompous claims, when faced with a common enemy, the soldiers of the Empire, no matter which province or city-state they call home, have stood shoulder to shoulder on the battlefield shouting 'Sigmar save the Emperor' and going their all to claim victory.*

# CAPTAINS OF THE EMPIRE

Relaying the orders of the general, and commanding smaller sections of the force, will be Captains – sometimes lesser nobles, more rarely common soldiers that have risen through the ranks and caught the eye of a General wise enough to look beyond the boundaries of class.

Captains are the war leaders of the strife-wracked Empire. They command the State Troops on bloody battlefields and corpse-strewn streets in the endless military campaigns of the Empire and beyond. Most Captains are tough professional soldiers who have survived dozens of fierce battles to get where they are. It is no surprise then that they resent having to serve under inexperienced nobles, an all too common occurrence. Captains tend to respect experience and ability over birth and social position. They know what counts on the battlefield. Such chosen veterans tend to be experienced and brave, and are often popular among the troops. However, they may struggle with their conscience when sending men to their deaths.

Because of their elevated rank and military standing, captains tend to associate with other officers and with city officials and burghers. Captains tend to be paid well for their services, so persons of many different occupations try to make themselves useful to a captain in the hope of earning some of his coin.

A well-connected Captain will keep himself informed of the various commanders in the city; one never knows when one will need to look for a new employer, and with the frequent incursions of Chaos, Orcs and less mentionable things, armies are almost always hiring. A Captain looking to get promoted would do well to cultivate friendships with artilleryists, members of the various Knightly Orders, and even priests and leaders of the many wholesome cults within the Old World. A word in the right ear at the right time can get



a captain noticed by his superiors and promoted to a better (and possibly safer) position. Likewise, an ill word in the right ear at the wrong time can have a Captain assigned to the next expedition to the Chaos Wastes.

Captains are sometimes assigned lands and granted a writ of nobility after a particularly successful campaign or for performing remarkable and noteworthy deeds. A classic example of this is Otto Trondheim, a former captain of the guard of the Elector of Stirland, who was raised to the rank of noble by the Elector after single-handedly defeating eight black orcs in personal combat, and leading his men in the rout of an invading army of the greenskins. Sadly, when the entire population of the town he governed was killed and raised as zombies by one of the Vampire Counts of nearby Sylvania, he was forced to abandon his castle and flee; he was never seen or heard from again.

You would struggle to find a true Empire citizen who disagrees with the notion of a standing army. The soldiers of the Empire are drilled and battle-trained to the highest standards. As a result, an experienced Captain can rely on his men to obey his bellowed orders to stand firm, even in the direst of predicaments.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Captain	4	5	5	4	4	2	5	3	8

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry (Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:** **Hold the Line!**

"Captain Haug had a voice like granite soaked in rum: 'Hold to, men, hold to. That's it, lads. Don't fire 'til you see the reds of their eyes. Steady now! You've faced worse than this, you miserable wretches. Baumer...do I perceive your mother among those green-skinned baboons coming at us? Krebs, steady your gun, lad, you're not hunting geese. Hold it, hold it...**FIRE!**'

He bellowed the tenderfoots into shape, and his barbed wit killed the cockiness of us veterans. How we hated him, yet how we loved him. He was the backbone of the unit, bullying us into shape. The renown we won was all thanks to him: our duty to the Emperor never shirked, and we gave as good as we got from the muzzles of our guns. We'd rather take our chances face on against the enemy than endure the full-blown anger of our Old Man."

- Trooper Fuchs of the Altdorf 3rd Handgunner Regiment

# BATTLE WIZARDS

After the Great War Against Chaos, Magnus the Pious lifted the ancient laws against the practice of wizardry and founded the eight Colleges of Magic in Altdorf his aim was to provide a core of competent Battle Wizards so that the Empire would never again have to fight a battle without the aid of magic. Ever since, when the Emperor and his Elector Counts muster their armies to war, they will call upon the Colleges of Magic for aid, and Battle Wizards will be provided as needed. The services of a Battle Wizard are much sought after by the Elector Counts, as many of their enemies employ potent shamans or fell sorcerers. Such foes bend the Winds of Magic to evil and destructive ends, and only those schooled in the arcane arts of the Colleges of Magic have any chance of countering such power.

Humans born with magical talent are dangerous and feared individuals. Daemons and disaster gather about an untrained Wizard. To deal with this threat the Empire sends such people away to join one of the eight Orders of Wizardry. During their apprenticeship young Wizards learn how to practice magic safely, and contemplate which Order they will eventually join. Some apprentices will be bound to serve the Wizard who uncovered their talents, whilst others adventure to garner enough money to pay for their tutelage at the Colleges of Magic.

Wizards are strange figures who wield awesome magical powers and are privy to secrets beyond the ken of normal folk. The minds of men cannot master the full spectrum of sorcery without inviting insanity. As such, each of the Colleges specialises in harnessing a separate Wind of Magic. As a result, wizards from different colleges have their own distinct sorceries, traditions and secret rituals, reflecting the nature of the magical energy they wield. They dedicate many long years, sometimes decades, to studying arcane tomes and

mystical scrolls, but only a fool would mistake their frail, scholarly appearance for weakness. Trained at the Colleges of Magic for many years, arcane power courses through their veins and lurks behind their eyes like the thunder before a storm.

Wizards are strange and aloof men, mistrusted by most folk. No sane inhabitant of the Empire courts their attention without great need, for wizards are notoriously unpredictable and (some whisper) tainted by the very magic they wield. Their mood can change from cool indifference to incandescent rage at the slightest perceived insult. The fates of those fools who have provoked their ire range from the lucky ones, who were cursed with permanent cases of the hiccups, to the less fortunate, who were transformed into warty toads, or worse. Many who cross a wizard simply disappear altogether, leaving behind only a smoking pair of boots as a warning to others. Some even whisper that Wizards are tainted by the very magic they wield. As such, the citizens of the Empire tend to make superstitious gestures behind their backs when in the presence of a wizard to ward away any evil influences.

Non-insane users of arcane magic of any skill in the Old World are quite rare – more so than one might expect. The few sane manipulators of the Winds of Magic tend to be the Magisters of the Orders of Magic, yet even they are eccentric and certainly strange by any ordinary measure.

The title "Magister" was created to prevent Wizards from becoming too wealthy at the behest of the Burgomeisters. In essence, they are vassals of their order and so they cannot manage business or own extensive property. Instead, a Magister's College functions like a Barony, and its Wizards are in service to it. However, over the generations, Magister is also an honorific, one which suggests that the individual has mastered of a particularly difficult art (in this case the art of magic), whose learning and position makes him or her superior in some ways to others. The title also refers to the possession of a kind of licence from their College and Order allowing them to practice their art and teach it to others. Anyone bearing the title Magister is considered a full brother or sister of the Order whose Lore they study and whose laws they obey.

Despite the respectability of their titles, the arcane spellcraft, or magic, as taught by and to Imperial Magisters, is still widely regarded as dangerous, against nature, and blasphemous by devotees of almost all of the Old World's acceptable religious cults. So although few would speak out against a sanctioned Magister, few would also want to share the same radius as a Magister, given the choice.

Not all Magisters are required to stay at the College buildings in Altdorf. In fact, the majority are required to leave in order to pursue their duties and contracts across the Empire. Many prefer to continue their studies elsewhere, sometimes in private or within one of the lesser guilds or libraries of their Order scattered throughout the Empire. Other Magisters are required or invited to join the courts of Electors or other nobles, perhaps by treaty, commercial contract, or familial ties. In such positions, a Magister might work as an advisor, an emissary, household protector against malignant magic, or even as a mentor for offspring that have been identified as possessing an Aethyric aptitude.





It is worth noting the contracts pursued by the Orders of Magic are very expensive, meaning only the wealthiest merchants and nobles will ever be able to afford the services of a Magister (unless of course he is a family member, an old friend, or has some other reason to give a free or reduced-rate service to the employer). There are also Magisters who turn their back on major commercial contracts, particularly amongst the Jade and Amber Orders. Amber Wizards tend to accept smaller contracts with villages and farmsteads for payments that cover their basic needs. Some Magisters travel the Empire or the world on the business of their Order or the Emperor. A few disappear and are seen only once or twice a decade if at all.

A scant few Wizards, the most dangerous of their kind, spend a portion of their training on assignment to an Imperial military body, practising with them in battlefield tactics and the strategies of war. Some might join a famous city regiment or even a chapter of Templar Knights. Not only do these secondments allow the Magister to get a feel for the people and organisations they will be a part of, it also gives the officer classes of the Empire's armies an idea of a Magister's capabilities in battle, so their expectations of what Magisters can do are reasonable. During this time, these Magisters learn how to best integrate their spellcraft with a large body of fighting men – a very different prospect from learning how to duel one-on-one with another Magister. They learn how to become a "force multiplier" for the men on the ground, assisting ordinary soldiers in their combat duties and offering magical support where required.

More senior and skilled Magisters who have studied the secrets of battle magic more extensively are often expected to regularly serve with the Empire's military. These Lord Magisters are more than just force multipliers, but forces in their own right. Although they endeavour to work closely with the armies they march with, they invariably pursue their own whims and goals in battle. Though these Lord Magisters may not act in strict concordance with the tactics of the armies' officers, the efforts of these princes amongst Magisters are always welcomed though also rather feared.

Among these talented Wizards, there are a few with a steely nerve and unmatched talent which are selected and groomed to become Battle Wizards, masters of "battle magic." This approach to magic involves particularly destructive spells permitted to be used only on the battlefield. Battle Wizards can hurl bolts of fire and lightning at their foes, confound them with terrifying illusions or snuff out their life-force like a man blowing out a candle. Exceptionally powerful, they can cast spells that evoke terrible windstorms, rain fire on armies, confound them with terrifying illusions, snuff out their life-force like a man blowing out a candle, and some say even call down stars from the sky to destroy the Empire's enemies. Developed to answer the Empire's need for improved support against the Chaos incursions, the art of Battle Magic are some of the most closely guarded secrets in the Old World.

Battle Wizards occupy a special place within the Colleges of Magic and are rarely permitted to interact with Imperial society. Rumours abound about how Battle Wizards are mad and incredibly dangerous, held in lead-lined rooms until such time they are needed. Regardless of the swirling myths, Battle Wizards are extremely rare and vary in ability depending on their allegiance to their particular College. Though they differ in the types of destructive spells they wield, they are all uniformly focused, capable, loyal, and resolved. Who else would be chosen to study more than one or two spells of an arcane war craft that allows the user to kill with a few words and call down meteorites with a wave of his hand?

Magisters that possess all the right attributes and skills needed to become more advanced in the arts of battle magic, and therefore those who are likely to advance swiftest and furthest in their Orders, would not only learn how to cast dreadful and destructive spells but would have to learn to do so under very distracting and high-pressure circumstances to simulate the chaos of a battlefield.

When a wizard's power reaches its peak and he attains the highest ranks within the Colleges of Magic, he also takes on a sacred duty to use his power to protect the Empire in times of strife. Members of the Colleges of Magic understand that they were created and are allowed to prosper in order to protect the Empire from those that would destroy it. So, in times of war, the Emperor calls upon his most powerful wizards to march to battle alongside his armies and use their gifts to strike down his foes. It is a duty that wizard lords accept as part of the price of their power and one that most perform willingly.

Of course, this duty to the Emperor can come in many forms, and while the most common is service in times of war, it can sometimes manifest in more subtle duties. Wizard lords not averse to open warfare might be expected to pay a tithe of potions or magical artefacts to the Emperor to aid his forces in battle, or might agree to raise some of their apprentices as battle mages, wizards specifically trained to devastate the Emperor's enemies with destructive battlefield powers.

To be a Battle Wizard is to understand the power at the heart of the world, and though each can bend but one of the eight Winds of Magic to his will, such power is not wielded lightly. To lose control of this arcane power for even a second is to invite disaster. A misplaced syllable could result in a wizard accidentally immolating himself, along with any unfortunates who happen to be standing in his vicinity at the time. A momentary lapse of concentration might even open a portal to the Realm of Chaos that the wizard could be sucked through. None are aware of the danger more than the wizards themselves, and so while a soldier risks his life in battle, a wizard risks eternal torment at the hands of the Dark Gods themselves.

The services of a Wizard are much sought after by the Elector Counts, as many of their enemies employ potent shamans or fell sorcerers. Such foes bend the Winds of Magic to evil and destructive ends and only those skilled in the arcane arts may stand against such power. It is a rare army indeed that marches to war without at least one Battle Wizard at its disposal. Battle wizards of all the orders are greatly valued in the Empire's armies, although a seasoned general will never rely on them totally – the Winds of Magic may suddenly calm at a crucial moment, leaving the wizard with no power to wield. Conversely, a wizard that summons too much energy and then loses control may cause a catastrophic and spectacular detonation that kills him and everyone nearby. Acting as the bodyguard of a battle wizard is not a favourable posting!

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Wizard Lord	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	1	8
Battle Wizard	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	7

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry (Character).

**MAGIC:** A Battle Wizard is a Wizard who uses spells from one of the eight Battle Magic lores in the *Warhammer* rulebook.

# WARRIOR PRIESTS

Sigmar is a warrior god, and to follow his creed is to live a life of battle. The Cult of Sigmar demands that its followers must fight all forms of evil with strength of arm and sword as well as faith, and many of its priests accompany the Empire's armies as they march to war. In this role they not only lead and inspire troops in battle, but also minister to their spiritual well-being. On many occasions, a rousing speech or tour of camp by a Warrior Priest of Sigmar has restored faith, brought hope or stayed mutiny when the words of even the most respected general has fallen on deaf ears.

Whilst there are priests for all the many gods worshipped in the Empire, the ones who regularly take up arms are those devoted to Sigmar, although the Priests of Ulric are also known to do so. It is for this reason that they are known as Warrior Priests, for their deities are gods of battle who demand worship in the fires of war and devotion by strength of arms.

Whilst all priests are expected to bear arms in the defence of their temple and faith, and most are at least proficient in combat, only a few march to battle alongside their Templars and the Imperial army. These warrior priests have a threefold responsibility: ministering to the faithful amongst the army, offering spiritual and tactical advice to the army's leadership, and smiting the unfaithful in battle. When war comes



to the temple, a cult's warrior priests take charge of its defence, marshalling the rest of the cult to repel attackers. Warrior priests are usually members of holy orders, such as the Sigmarites of the Order of the Silver Hammer. Most warrior priests come from the cults of Sigmar, Ulric, and Myrmidia, although other cults are not without a few token militant brethren.

Throughout the Empire it is considered only right and proper to honour all the gods, and even the priests of a particular deity show respect to other gods in appropriate situations. Where the older gods are seen to care little for Humans, Sigmar is the patron of the Empire and of its people – which is why the inhabitants of the Empire call themselves Sigmar's People. This is true throughout the Empire – even in places where Ulric, Taal and other gods are the most actively worshipped.

The Cult of Sigmar demands that its followers must fight all forms of evil with strength of arm and sword as well as faith, and many of its priests accompany the Empire's armies as they march to war. In this role they not only lead and inspire troops in battle, but also minister to their spiritual well-being. The soldiers of the Empire, trusting in their faith, can withstand and turn back the tide of enemies that assail them, needing only to hear the Priests reciting the Deus Sigmar to inspire them to heroism. On many occasions, a rousing speech or tour of camp by a Warrior Priest of Sigmar has restored faith, brought hope or stayed mutiny when the words of even the most respected general has fallen on deaf ears.

Sigmar, in His divine all-seeing wisdom, knows that there are many unseen and supernatural evils and horrors which beset mankind, and so channels His own divine power through His chosen priests. It befalls the Priests to contend with the foe on the spiritual and magical planes and this they do with prayers and invocations, almost equal in potency to the spells of Wizards, and with the strength of their unflinching minds.

## BROTHER VALDEMAR

*As with many second sons of noble families, Valdemar was sent to the Church of Sigmar in Altdorf to train as a priest from an early age. His skill with the warhammer, as well as the proficiency with which he mastered the sacred rituals of the temple, was soon recognized by his superiors. Valdemar's first tenure as priest, beyond the cloistered walls of the Church of Sigmar, soon brought him into conflict with a Chaos Beastman warband that was threatening his parish of Haldenburg. Valdemar slew the entire warband in a bloody battle at the very doorstep of his old chapel. Ever since, Brother Valdemar (now in his fiftieth year) has been a mainstay of many an Imperial army that has sought victory over those who would overthrow the power of the Cult of Sigmar.*

Warrior Priests of Sigmar are a common sight among the armies of the Empire. They are most often seen preaching and prophesying in the ranks of the common soldiers. Sometimes Sigmar himself chooses someone to be His messenger, he speaks to him and endows him with a measure of His own spiritual strength, power and authority. This blessing may fall upon any man, be he noble or commoner. Thus are recruited the clergy of Sigmar's own cult, and it is from among the humble priests that the higher echelons of clerics arise, even unto the powerful positions of Lectors or the Grand Theogonist himself.

Priests of Sigmar who accompany Empire armies as senior officers and representatives of the state god are most commonly known as Warrior Priests. The provision of Warrior Priests within the army is seen as a religious duty by the state and is provisioned by the Emperor himself. Such priests function as anger and soothsayers, interpreters of Sigmar's will, and, in that respect, they important advisers to the army commanders. These priests are members of the priesthood and of the army itself. They are to be found in the armies of the Reikland – which is to say of the Emperor himself; every military institution throughout the Reikland has a substantial shrine to Sigmar. The chief priest of this shrine is the Warrior Priest who will also accompany the troops to war and, as likely as not, fight alongside them in battle. Other states sometimes include Warrior Priests amongst their armed forces, but Sigmar is primarily associated with the Reikland and the Emperor, in the same way that Ulric is associated with Middenland, though he is worshipped throughout the Empire. Warrior Priests are religious zealots, inspired by Sigmar to great feats of bravery and strength, and many a defeat has been thwarted by a brave Warrior Priest intervening to rally fleeing troops and lead them to glorious victory. It is popularly supposed that such heroes are indeed suffused with the divine will of holy Sigmar himself.

Every city, town and village of the Empire has its shrines to Sigmar and priests of His cult. Thus a Warrior Priest is ready at hand to inspire the people whatever trials may come. These Priests are recognised by their robes, and by the insignia of Sigmar which they wear, in particular the image of the Holy Hammer. They shave their heads as a sign of devotion and they carry all manner of strange fetishes made of iron, wood and bone. Many Warrior Priests further adorn themselves with scrolls detailing war oaths and parchments written in the blood of martyrs.

The prayer of a Warrior Priest is a call to war, their hymns the clash of arms and their benedictions are the smiting of Sigmar's foes. Warrior Priests call upon the power of their gods, performing miracles in their names. A Warrior Priest can summon their faith to lend steel to their blows

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"We must be ever-vigilant, for if we become unwary and weak the enemies of mankind will devour us utterly. Place your faith in Sigmar to protect you, place your trust in your Emperor to lead you, and put your strength in your sword to deliver you from those who would destroy your Empire."

- An unknown Warrior Priest of Sigmar

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in combat, destroy creatures of darkness or shield themselves from harm. To see such power made manifest fires the hearts of men, and all who witness such miracles redouble their efforts to defeat their enemies. Woe betide any foe facing an army filled with such divine power.

Warrior Priests go about their tasks in castle and camp, mending the soldiers, healing the wounded and inspiring everyone with the words of Sigmar. When Sigmar calls upon His Priests to speak, they do so, rousing tired and flagging soldiers to righteous fury with their fervent sermons. Among the many evils which beset the Empire, there are three heresies which a Priest of Sigmar will recognise instantly and denounce: malign sorcery, the curse of Undeath and the vile worship of Chaos. From these evils may Holy Sigmar deliver us!

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Warrior Priest	4	4	3	4	4	2	4	2	8

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry (Character).

### SPECIAL RULES:

**Divine Power:** *Priests of Sigmar can invoke their patron god's protection against the sorcerous powers of the enemy.*

Warrior Priests can channel power and dispel dice in the same manner as a Level 1 Wizard.

**Righteous Fury:** *Priests of Sigmar use rousing oratory to inflame the passions and stir a bitter hatred of the enemy.*

A Warrior Priest, and any unit he is currently in, has the Hatred special rule.

**Battle Prayers:** *Priests of Sigmar are granted exceptional powers by their divine patron which they can wield to smite their foes in battle.*

Warrior Priests know the three Battle Prayers listed below. Battle Prayers are innate bound spells (power level 3). Battle Prayers are **augment** spells that target the Warrior Priest and his unit.

- **Hammer of Sigmar:** The Warrior Priest and his unit reroll all failed To Wound rolls in close combat until the start of the next friendly Magic phase.
- **Shield of Faith:** The Warrior Priest and his unit gain a Ward save (5+) against all Wounds inflicted in close combat until the start of the next friendly Magic phase.
- **Soulfire:** The Warrior Priest and his unit gain the Magical and Flaming Attacks special rule until the start of the next friendly Magic phase. In addition, when cast, all enemy models in base contact with the Warrior Priest suffer a Strength 4 hit. Models with the Daemonic, Undead or Vampiric special rules in base contact suffer a Strength 5 hit instead, which Ignores Armour Saves.

# ARCH LECTORS

Of the pantheon worshipped in the Empire, Sigmar is most ubiquitous and powerful. The cult is led by the Grand Theonist, but his will is interpreted by the two Arch Lectors. As the Emperor is believed to be the living incarnation of Sigmar, the Grand Theonist and his Arch Lectors are all electors, that is, they may cast a vote to decide who shall be crowned the next ruler of the Empire, though they may not become Emperor themselves.

Arch Lectors are amongst the highest ranked priests in the Cult of Sigmar, able to wield great power, both spiritually and physically. They epitomise the aspect of Sigmar as a warrior god and have a fierce hatred of all things Chaotic. An Arch Lector of Sigmar is a fiery individual, zealous and proud, with a strong arm to wield a warhammer in the name of his god. Uttering prayers of strength and battle, it is his duty to take the fight to the depraved, the unholy and the unclean, and to smite them with all his holy wrath.

## THE HAMMER OF SIGMAR

*Johann made his way into the drear catacombs. This wasn't like fighting the Brets. This was different, confusing. And now they were down a hole in the ground looking to fight the dead. Surely the dead had had enough of fighting. Still, he was glad that the priest was there. He didn't say much, but just his presence was enough to make Johann feel better.*

*Johann thought back to the priest in his home village. Not sure he'd be up to much in a place like this when battle was joined. Baldy, on the other hand, certainly knows how to handle himself in a fight. He was a true warrior, as well as being a priest. Well-named, no doubt.*

*Suddenly a hand erupted from the earthy wall, followed by a skull and the rest of a skeletal body bedecked in ancient armour. It swung a rusted blade, and caught Johann on the side of his helmet. Johann fell to the ground, more dazed than damaged. He recovered only quickly enough to see the skeletal abomination raise its weapon once more for the killing blow.*

*Then just as suddenly, flames shot through the air and burst over the dead warrior, sending the bones to their final rest, a charred pile on the tunnel floor. Johann looked back to see the priest close behind with his arm raised, the power of Sigmar shining in his eyes.*

*"Thank you," Johann said weakly. "I didn't know you could do that."*

*"Sigmar is not just the Hammer. He is the Word," the priest said dryly.*

*Before he could reply, another skeleton came to life and advanced on Johann. But as it moved to strike, the priest bounded forward and smashed his hammer through the creature's skull, sending fragments flying. The rest of its body fell limply to the ground.*

*"Sigmar is not just the Word," said the priest, walking past Johann and on down the dark tunnel.*

Arch Lectors are grim, imposing figures, both on and off the battlefield, clad in ceremonial vestments and armour adorned with the Holy Hammer and twin-tailed comet of Sigmar. Their prayers are calls to war, their hymns the clash of arms and their benedictions the smiting of enemies with mighty warhammers. They also have the honour of riding the War Altar of Sigmar to war from whence their battle prayers are greatly enhanced.

In these dark times, where the curse of undeath and the worship of Chaos infest the Empire, it is the duty of Arch Lectors to protect the populace and cast out such evils. They epitomise the warrior courage of Sigmar himself, leading from the front where they manifest the power of the gods and inspire whole armies to acts of heroism.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Arch Lector	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	2	9

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry (Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:** Divine Power, Righteous Fury, Battle Prayers.



# THE WAR ALTAR OF SIGMAR

When war calls the High Priests of Sigmar to battle, it is an awe-inspiring sight to see them ride at the head of an army atop the mighty War Altar of Sigmar. Commissioned by Magnus the Pious after his ascension, the War Altar is a colossal chariot, ornate and gleaming with a towering effigy of a golden Griffon carried upon it. Crafted by the most skilled artisans in the Empire, this statue was consecrated in the Temple of Sigmar in Altdorf with the blood of the Grand Theogonist and Emperor Magnus themselves. The Golden Griffon has thus ever been a source of great, and some say divine, energy. An Arch Lector of Sigmar can draw forth this power with the sheer conviction of his faith and unleash a blinding white light. For creatures that are bound to the mortal plain by means of dark magic, this light is anathema and they are utterly consumed by its touch; bursting into cleansing flames and crumbling to dust in an instant.

"No man can be judged until he stands alone before his god."

- Alaric, High Theogonist of Sigmar

Against the forces of Chaos, where the danger of spiritual malaise and moral corruption is as great a danger as death, the Grand Theogonist may deem it necessary to unleash the War Altar in battle once again. He may entrust this solemn duty to one of the Arch Lectors under his command, or, in times of particular crisis, ride it to war himself. Bellowing unforgiving verses from the Canticle of the Heldenhammer, the Arch Lector imbues the army's soldiers with a profound and righteous fury, his inspirational presence shielding their souls against the manifold horrors that the world throws at them.



The War Altar has seen battle on hundreds of occasions, and it bears the scars of battle as proudly as any soldier of Sigmar. It is the duty of each Grand Theogonist to tend to this holy relic. They renew scrolls of benediction, repair sigils of faith and attach new artefacts and holy icons to the War Altar's redoubtable frame. These modifications are made completely at the discretion of the incumbent Grand Theogonist. As such, the War Altar has reflected the personality of each man to hold the rank over the centuries. In the time of Grand Theogonist Richter, a fiery orator who sought to bring the light of Sigmar to the darkest corners of the Empire, the War Altar sported a pair of burning braziers. Volkmar the Grim instead affixed the mighty Horn of Sigismund to the chariot's sturdy carriage, so that his enemies would tremble at his approach. Whatever improvements are made, the Golden Griffon mounted atop the War Altar remains untouched, forever standing proudly as a symbol of the Empire's might.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
War Altar	7	-	-	5	5	5	-	-	-
Warhorse	-	3	0	3	-	-	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Chariot (Armour Save 5+).

**SPECIAL RULES:** Large Target (5), Stubborn, Ward save (4+).

**Holy Fervour:** All friendly Empire units have the Hatred special rule whilst within 6" of the War Altar of Sigmar.

**The Power of Sigmar:** Any Battle Prayers cast by a model who is mounted on the War Altar of Sigmar also target all friendly units within 6".

## MAGIC ITEMS:

### The Golden Griffon (Enchanted Item)

*The Golden Griffon is the best known emblem of Magnus the Pious and a source of raw magical power. In battle, it unleashes a blinding white light that is anathema to the unholy.*

Innate bound spell (power level 4). The Arch Lector may cast *Banishment* (see the Lore of Light).

## UPGRADES:

### The Horn of Sigismund (Enchanted Item)

*The Emperor Sigismund was given this huge enchanted horn by the Dwarfs after the battle of Grimgrill Dale. After the death of Sigismund during the siege of Altdorf the horn passed into the keeping of the Temple of Sigmar. It has remained in the temple ever since, and is blown three times on the anniversary of the death of Sigismund as a solemn reminder of the dark days when the Empire was ravaged by Orcs and Altdorf was almost destroyed. It is said that when the horn is blown, the enemies of the Empire hear the angry roar of Sigismund himself and they flee before the wrath of the vengeful dead.*

The War Altar of Sigmar gains the Terror special rule.

# WITCH HUNTERS

If the Empire's armies and battle magicians are the first line of defence against invasions of Chaos from outside the country's borders, then Witch Hunters are its defence against attacks by the enemy within. Unlike those who fight the incursions of Chaos on the edge of the Old World, Witch Hunters prefer to operate within Human society, rooting Chaos out before it can gain a foothold. Believing that the best form of defence is attack, they seek out those who consort with Chaos or break the Emperor's laws relating to it, and neutralize them.

The Order of the Templars of Sigmar, universally known as the Witch Hunters, is an organization of grim individuals who, for reasons of their own, have dedicated their lives to eradicating the forces of Chaos and its minions wherever it may be found, be they warlocks, witches, sorcerers, fortune-tellers, necromancers, worshippers of the dark gods, deviants, mutants, blasphemers, sinners, utterers of profanities, servants of Daemons, or composers of corrupting music. They are tasked by the Grand Theogonist to protect the lives and souls of Sigmar's people by hunting down those who draw the attention of the Ruinous Powers.

Witch hunters prefer to seek out Chaos cultists, Mutants, and heretics that have insidiously hidden amidst the cities of the Empire. Their definition of Chaos is somewhat individual, frequently extending to cover anything and anyone to whom they take a dislike, and they are generally regarded with fear and distrust. Witch Hunters tend to be a surly and suspicious lot with no qualms about killing innocents, so long as they also manage to slay the guilty. They hunt mostly by intuition, keeping an ear open to strange rumours and peasants' tales whilst their eyes seek the distinctive trails of corruption and



signs of magic gone awry. When Witch Hunters find the spoor of evil, they are utterly relentless in tracking it to its source, hounding their quarry unto death if they think they can strike a meaningful blow against the forces of evil. Witch Hunters devote their lives to rooting out evil wherever it may be found, whether in the shadows of some dank and lonesome hamlet or in the raging melee of a battlefield.

They are loners by nature and they trust no one; no one is free from their suspicions and almost any deviation from their individual definition of normality is grounds for deep suspicion in their eyes. They will act against anyone in whom they detect (or think they detect) traces of mutation or other Chaotic tendencies. Indeed, there are few who altogether escape the suspicions of the Witch Hunters with the possible exception of other Witch Hunters. Witch Hunters are trained to look for the slightest hint of mutation and the merest suggestion of sorcerous powers, and those in whom corruption is discovered will find themselves answering to the soot-stained muzzle of a Witch Hunter's pistol.

Practices of Sigmar's worship vary enormously from place to place, but all his worshippers hold to certain tenets, namely the abhorrence of unnatural sorcery, the persecution of witches and mutants and the slaying of all forms of greenskins, and creatures of Chaos.

Of all these foes, practitioners of sorcery (outlawed until the formation of the Colleges of Magic following the Great War against Chaos) and the proscribed cults of the Chaos gods are the most vile enemies and need to be rooted out wherever they are discovered. Those that dare to employ fell sorcery are branded malevolent witches and it is the duty of the much feared Witch Hunters to hunt down and destroy such nefarious villains. This work is incredibly dangerous and is undertaken by only the boldest of souls who hold the faith of Sigmar close to their hearts, for rogue sorcerers and witches are powerful enemies who gather all manner of vile creatures of Chaos to them. Death by fire is the proscribed punishment for this particular heresy. Many of the Witch Hunters' victims treacherously avoid their fate by perishing under torture before making a full confession. In these troubled times the Witch Hunters are kept busy as more and more men turn to the dark arts. The most dangerous of all these heretics are the followers of the Chaos gods. These depraved individuals practice Daemon worship and (it is claimed) even offer human sacrifices in the name of their vile masters. Of all the enemies of Sigmar they are the most abhorrent!

The Witch Hunters are zealous, puritanical individuals, however they are not clerics. Witch hunters have to stand above and beyond the religious orders themselves and thus do not belong to a temple and are not part of the priesthood, though sometimes a witch hunter might have had some religious training, or they may be accompanied by priests as allies. They roam the Empire, hired by the Counts to enforce state laws against witchcraft, blasphemy and the adulation of the Dark Gods. Witch hunters often recruit warbands of warriors, priests and Wizards to accompany them in their travails, for the prey of a witch hunter is fought not only in the land of the physical, but also in the realms of the spiritual and magical.

The writ of a witch hunter supersedes any local authorities, though a powerful noble or clergyman may be able to defy them in a case of jurisdiction. While not the paranoid maniacs

of children's tales, willing to burn a person for looking cross-eyed, the job of witch hunters makes them naturally suspicious and prone to using more force than is needed. It is important to make sure the job is done right, after all.

Judge, jury and executioner combined, a Witch Hunter will use any means necessary to burn out heresy from the heart of the Empire. Not a twinge of doubt softens the knife-sharp edges of a Witch Hunter's soul; his bleak existence allows no room for foibles such as compassion or mercy. Heretics, once captured, are forced to repent their crimes before their taint is purged by fire. On the word of a witch hunter, anyone can be tried and burned at the stake for witchcraft and hundreds, if not thousands, have burned in the fires of the witch hunters for their crimes – and perhaps not all of those who died by their hand were guilty. It is said that a Witch Hunter would sooner raze an entire village to the ground than see a single worshipper of Chaos go free. However, such concerns are nothing compared to the very real perils they are concerned with and the deadly forces they are pitted against. For all the heartlessness and cruelty of this dark brotherhood, the Empire needs men of this calibre – men who will put aside their own humanity in order to punish and destroy those who embrace dark sorcery or the temptations of Chaos. Such is a Witch Hunter's duty, and it is a burden lesser men would find impossible to bear.

Witch Hunters are charismatic rabble-rousers who can soon turn a crowd to their own ends. They are universally dreaded, for everyone has something or someone to hide, and there are countless individuals who would willingly and enthusiastically hunt down and burn their own kin were a Witch Hunter to command them to do so. All ordinary citizens agree that Witch Hunters are necessary and that the work they do is crucial to the safety of the Old World, but there are very few who do not feel a flush of fear when they see a figure wearing the familiar dark hat, buckled tunic and cloak.

In some states, Witch Hunters are tolerated and encouraged; in those where they are not, they operate secretly and are even more suspicious than usual, if that is possible. They will kill their quarry out of hand where necessary, but prefer to whip up mass hysteria. They love to conduct show trials and lynchings, encouraging people to denounce their neighbours, their rulers, and even their own families.

Though it is said that the first Witch Hunters fought alongside Sigmar himself against the sorcerer Nagash, the secretive Order of the Silver Hammer was only officially recognised in 1682 by the Grand Theogonist Siebold II to act as a bulwark against Chaos and daemon-worshippers. Acting undercover throughout the Empire but bearing a letter of commission with the Grand Theogonist's seal on it, the witch hunters became feared agents of an anti-Chaos inquisition that could reach even to the heights of the Electoral thrones, as when the Elector Count Konrad von Mullein of Wissenland was revealed as a servant of Khorne in 2011. Their battle atop the highest tower of the palace in Wissenberg is still commemorated in verse and in the local roast, "Look out below!"

"These poor, simple folk – too fearful or too dull-witted to see the vulgarity and evil in their own midst. They wail and complain about my... uncompromising methods, but who among you can say that hanging half a village is a high price to pay for the assurance that corruption has been exposed and destroyed this day?"

- Ernst Traugott, *Templar Witch Hunter*

But many Electors and priests of other cults feared the witch hunters and the power they gave the Grand Theogonists. When Magnus the Pious came to the throne, he defused the issue by taking the witch hunters under the Emperor's own authority and charging them to work for the "safety and good of all the Empire, and in the name of all the cults." Since then, they have been a secular arm of the state, though many of their members have religious training. Their headquarters is a forbidding building just a few hundred yards from the Cathedral of Sigmar in Altdorf, with a prison beneath it. Many have entered over the centuries, but few have ever exited – alive.

As men accustomed to fighting Witch Hunters are well-armed and sturdy individuals. They favour hooded cloaks and headgear which conceal their appearance from the overly curious. The tall hat and dark cloak or coat is the distinctive garb of the Witch Hunter, almost like a uniform, although not all Witch Hunters choose to treat them as such. In addition to the hat and cloak, Witch Hunters often carry the symbol of the Twin-Tailed Comet as a sign of their membership in the Order. Some wear chains about their throats to remind them of fallen comrades and old rivalries and also, so it is said, so that the iron might serve as protection against witchcraft.

Despite their unsettling reputation, Witch Hunters are welcomed with open arms in times of war. When battle is raging and the sorceries of vile wizards burn the skies above, a Witch Hunter's assortment of arcane sigils, holy talismans and protective charms can ward away evil magic, often proving the only thing that stands between an Empire soldier and a most unnatural death. The tools of the Witch Hunter's profession include sharpened stakes, prayer-inscribed rapiers and baroque pistols loaded with thrice-blessed silver bullets. They also make use of knives, stakes, torches, holy water, chrisms, blessed ashes and other relics to further increase the suffering inflicted upon their foes. Some say that the Witch Hunter's bullet is the final judgement of the damned; one who is tainted by dark magic will burst into white-hot flame at its touch, whereas those who fail to burn are at least proven innocent by their death. As the Witch Hunters are fond of pointing out, to die cleanly is a far better fee than to live under the sway of evil.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Witch Hunter	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	8

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry (Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:** Magic Resistance (2).

**Accusation:** After deployment, but before the first turn begins, select a single model in your opponent's army to accuse of heresy. This is the Witch Hunter's primary quarry. The Witch Hunter may re-roll all failed To Hit against his primary quarry. Every hit he inflicts on that model with close combat or shooting attacks also has the Killing Blow special rule. Finally, a Witch Hunter may also choose to shoot at the primary quarry as if he had the Sniper special rule.

**Grim Resolve:** Witch Hunters, and any unit they are in, have the Immunity (Fear) special rule.

**Tools of Judgement:** When attacking Wizards, or models with the Daemonic, Undead or Vampiric special rules in close combat, a Witch Hunter re-rolls failed rolls To Wound.

# MASTER ENGINEERS

It was the Dwarfs who first introduced the science of engineering to the Old World. Among them, the Engineers' Guild is deeply respected and its works are held in high esteem, so long as it upholds traditional methods and values. Humanity took what the Dwarfs had to offer and ran with it, especially in regards to gunpowder and other devices suitable for use as weapons. The Engineers and gunners of the Empire are keen to prove their worth. Only the Dwarfs can rival the Empire in the art of black powder weaponry and even then, it is said, the ingenuity of Man can outshine – and outrange – the Dwarfen smiths of old. The Imperial School of Engineers in Altdorf is famed for its bizarre inventions, which can be most useful if they manage to function correctly. Outside the Empire, Tileans are particularly famed for their bold engineering ideas.

Master Engineers are obsessed with designing new machines and technological marvels. Many are also gifted artists, writers and musicians, for inventing is just one avenue for their creative thoughts to express themselves. When their energies are focussed in the workshops of the Imperial Engineers School, they can be found tinkering tinkering with new technological weapons for the Emperor's arsenal. The Engineers' most successful creation is probably Von Meinkopt's dreaded Helblaster Volley Gun. After the creator's unfortunate death, caused by the malfunctioning of one of his 'reliable' machines, the Engineers often tend to observe these interesting prototypes from a safe distance.

Though much of an Engineer's time is spent tinkering with half-finished inventions of whimsy, each recognises that the ultimate purpose of their labours is coming up with new ideas to combat the multifarious threats to the Empire. Anti-flyer weapons, tunnelling machines, ice rays, alchemical bombs and all manner of weird devices are but a handful of the deadly inventions devised by the Engineers. They are eccentric individuals, muttering incomprehensible gobbledygook and bustling from one machine to another to improve its performance.

Master Engineers can be struck by inspiration for a novel war machine at any time, and when a new idea gets stuck in their heads, they will become totally absorbed with its creation, eschewing distractions like food or sleep until they see their vision realised. These inventors tend to mutter incomprehensible gobbledygook to themselves as they bustle from one machine to another in an attempt to improve their performance. Normal citizens of the Empire quite rightly think that Engineers are a little bit mad, and they try to avoid them whenever possible.

However, it is not just their positions as inventors and suppliers of deadly weapons that make Master

Engineers valuable on the battlefield where they employ their most successful pieces of machinery to the advantage of the Empire's forces. While they are not soldiers, Master Engineers are still part of the Emperor's forces. With their burning need to try out their latest creations, they can often be found taking advantage of 'battlefield conditions' to field test their latest inventions or snipe at the enemy with a variety of powerful experimental rifles and handguns, but sometimes they cannot resist the appeal of being in charge of the artillery fire. The contraptions Engineers bring to battle range from utterly lethal devices, such as the Steam Tank and Helstorm Rocket Batteries, to the downright bizarre, such as von Hugon's Terror Bell, the Thunder Barrel, the Herstel-Wenckler Pigeon Bomb, and von Trumpmann's mechanical boots of marching, or a whole array of other deadly devices. These inventions rarely work, or at least not in the intended way, but every now and again a Master Engineer will succeed in creating a new and strange war machine that can have quite lethal consequences - usually, but not always, for the enemy. The youngest Engineers show a burning desire to personally try out their latest inventions on the battlefield. The older Master Engineers have seen enough malfunctions in their time to know better than to field-test their devices themselves. Instead, they prefer to entrust their prototypes to some eager, youthful fellow whilst they observe from a safe distance.





However, sometimes Master Engineers just can't resist the appeal of being in charge of the really big guns. On the battlefield, individuals from the Imperial Engineers School attend to the artillery of the Empire forces, making small adjustments here and there as the battle rages and ensuring that the war machines function correctly. Engineers also tend to oversee the deployment of the army's artillery pieces, baffling gunners with talk of parabolic arcs, trajectories and wind speeds, making complex calculations and tiny adjustments to trajectory and fuse lengths, to ensure that each shot finds its mark. Artillery crews often resent the presence of Master Engineers, seeing them as pompous bookworms who get in the way with lofty academic theories and no real practical experience.

"Now, if I simply adjust the targeting ratchet by one degree... oops! Thank Sigmar they were only mercenaries!"

- *Master Engineer Herman Faulkstein*

However, many a gunner has had to swallow his own words after seeing the effect of an Engineer's labours – entire enemy regiments being shredded by a direct hit from a mortar shell, a whole cavalry column torn asunder by a well-placed cannon ball, or a ferocious monster suffering the full onslaught of a Helblaster Volley Gun. Whether the carnage caused was the result of careful calculation or just blind luck, the feeling seems to be that the presence of a Master Engineer really does make artillery more reliable and accurate (most of the time anyway).

While Nuln and Altdorf have the greatest concentration of Engineers, these men can be found throughout the Empire. Determined to invent the next 'great' contraption and have their name used with it in perpetuity, Master Engineers have a carefree attitude to experimentation and the safety of those around them. Occasionally, the risks will pay off and through the

oftsane ingenuity of its greatest Engineers, the Empire can field some of the most devastating war engines to ever grace the battlefield. Any machine that fires with a deafening report and results in explosive carnage is considered a success, but it is a brave man who volunteers to crew one of these erratic contraptions.

Engineers sometimes remain at the school in Altdorf or perhaps seek out a patron of their own amongst the Elector Counts or nobles of the Empire. On the battlefield it is possible to see Engineers caring no discernible uniform at all or conversely conforming rigidly to the state colours of a province or city-state, sometimes even taking on the personal panoply of a duke, count, or baron. Always prevalent, however, is soot, the smell of gunpowder, and a certain mad gleam in the eyes that is common amongst inventors.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Master Engineer	4	3	4	3	3	2	3	1	7

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry (Character).

### SPECIAL RULES:

**Master of Ballistics:** One war machine that is within 3" of a Master Engineer can use his Ballistic Skill or re-roll one artillery dice or scatter dice during each Shooting phase. This cannot be the artillery dice that determines the distance a cannonball bounces. You must nominate which weapon, if any, will be using this special rule at the start of each Shooting phase, before any such weapons within 3" of the Master Engineer are fired.

**'Stand Back, Sir!':** A Master Engineer that is within 3" of a war machine is allowed to take a 'Look Out, Sir!' roll just as if he was within 3" of a unit of five or more models of the same troop type as himself. If the roll is successful, the hit is instead resolved against the nearest friendly war machine.



# STATE TROOPS

Since the time of Sigmar, the Empire has maintained armies of professional soldiers who defend the Emperor's lands. Recruiting parties travel through the provinces, beating their drums and promising a life of adventure and glory for those who sign up to join the Emperor's armies. Drawn by love of their homeland or the promise of three meals a day, there are many men willing to risk life and limb in the state regiments of the Empire. State troops form the mainstay of the Empire's armies, though armies are often bulked out by ad hoc militia regiments recruited to fight as and when required (who will often be made up of mercenaries or local peasants levied from the surrounding lands). As well as forming a standing army, state troops serve as city guards and enforcers of local laws. In the case of the provinces, these forces fall under the command of the count, whereas in the city states the city's Burgomeisters command them.

At the core of every Empire army are its state troops – professional, disciplined soldiers, drilled in all manner of weaponry, from halberds to handguns. State troops are raised by the province or city they hail from to stand ready in its defence. Every province and each city state in the Empire has its own army, which is equipped and maintained at its own expense. How they are organised varies considerably depending on the location. In the most prosperous cities, there may be impressive army headquarters, extensive barracks, wide drill squares, shrines, and memorials. At the other end of the scale, a province lacking in coin may billet its troops within roughly built wooden palisades, to sleep in the open air, or if they are lucky a damp, draughty tent. Equally, there

may be a complex and bureaucratic command structure of officers, or simply a few charismatic captains.

Regardless of whether they are provincial troops or city state troops, these forces are known as State Troops or State Regiments. Together these regional forces make up the Imperial Army, though they are often supplemented with militia troops and Mercenaries. These soldiers are full-time, paid professionals, usually drawn from the peasant or burgher classes. They man the Empire's fortresses, patrol the borders, and repel invaders. Most soldiers of the infantry train with either the halberd or the firearm. Although dominated by the nobility, the Imperial Army also promotes based on ability and it is possible to rise through the ranks to a command position (though the bigotry of the ruling class makes this difficult). Imperial Dwarfs and Halflings are usually formed into their own units.

State troops wear uniforms in the traditional colours of their province or city; bright uniforms with a mix of badges, hats, and campaign symbols. Most soldiers wear some form of doublet and hose, with colourful undershirts pulled through slashes cut in the fabric of their jackets and briches. Other regiments wear plain tabards, decorated with their province or city's coat of arms. All the troops in a regiment wear a uniform which has its own distinctive pattern or mix of colours.

There are no strict rules about the use of these colours or the way in which they are worn, so it is usual to find a great deal of variation in clothing styles between



regiments from the same place, although a soldier always endeavours to display his homeland's colours somewhere on his person. For example, a Middenlander would include something blue in his uniform, perhaps wearing a blue jacket, tying off his britches with blue ribbons or simply sporting an enormous blue feather in his cap. There are some notable exceptions though, such as the Carroburg Greatwords (an infamously hard-bitten regiment who wear blood red uniforms despite hailing from the Reikland), the Death's Heads of the Ostermark and the Scarlet Guard of Stirland, who are just a few of the many famous regiments in the Empire that eschew the colours of their province in favour of their own, distinctive uniforms.

It is also common for regiments to have differently coloured cuffs, sleeves, or other minor details whilst retaining the overall colour of their state. For example, though the uniform colour of Nuln is black, regiments have differently coloured sleeves, cuffs, collars, and sometimes trousers and hats, which identify them. The colour uniforms shown elsewhere depict examples of popular patterns and dress styles – it would be easy to find state regiments which mix the styles shown with any of the possible colour combinations. In the poorer regions it is quite common for troops to wear their own homespun clothes in plain browns and greys – and such units can present quite a ragged and irregular appearance.

State Troops are paid as full time professional soldiers, ready in their barracks at all time, and are easily recognised by their uniforms. They also serve as the town guards, the fire watch and the police force, as well as forming a standing army ready to repel invasion. However, most of the time these soldiers spend their days drilling and training with various weapons to the barked instructions of grim-faced Sergeants and veteran Marksmen. Swordsmen tend to call their champions duellists, a sign of their great skill with a blade. All such men must be charismatic and capable fighters, some leading a hundred or more men into battle, setting a courageous, even foolhardy, example to their troops in the face of terrible horrors and danger.

*'Where march you, men of Reikland,  
where carry you halberds and swords?*

*We march to war for our Emperor  
and Sigmar, our saviour and lord.*

*Tomorrow we go to war  
to face the hosts of Chaos.*

*Tomorrow we will be buried  
in the cold graves that await us.*

*And when this war is done,  
and my body lies on the field at night*

*Hear my prayer, save my soul,  
Lord Sigmar take me to your light.'*

*- Old Soldier's song from Reikland*

During times of active military service, few careers may be as demanding as the life of a State Trooper. However, outside the theatre of war, the life of a soldier is often mired in dull routine and repetition. To some soldiers, it's not clear which life style is preferable. Soldiers awake before dawn, quickly pulling on their uniforms, taking up their weapons, and hustling to the staging yard for morning exercises and drills. Drills vary from unit to unit, but often end with a forced march with full kit and armour. For those on duty, that means patrolling. For those off-duty it means more drills. Soldiers practice with their unit's weapon for several hours each day. They rotate duties to keep any soldier from becoming too complacent at his post, usually working in two- to three-hour shifts.

Every state trains its regiments to fight together, providing each other with mutual protection on the battlefield. State regiments march to battle with other regiments of differently armed troops to aid each other. These regiments form up close to each other, where they guard vulnerable flanks and provide battlefield support, either by joining their allies in the bloody melee of close combat, or by showering oncoming enemies with missile fire.

State troops may be equipped in a variety of ways with different types of armour and weapons, but the most common weapon of an Empire soldier is the halberd, a combination of spear and battle-axe that is wielded in both hands. Other regiments favour weapons such as handguns, swords or spears. A state regiment will often have smaller detachments of troops to support it, protecting its vulnerable flanks or showering the enemy with missile fire. Swordsmen fight shoulder to shoulder with Spearmen, the close range parries and ripostes of swords complimenting the longer reach of the spear. Handgunners and Crossbowmen fell their foes with withering volleys of fire, but should a foe survive through such salvos, a regiment of Halberdiers will bravely intercept them, cutting them down with heavy bladed pole arms. State regiments are almost always provided with some sort of body armour. It is unusual for every trooper to be armoured in exactly the same way. In most regiments some soldiers have breastplates and often armour for the upper leg as well. The troops of poorer states have to make do with a thick leather jack or heavy chainmail coif to protect their shoulders and upper body, or even no armour at all.

## HALBERDIERS

A halberd is a long-hafted weapon with a heavy blade that is capable of smashing through heavy armour or the tough hides of creatures such as Orcs and Beastmen. Regiments of Halberdiers are the most numerous state soldiers, thanks to the Emperor's requirement that each Elector Count maintain a standing force of Halberdiers, but also due to their versatility and strength in battle. Because it is impossible to use a shield while swinging a halberd, this trooper often wears a substantial suit of armour to protect him.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Halberdier	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7
Sergeant	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	7

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry.

**SPECIAL RULES:** State Troops.

## SPEARMEN

A formation of spears makes an excellent defensive regiment. Enemies who charge a unit of Spearmen are faced with a virtually impassable wall of sharp steel points. Spears are easy to manufacture and thus are more common in the northern and eastern provinces of the Empire where the constant threat of invasion requires battalions of soldiers to quickly be made battle ready. In the southern provinces, which are influenced by nearby Tilea where the pike is the infantry's weapon of choice, the traditional Empire spears are often replaced by similar pole weapons, commonly called half-pikes. Soldiers sometimes hang banners depicting their house colours, religious affiliation, or other symbols. Some even hang scrolls containing prayers to the uncaring Gods in the vain hope of garnering their attention in the thick of battle.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Spearman	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7
Sergeant	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	7

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry.

**SPECIAL RULES:** State Troops.

## SWORDSMEN

Swordsmen are expert fencers and blade masters, using shields to protect themselves and get close enough for a darting strike with their blades. They are regarded as romantic and dashing figures, often bravely engaging the best enemy regiments to prove their valour and skill. This reputation, whilst somewhat exaggerated by the bards and poets of the Empire, has its foundation in truth, for Swordsmen are amongst the most highly trained and proficient of the state regiments. A skilled Swordsman can attack a foe's weak points while simultaneously defending himself with his shield. Their great ability with the sword makes them a tough challenge for even the most skilled opponents.

It is not uncommon for swordsmen to be deployed as a detachment, in position to support their parent regiment by charging the enemy flank where they are less armoured and cannot bring their shields to bear. This tactic tends to give the impression that the swordsmen have won the day, when in fact the main regiment has done much of the hard work of facing the enemy head-on. The resulting rivalry and banter remains light-hearted – usually.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Swordsman	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	1	7
Sergeant	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	2	7

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry.

**SPECIAL RULES:** State Troops.

## ARCHERS

In the Empire, the bow is a classic weapon of the yeomen, and these troops are normally organised into small groups of skirmishers who support the regimented units in battle. Archers are adaptable troops, able to fight in close ranks or in a loose skirmish screen. The northern provinces of the Empire are famous for their bowmen and tend to have a high proportion of Archers in their armies. In recent years, use of

the bow, at least among soldiers, has given way to the crossbow, which has a better range and better damage potential. As a result, bows are falling to those who cannot afford the superior crossbow or gunpowder weapons for that matter. Make no mistake; bows are still viable weapons. While they lack the punch of a bolt or bullet, archers can fire faster with these weapons.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Archer	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7
Marksman	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry.

**SPECIAL RULES:** State Troops.

## CROSSBOWMEN

The use of the crossbow has grown in popularity, despite some reactionaries thinking they are not honourable weapons. They were first used with distinction by the mercenary bands that inhabit Tilea and the Border Princes. As these men offered their services to an ever widening circle of clients, others began to recognise the strength of their trademark weapon.

Crossbows are still not very popular weapons for Imperials, though Tilean mercenaries are often recruited to augment the firepower of a Count's army. Some Counts from the southern provinces retain units of Crossbowmen as part of their personal household troops. Crossbows may lack the penetrative power of handguns, but are just as accurate in the hands of an expert.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Crossbowman	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7
Marksman	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry.

**SPECIAL RULES:** State Troops.

## HANDGUNNERS

Handgunners are highly effective troops armed with long-barrelled blackpowder weapons. These weapons are known as handguns and are manufactured in Nuln. Handguns are expensive weapons so only the richest states can afford to equip troops in this way and supply them with sufficient quantities of black powder. They are at their best firing from a static position, as their weapons are cumbersome and time consuming to load and shoot. The weapons themselves are noisy and perform badly in wet weather but they give the Empire's forces a considerable advantage against heavily armoured opponents. The withering volleys of Handgunners' lead shot can break the most determined Orc Waaagh! or unhorse even a heavily armoured Chaos Knight. Often the best marksmen among them get to use one of the deadly experimental weapons created by the Engineers' Guild.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Handgunner	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7
Marksman	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry.

**SPECIAL RULES:** State Troops.

# FREE COMPANY MILITIA

It is unusual for a general to be satisfied with the number of men he has available to lead into battle, and many are forced to bolster their lines with lesser troops. Whilst state troops form the mainstay of the Empire's military forces, its armies are often bulked out by ad hoc regiments of militia who are recruited, willingly or not, to fight as and when required. No one can foretell how many will turn up at the muster, or what their fighting quality will be. After all, these irregular troops receive no formal training or discipline. These units are known as 'Free Companies', and are only formed for the immediate conflict, although that might be anything from a single battle to a year-long campaign in foreign lands. Either way, those that do not die will be free to return to their lives once the fighting is done.

Many militias are formed from townsfolk and villagers levied from the local countryside – brave men standing ready to defend their homes and families against the monsters and beasts that constantly threaten them or simply coerced into the ranks by burly recruiting sergeants. Other militias are bands of mercenaries, bandits from the forests or other curs used to living by the strength of their sword arm, hired or pressed into service, forced into the battle line and, if they survive, paid a few coins for their trouble.

Some commanders rely heavily on mercenary troops – sellswords whose loyalty is bought with gold. It is an easy way to muster an army, if you can afford it. Such men may be undisciplined rabble, or they may be hardened veterans with skills that equal or even surpass state troops (some in fact used to be state troops).

Militia fighters tend to wear their own, tatty clothing, which may sometimes have a vague resemblance to a uniform and often incorporates elements of their own state's colours. These warriors are armed only with their own personal assortment of weapons, be it bows, swords, cudgels or, particularly in the more rural provinces, farming tools.

Roving bands of footloose young men and would be adventurers who wander off to seek their fortunes in such wild and lawless places as the Border Princes or the Wasteland (or the untamed wilds of the Empire itself) are a plentiful source of irregular troops for an Elector Count, and there is a constant stream of adventurers, pirates and brigands returning to the Empire. Battles in far-off lands have forged these men into hardened warriors, but most are unable to settle back into normal society upon their return. They are hardy fighters and are well used to the rigours of war, but are uncouth, disreputable sorts, liable to cause trouble roaming around in dangerous, and often well-armed, bands. The most successful of these fighters may even end up as nobles in some distant land. Others become brigands or pirates, most are never seen again, but a steady stream return to their homeland, with scars, tall tales and a total inability either to settle down into normal society or accept discipline as regular soldiers. They are good fighters but liable to cause trouble in taverns, when they are not roaming around in dangerous bands.

"They might look like an undisciplined rabble to you Sergeant, but a man fights twice as hard when he's defending home and hearth."

- Captain Edwalst von Hilde

The Elector Counts wisely seek to recruit such bands as irregular troops for two reasons. The first is to bring these headstrong fighters under some sort of control and thus prevent brigandage and rebellion. The other reason is that they represent a ready source of expendable troops, often brave, reckless and hardened to the rigours of campaigning. The polite and diplomatic term for such irregular troops is 'Free Companies', but the professional, disciplined state soldiers of the Empire simply refer to them as what they are – scum. Once the fighting is done, however, these Men are forcibly disbanded and dispersed before they become too unruly and begin plundering the lands they have just fought to protect.

Free Companies are paid after the battle from a mixture of the spoils of war and the Elector Count's own war chest. Some unscrupulous generals are known to throw Free Company regiments into the thickest fighting, knowing that dead mercenaries do not require payment. However, sellswords can become a liability if treated too callously – it is not unheard of for a regiment to switch sides in the middle of a battle should they receive a better offer from the enemy.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Militia Fighter	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	6
Militia Leader	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	6

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry.

## SPECIAL RULES:

**Militia:** Models with this special rule can use the Support Fire and Counter Charge actions from the State Troops special rule.



# HUNTSMEN

While the Empire has come far from the tribes that founded it 2500 years ago, some things haven't changed at all. Although peasants till parts of the land, huge expanses of the Empire are still covered with forest or are hostile to agriculture. In the untamed wilds of the Empire there lurk countless mutants who are ever hungry for human flesh. These are the lands where Huntsmen and trappers thrive. They use the same techniques as their ancestors to take down game, be it a trap or a well-placed shot. It takes skill to stalk wild animals while avoiding the dark creatures of the woods. Huntsmen in their animal skin clothes and fur hats may appear uncouth to city folks, but they don't much care what others think of them.

Huntsmen are rare individuals who are more at home in the wild than in the teeming cities of the Old World. Huntsmen are masters of the wilderness and skilled trackers who patrol the forests surrounding their homes to cull these foul monsters. They roam through the wilderness, following trails that few other eyes can discern, while keeping an eye out for dangerous beasts and unnatural occurrences. Armed with little more than a bow and their wits, these grim warriors are adept at luring their quarry into lethal ambushes.

The weapons used by hunters have changed little over the centuries. While there have been advances in technology, such as the advent of the crossbow and forged steel, hunters have hardly been affected by the application of these developments. A crossbow functions similarly to the bow, forged steel behaves similarly to iron.



Equally at home in forest or mountains, a Huntsman can identify trouble, help hunt up meals, and keep watch. A Huntsman is an invaluable ally, whether the task is to discover where Orcs amass in the World's Edge Mountains, map out the passes above the Ostermark, or lead traitorous discussions with the goblins or Orcs of the Grey Mountains. While it may take some time to grow accustomed to the nuances of a foreign land, truly gifted Huntsmen will slowly acclimate to any region. Their ability to adapt is vital to their trade, and their survival.

When an Elector Count, especially those from the wilder, less 'civilised' provinces, such as Ostland, Stirland and the Ostermark, muster regiments of militia, they are keen to gather as many Huntsmen to their banners as they can. These seasoned hunters are organised into groups of skirmishers who can scout ahead of the main body of the army to gather intelligence, disrupt enemy movements and pick off war machine crews with deadly accurate bow fire.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Huntsman	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7
Tracker	4	3	5	3	3	1	3	1	7

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry.

**SPECIAL RULES:** Skirmishers, Scouts.

## THE MASTER OF THE HUNT

*When the nobility of the Empire goes hunting, they employ a specialist hunter called the Master of the Hunt to ensure a successful venture. The Master of the Hunt is a common position in most noble households.*

*It is this huntsman's responsibility to locate the prey for his lord. The lord then determines if the game is worth pursuing or not. If the lord is pleased with the selection, the huntsman flanks the animal and begins herding it towards the hunting party and the chase is on.*

*The Master of the Hunt and his lordship are always assured the widest selection of game because they hunt in Imperial forests. An Imperial forest is a large region of prime hunting land reserved for the sole use of the Elector Count and his approved guests. As most Elector Counts are busy with matters of state (and not hunting), protected Imperial forests typically sit empty and teeming with game. Provincial law prescribes harsh penalties on any form of poaching in an Imperial forest, and the killing of a field hare carries the same punishment as the killing of a stag. There is a popular misconception that Imperial forests are restricted to wooded regions, and this is not the case. An Imperial forest can include any type of terrain that supports wild game, whether it's grassland, wetland or plain.*

# GREATSWORDS

Alongside the common soldiery, Elector Counts and Burgomeisters can normally call upon more specialised troops. Foremost amongst these are the Greatswords, an elite body of heavy infantry that forms their lord's personal guard on the battlefield. Greatswords are expensive to equip and maintain, and are therefore always fewer in number than the province's regiments of ordinary state troops. To commit such troops to battle is a serious matter for an Empire general and is often regarded as a last resort.

Regiments of Greatswords garrison the castles of the Elector Counts and form their lord's honour guard on state occasions. These grim men are equipped with huge two-handed swords called zweihanders that can cleave an armoured knight in twain with one blow. Greatswords are also often adorned with suits of plate armour, for these elite troops are expected to fight in the thick of the bloodiest and most dangerous combats of a battle. Greatswords swear to never give ground to the enemies of the Empire and to protect the Count at the cost of their own lives. The history of the Empire is rich with episodes where these brave soldiers were cut down to a man in a last stand around their Count after all the rest of the army had been defeated.

Members of the Greatswords are personally picked by the Elector Counts from amongst the most accomplished warriors in their state regiments. Indeed, many Greatsword regiments are led in battle by the Count's personal champion. Only the bravest and most honourable soldiers are ever promoted into the ranks of the



Greatswords, and to gain such a promotion, a soldier must distinguish himself under the eyes of his commanding officers and accomplish some heroic feat of arms. Whilst these brave acts are far from uncommon, it is much rarer for the soldier in question to survive the experience. Though this is incredibly dangerous, there is no shortage of those willing to risk their lives for the chance to be raised to such a respected position. On one such occasion, during the Battle of Blood Ridge, Albrecht Hoefner, the last survivor of von Menscher's Blackhelms, received his promotion to the Hochland Greatswords after defending his regiment's colours for an entire day against repeated attacks from scores of bloodthirsty tribesmen and mutated beasts. However, Albrecht died a week later after he finally succumbed to an infected leg wound he received during his valiant last stand. It is the dream of almost every soldier in the Empire to serve in a regiment of Greatswords, but it is a goal that few men have the courage or skill to realise.

Upon a soldier's induction into the esteemed ranks of the Greatswords, he is required to swear an oath never to take a backwards step in the face of the enemy. Every regiment of Greatswords has its own particular punishments for those who fail in their duty. However, such instances are extremely rare, and the history of the Empire is replete with heroic tales of regiments of Greatswords that have died to a man to protect the life of their liege lord, even after the rest of their army had been butchered.

This courage and devotion in Greatswords is well rewarded; the veterans of this elite corps receive double pay, eat the best food and live in well-appointed quarters in the most prestigious barracks within the castle walls. Sometimes, an especially heroic Greatsword may even be rewarded by his Elector Count with knighthood. This is a great and extremely rare honour for a warrior not of noble blood, and it is one of the few paths which the common soldiery can take to join one of the acclaimed Knightly Orders.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Greatsword	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	1	8
Count's Champion	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	2	8

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry.

**SPECIAL RULES:** State Troops, Stubborn.

## THE CARROBURG GREATSWORDS

*The Carroburg Greatswords are one of the most famous regiments in the Empire, with tales of their valour and ruthlessness told from Marienburg to Talabheim. The regiment earned its bloody reputation after the Siege of Carroburg in 1865, where its soldiers successfully defended the walls of their city against the Count of Middenland's vast army. Despite the horrific casualties and many wounds they suffered during the battle, the Greatswords fought on resolutely and by battle's end, their white Reikland uniforms were stained red by the blood of the fallen. From that moment onwards, the Carroburg Greatswords have worn dark red uniforms in remembrance of that bloody battle.*

# FLAGELLANTS

The Old World is a dark and dangerous place, full of many hardships greater than human fortitude can withstand. Wars, plagues and the predations of terrible monsters can destroy whole towns and force their inhabitants to become beggars, vagabonds and brigands. This combined with prophecies of the Lord of the End Times and the doom of the world, has filled the hearts of the Empire's people with despair and hopelessness. It is probably no wonder that many are driven mad by the terrible hardships that they suffer. Many see their condition as a sign that the realms of Men are about to collapse, that they are living in the last days of a dying world. There are many who have suffered personal disaster and whose livelihoods have been destroyed by natural catastrophe or invasion. All who endure such hardships are hardened by their losses, yet some are driven over the edge of sanity by their suffering.

Many of these dishevelled wretches see their plight as a morbid sign that the Empire is about to collapse, an irrefutable portent that these are the last, desperate days of a dying world. Only by bloody penitence and self-flagellation can it be saved. Such unfortunates flock to hear the despairing pronouncements of lunatic doomsayers, and these bands of Flagellants roam the Empire at will, spreading their gospel of desolation before them. These men revel in their despair, despondent in all things yet manic in their pronouncements of gloom. The Flagellants of Sigmar are all mad, driven so by the ever-present threat of Chaos to the north, the random plagues spread by the dreaded Skaven, and other horrors of the Old World.

Flagellants are religious zealots, fanatics and madmen obsessed with the end of the world, who have given themselves over to a complete and inescapable belief in ultimate doom. Such unfortunates flock like moths to a flame to hear the despairing prognostications of lunatic doomsayers, and in their desperation, they join these penniless zealots in their rants about lost hope and the end of the world. Together, these deluded bands of Flagellants roam the Empire at will, spreading their gospel of desolation before them, and proselytising angrily to their fellow citizens about the need to honour the gods and defy the forces of Chaos. With insane persistence, they preach their view of the end of the world, led by an equally insane priest.

The ragged Flagellant bands wandering the roadways of the Empire are comprised of lunatics who mortify their own flesh to seek atonement or to inure themselves against the tortures they expect to face in the coming apocalypse. It is a common sight to see groups of fanatical madmen whipping and beating themselves in an attempt to 'purge' themselves of any attachment to the material world, which they believe to be sinful and therefore not worth relying upon. They travel from village to village, begging scraps of food as they preach their nightmarish vision of ruin to any who will hear. Upon reaching a town or village, they call its inhabitants to bear witness to their gruesome self-mortification. When a sufficient crowd has gathered, the Flagellants scour themselves with whips and barbed chains until their flesh is bloody, rejoicing and singing praise to Sigmar as they do so.

Amid the whipping and screaming, a prophet of doom shrieks of the grievous sins of Mankind and cries that only those who join their cavalcade of agony can save the world. Such is the force of passion and fervour of the prophet's oratory that many in the audience cast off their former lives and join the

Flagellant band. In time, a great procession trudges from town to town, bearing their knotted scourges and chanting their melancholy dirges. Whilst some listen to their doom-mongering speeches, many citizens simply ignore them, while others pelt them with rubbish in an effort to make them leave. These men are nearly as horrible as those who serve Chaos, as disease is rampant among their numbers and most are infested with insects and worse.

A Flagellant's world is that of pain. Some of this pain is the self-inflicted lashes brought on by the Flagellant's constant acts of repentance. However, the Flagellant also bears the painful burden of preaching the message of his gods to heathens, and leading fellow defenders of the faith into the unending war against Chaos.

When not in battle against their vile enemies, Flagellants often lurk in the shadows of the slums, searching for souls to save...or evil to punish. Flagellants are regarded as dangerous, a reputation that is largely justified. After all, a Flagellant may be harshly critical of those who do not measure up to his own deranged standards of piety – to the extent that he might even accuse them of being sympathisers of Chaos, which can have fatal results. The mad fanatics can easily find both where the sane would find none, choosing to see only what they want to see. Many times, Flagellants walk into the most innocent situations and turn them into blood-soaked scenes of carnage.

Flagellants also frequent the temples of the gods they worship. Mercifully, much of this time is spent in silent prayer, as they ask their deities for the strength to smite their





other worshippers of the temples, attempting to gain converts to their crusade against Chaos. Though they may gain the adoration of a few zealots, such attempts to gain followers usually lead to suggestions as to where Chaos might be fought...far away from the temples. By that measure, Flagellants haunt ruins, caves, and other places where creatures of Chaos are rumoured to lair. If the taint of Chaos is mentioned in connection to a particular place, odds are that a Flagellant patrols somewhere nearby.

Flagellants have few allies and even fewer friends. This, of course, is their own doing – they believe that people who do not blindly follow their causes with slavish devotion are enemies at best, and conspirators of Chaos at the worst. Their few friends are often rogues who whisper lies to them, seeking to twist some advantage out of their insistence on seeing enemies everywhere.

Those who serve their Gods as Flagellants sometimes survive throwing themselves into danger to smite the forces of Chaos and darkness. Those who survive long enough become Prophets of Doom, mighty warriors for their deity, blessed with a degree of divine protection. Their paranoid conviction in the end of the world often leads them to study gloomy interpretations of sacred texts, and they become practised in ranting loudly and at length about their apocalyptic convictions.

Prophets of Doom are remarkably charismatic individuals who lead other broken souls, as the force of their personality and their strong religious convictions draw others to them. In times of war, they are highly praised by the cult hierarchy, but when peace comes the priests prefer to move them along as quickly as possible, lest they find too many "enemies of Sigmar" within the towns of cities. Most Prophets of Doom die bravely in battle, but some do move on, often to other ways of discovering and punishing the corrupt.

Amongst these veteran Flagellants it is customary to show their devotion to the gods by voluntarily undergoing all manner of hardships. Flagellants are named after their habit of scourging themselves, but the Prophets of Doom often employ even more extreme self-mutilations. Some of them even inflict crippling injuries upon themselves, or truss their limbs up in chains or cages in order to demonstrate their devotion. It takes huge resilience to survive for any length of time as a Flagellant, and the Prophets of Doom are a hardy folk. Not only have they prevailed against the beasts and enemies they have encountered during their wanderings, but they have also survived the tortures and austerities they have inflicted upon themselves in the process.

Some lords use the Flagellants in their armies, relying on their crazed natures to stand fast before the terrors who oppose the Empire. When word reaches the Flagellants that a battle is brewing, they gather together in anticipation of the conflict, believing it to be the final hopeless battle between good and evil. When battle is joined, bands of crazed Flagellants beat themselves into a frenzy before charging headlong towards the enemy. Thus, as armies clash, the Flagellants throw themselves into the fray in a desperate gesture of sacrifice and repentance, launching themselves against the most hopeless of odds.

Although they are mad, Flagellants are not cowards. They barely care if they live or die, so long as they can strike a blow against Chaos and all that they perceive as vile before they go. They firmly believe that the end of the world is about to come, and their conviction gives them a maniacal courage. Indeed, many are completely fearless; having long

since confronted their own visions of world destruction, nothing holds terror for them any longer. Due to the constant hardships they are forced to endure, many of them self-inflicted, Flagellants feel almost no pain and are difficult to kill. Their madness also gives the Flagellants great strength and endurance, and they fight with astounding fury and determination. Such fanatical troops can be useful in battle, but their presence is disturbing for the rest of the army, sapping morale with their apocalyptic visions of defeat and destruction.

Flagellants always wield massive weapons, the better to smite their enemies, and eschew the use of armour, feeling that their Gods will protect them until the proper time to die has come. With howls of doom on their lips and visions of martyrdom in their thoughts, Flagellants fight with wild ferocity, swinging their flails at their enemies and leaving trails of blood and woe in their wake. Heedless of danger or injury, these madmen will continue to fight with reckless abandon until each and every one of them lies dead or dying on the battlefield, thus vindicating their belief that the end is indeed nigh...

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Flagellant	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	5
Prophet of Doom	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	2	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry.

**SPECIAL RULES:** Frenzy, Unbreakable.

**The End is Nigh!** If a unit of Flagellants is in base contact with an enemy unit at the start of any Close Combat phase, the Flagellants may immediately sacrifice D3 Wounds worth of models. Casualties inflicted in this way are 'martyrs' and they do not count towards combat resolution.

If at least one model is removed as a martyr, the remaining models in the unit immediately gain one of the special rules listed below until the end of the current phase. The exact special rule that applies will depend on the number of models removed as martyrs.

In addition, friendly units within 6" of Flagellants suffer -1 to their Leadership, except other Flagellants, Warrior Priests, Arch Lectors and Sisters of Sigmar.

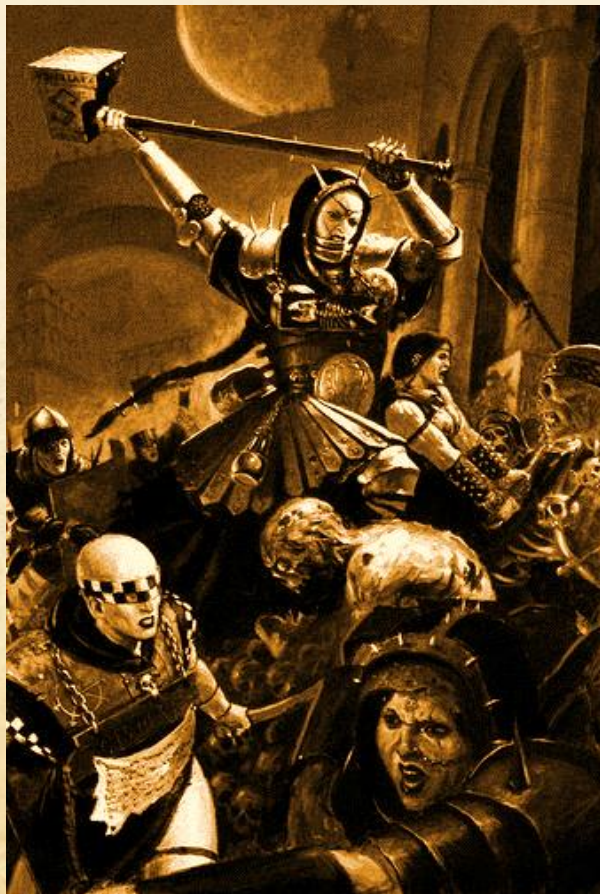
- 1 Fanatical Fury:** *The Flagellants enter a seething fit of rage as they launch themselves at the enemy with an almost unnatural fervour. The unit re-rolls all failed rolls To Hit.*
- 2 Strength of the Penitent:** *The Flagellants' self-inflicted pain lends their blows great power. The unit re-rolls all failed rolls To Hit and To Wound.*
- 3 Insensible to Pain:** *Having beaten themselves insensible, the Flagellants no longer feel mortal injuries, shrugging aside blows that would cripple a sane man! The unit gains +1 Toughness, and re-rolls all failed rolls To Hit and To Wound.*

# SISTERS OF SIGMAR

For centuries the nobility of the Empire has sent its wayward or troublesome daughters to the Holy Convent of the Order of Merciful Sisters of Sigmar in Mordheim to be initiated into the only order of priestesses dedicated to the Empire's patron god. The Sisters of Sigmar, as they are commonly called, have traditionally travelled the Empire administering to the sick and poor, tending to the needs of orphans, curing the diseased and mending broken bodies. As well as the healing arts, which they practise with expert knowledge of herb-lore and prayer, their advice is frequently sought by those about to make an important decision, for the Sisters of Sigmar are famed for their ability to predict the fickle course of fate.

Though once much loved by the common people, the Sisters have seen their popularity wane in recent years. Rabble-rousing Witch Hunters have denounced them as witches and heretics, so that even in the countryside they are attacked and driven away by the very peasants they seek to help. Many of Sigmar's priests wish to disband the order altogether, claiming that women have no right to teach the holy word of Sigmar. Even the Grand Theogonist, ostensibly the chief authority over the order, has cooled towards the sisterhood, denying the throne to Magritta of Marienburg who was brought up by the Sisters and said to be sympathetic to their cause. These days the Sisters of Sigmar have retreated to their convent situated high on the craggy island of Sigmar's Rock in the river Stir in Mordheim.

Of all the inhabitants of Mordheim only the Sisters of Sigmar were prepared for its destruction. Seeress Cassandra foretold of the disaster and at their nightly vigil the Maidens of Sigmar heard the voice of Sigmar speaking in their dreaming



minds. Thus they knew that they would be safe in their fortress high above the city, raised as it is above the polluted vapours, if only they were prepared to survive the fire of Sigmar's Fury.

While the rest of Mordheim fell under a spell of madness the Sisters of Sigmar offered prayer after prayer, scourging themselves to drive out all thoughts of sin, fervently accepting a punishing penitential regime to harden their minds against the wantonness running rampant outside their walls. When the blow finally came the Sisters gathered beneath the great temple dome of their convent which, well built and fortified as it was by the prayers of the Sisters, protected them from the fire and heat of their master's ire.

The warbands of the sisterhood are led by tough Matriarchs, each accompanied by a body of warrior sisters. The training and harsh discipline of the convent includes mastery of martial as well as ecclesiastic skills, for mastery of the body is but the first step towards the mastery of the soul. Their favoured weapon is the warhammer, the instrument of Sigmar, seen as his holy symbol, alongside the twintailed comet.

By tradition, the Sisters draw their recruits only from the most noble houses of the Empire, and families consider it a great honour to have their daughter accepted into the order. Only maidens of noble lineage can be relied upon to have the devotion to duty and innate sense of honour. Few though the recruits may be, they must endure several years as Novices during which time their devotion will be tested to the full. All are eager to prove themselves worthy to be the handmaidens of Sigmar. Sigmarite Sisters know that their entire order is shamed in the eyes of their Lord Sigmar. Every one of them is sworn upon His altar to pacify the city and thereby redeem themselves. Whatever the perils and horrors that stand in their way, they will be overcome!

Each of the Sisters Superior is a long-serving priestess of the Cult of Sigmar, well versed in the rituals of the temple and an example to the younger Sisters and Novices. The Sisters Superior are entrusted with maintaining the faith and fervour of the order. The Sigmarite Matriarchs, of whom there is an inner circle of twelve, are answerable to the High Matriarch of the temple. Matriarchs are driven by a zealous devotion to the Cult of Sigmar and a relentless determination to redeem the Sisterhood in His eyes.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Sister of Sigmar	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7
Sister Superior	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	7

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry.

**SPECIAL RULES:** Hatred, Immunity (Fear).

**Faith in Sigmar:** *The Sisters are favoured by the great god Sigmar.*

A unit of 5 or more Sisters of Sigmar follows the rules for Divine Power and Battle Prayers. For every additional 5 models in the unit, they may add +1 to their casting result.

# KNIGHTLY ORDERS

The Empire is a feudal society with counts, barons, and lesser nobles ruling over the many small towns and village communities of each province. While the state troops are mustered from the common folk of the Empire, the Knightly Orders are formed from its noble sons. It is considered a great honour to be inducted into a Knightly Order, to train as a knight, don a suit of plate armour and ride to war.

The noble-born warriors of the Empire do not form part of any state's standing army, for to do so would mean to rub shoulders with the common soldiery. Instead, they typically fight for one of the Knightly Orders of the Empire; heroic brotherhoods of warriors who ride into battle atop mighty barded warhorses. Knights are magnificent figures, clad in gleaming suits of heavy plate armour crafted by Dwarven smiths, armed with weaponry of the finest quality and mounted on powerful destriers. The sight of a regiment of knights charging full tilt at the enemy is a terrifying prospect for the Empire's foes to face. As the knights thunder onwards, they are likened to an avalanche of steel and muscle, and those enemies not spitted on the end of sharpened lances are crushed beneath the trampling of iron-shod hooves.

There are many of these brotherhoods throughout the Empire. They range in size and strength from great orders with a long and storied history and chapter houses in every province, to smaller and even more specialist orders who may only operate out of a single temple. Each keeps

with its own traditions and creeds, which will often influence their preferred heraldic designs, ritual behaviours and even their fighting style. Some orders may even restrict their membership to devout worshippers of a particular god. In any case, when the Empire goes to war, the common soldiery are cheered to have knights riding beside them, for they know that they have the greatest warriors in their midst. In battle, they fight alongside other Knights from their own order, forming a separate unit on the battlefield. When two competing provinces fight each other there may well be contingents of the same Knightly Order on both sides, but this is an accepted practice and causes no ill will within the Knightly Orders themselves.

Knights walk in two distinct circles, the military and the aristocracy. They provide the soldiers of the Old World with leadership drawn from the nobility (which a great many consider important and proper), as well as devastating cavalry charges known to break entire armies with their fury. Knights earn the respect their more courtly peers do not by demonstrating a willingness to appear on the field of battle and play an important part in the swirling melee of combat. At court, knights provide the nobility with military advisors who speak their own language and sympathise with the concerns of statecraft. Whilst common soldiers may have more battlefield experience than many knights, they usually lack the education and perspective requisite to see the bigger picture of warfare and politics, and so are rarely called on to act as advisors.



To become a member of one of the Empire's select brotherhoods of Knightly Orders, a noble must forsake his feudal responsibilities and rights of inheritance and then pass a rigorous rite of initiation. There are many of these brotherhoods throughout the Empire. Some are small in size and their members are recruited from the local aristocracy, such as the Knights Griffon and the Knights of the Broken Sword. Other Orders restrict their membership to devout worshippers of a particular god. These are often referred to as Knights Templar, and they include such orders as the Black Guard of Morr and the zealous Knights of Sigmar's Blood. Whilst every Knightly Order will have a primary temple in one city-state or province, most will also maintain subsidiary temples across the length and breadth of the Empire.

Knights owe their allegiance directly to their lord: the Grand Master of their Order, and the Elector Count of their province. The Count can call upon his knights to come to arms and fight as part of his army. When a Count musters his forces all the knights from an order fight together, forming individual units of Knights Panther, Knights of the Blazing Sun, and so forth. The history of the Empire is full of strife, and on occasion one Count has marched his armies against another, and knights from different provinces have fought each other despite being part of the same Order. This is accepted as part of the natural order and causes no ill will amongst the Knightly Orders.

In general, the Knightly orders of the Empire are based at a Chapter House and have no particular religious significance. They are lodges or centres of martial nobility with their own traditions which may or may not involve worshipping one or more of the gods, or celebrating famous victories, founder's days, and so on. Knightly orders are most often founded and sponsored by powerful nobles or families, often Counts, though there are knightly orders sponsored by temples. This tends to happen during periods of anarchy and unrest when temples were in danger of being plundered by bandits and miscreants. A temple would raise funds and pay to establish a knightly order, often taking the younger sorts of nobles or less elevated nobles who would not be eligible to join the older knightly orders.

Every Empire knight bears his rank and Order's symbols upon his shield or armour as heraldic devices and other icons of importance and symbolic meaning, and the style of his armour and dress follows a traditional design. The most famous Orders in the Empire have histories stretching back centuries and their chapter houses are hung with ancient banners and battle trophies. The three largest and most influential Orders are the Knights of the White Wolf, the Knights Panther, and the Knights of the Blazing Sun.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Knight	4	4	3	3	3	1	3	1	8
Preceptor	4	4	3	3	3	1	3	2	8
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry.

"When we fight with honour, we bring honour to our house."

- *Unknown Imperial Knight*

## INNER CIRCLE KNIGHTS

The Knightly Orders of the Empire are organised along strict lines of hierarchy, with every novice trained in martial virtues and the chivalric code until he is ready to take up the mantle of a fully-fledged knight. As the warrior attains honour on the battlefield and proves his worth, he will ascend through the ranks of his Order and forge himself a warrior's name. Within each knightly order there are those who rise to the top, the best of the best. They have proven themselves valiant and loyal time and time again and for that they are brought into the inner circle of the order. The Order's veteran knights form its inner circle, and these are the most powerful warriors in the Empire. These heroic warriors epitomise the warrior virtues of the Knightly Orders and they have accomplished mighty feats of arms, slaying their foes on countless battlefields. They command Knights in the field, represent the order at court, and make the important decisions. Many of them have been entrusted with dangerous secrets about the foundations of their group. Each one of them aspires to become the Grand Master of his order. That is the pinnacle of knighthood. The Knights of the Inner Circle are the elite of the elite, amongst the best fighting men of the entire Empire. When the courageous Knights of the Inner Circle go to war it is only to fight the most diabolical enemies, and their presence on the battlefield is worth many times their number.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Inner Circle Knight	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	1	8
Inner Circle Preceptor	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	2	8
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry.



# GRAND MASTERS

The most senior of the Knights of the Inner Circle, and the nominal heads of each of the knightly orders, are the Grand Masters. The Grand Masters are some of the most well-known military men of the Empire, admired by the aristocracy (to whom they invariably belong) and common people alike. The grand master is expected to be a paragon of knighthood, and as such must display both great physical prowess and knowledge on subjects such as history and warfare. A Grand Master is a warrior and leader of unparalleled valour, having fought in dozens of battles, and whose military prowess is beyond question.

A Grand Master is not only one of the most fearsome warriors in the Old World, but also a legendary commander and leader of men. There are very few Grand Masters in the Old World, for even amongst those dedicated individuals who have the skill and strength of mind to become a Knight of the Inner Circle, few have what it takes to reach the pinnacle of knighthood. A Grand Master is always at the forefront of an army when it marches to war, leading his fellow knights, and often the entire army, into battle. He is usually amongst the most trusted of military advisors and generals, and when not engaged in warfare is often charged with planning for it. A Grand Master of a templar order is often a leading personality within a religious cult as well, commanding total loyalty from its warriors.

Elector Counts often call upon the Knights of an Order to come to arms and fight as part of their army. To add this crack heavy cavalry to their own army is vital for the Counts. This makes the Grand Masters very powerful individuals, because theirs is the final decision whether the Order will join the Count's army or not.

When an Elector Count petitions a Knightly Order for aid, it is sometimes a condition that the Grand Master himself take command of the army. Most Elector Counts are only too happy for a general of such superlative ability to lead his soldiers since it is well known that Grand Masters make formidable leaders, though this has not always been the case, and ego, ambition or sheer lunacy has sometimes brought unfortunate consequences.

In the year 2485, just such an attitude almost spelled disaster for Wolfram Hertwig, the Elector Count of Ostermark. At the Battle of Black Road, he stubbornly refused to allow the Grand Master of the Knights of the Everlasting Light to take command of his army, though Hertwig was barely into his teens and had never commanded an army in battle. In response, Grand Master Kessler and his warriors rode back to their chapter house, leaving Hertwig's army to fight the invading Orcs without their aid. He led his troops into a bloodbath, barely escaping the carnage with his life.

Though the greenskins were eventually defeated, the count's army suffered horrific losses and for many years, the Ostermark was dependant on aid from the armies of Ostland or Talabecland for its survival. "Hertwig's Folly", as it is now known, stands as a cautionary tale to those who would let pride blind them from the value of having the greatest warriors of the Empire fighting at their side.

In times of war the Grand Masters regularly take to the field of battle alongside their knights, inspiring them with the same sort of awe the knights themselves inspire in the common soldiery. Their no-nonsense attitude to warfare means that even in the heat of the battle they can keep their warriors in check, ensuring that they press home their attack until their opponent breaks. In battle, a Grand Master will always be found deep within the enemy ranks, crushing his foes beneath an onslaught of powerful, well-aimed attacks. His enemies will learn to fear the military might of a Grand Master.

"If there is one thing I have learnt, it is that peace is fleeting and war is eternal."

- Maximilian Weiss, Grand Master of the Empire

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Grand Master	4	6	6	4	4	3	6	4	9
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry (Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:** Immunity (Psychology).

**Master of Battle:** If a Grand Master joins a unit of Knights or Demigryph Knights, the unit gains the Immunity (Psychology) special rule. If the Grand Master leaves the unit or is slain, this special rule is immediately lost.



# DEMIGRYPH KNIGHTS

In the heart of the Reikwald Forest there lurk many foul and fearsome creatures. However, there also dwell beasts of a nobler heritage that can be harnessed for war by the Knightly Orders of the Empire. Only Knights of the Inner Circle are found worthy to ride to battle on these more exotic and, frankly, ferocious mounts. Some such champions of the orders have long passed into legend – the Winter Wolves of Middenheim, and the Razorbeak-mounted Knights of the Shining Talon amongst them. Most famously, however, it is Demigryphs that are chosen as mounts for the most virtuous and battle-hardened knights, for these great beasts have proven themselves as loyal and powerful steeds on countless battlefields in the Empire's proud history.

Whilst many of the monstrous creatures ridden by the heroes of the Empire have been raised from birth, such is not always the case with Demigryphs. Amongst some Knightly Orders, an aspiring knight's final trial is to capture a Demigryph and break it to his will. Unsurprisingly, many fail and are torn to bloody ribbons. As a result, there are relatively few Demigryph Knights in the Empire and even the Knights Griffon, who count fully two dozen of these majestic beasts amongst their number, still rely primarily on more conventional steeds. However, those few small Orders, such as the Knights of Taal's Fury and the Knights of the Vengeful Sun, whose entire brotherhoods can take to war upon these monstrous beasts, have a roll of victory honours surpassed only by the most ancient of Knightly Orders.



When a Demigryph attacks, it strikes in a blur of motion, pouncing upon the enemy before they even have time to raise their weapons; a swipe of a Demigryph's razor-sharp talons can eviscerate a man and its powerful beak can cut through armour and limbs with dreadful ease. It is rare to find a Demigryph Knight who does not bear a scar of two inflicted by their own mounts, for whilst Demigryphs are noble creatures, they remain fierce and temperamental. The knights wear these scars with pride, for they set them apart from their horse-mounted brethren and bear testament to their skill and bravery. However, for every grim story of a knight being devoured by his own mount, there is another tale of a loyal Demigryph stalking the foe to avenge the death of its rider.

Demigryph Knights do not tend to overwhelm their prey in great sweeping charges. Instead, they are more likely to engage the enemy in protracted assaults where the strength and endurance of their fearsome mounts becomes decisive. Demigryphs are well suited to the savage and bloody nature of such fighting, with their claws and razor-sharp beaks cutting a bloody swathe through their foes. In such close confines, a knight's traditional lance loses much of its effectiveness, and many Demigryph Knights have thusly adapted their fighting style to wield heavy cavalry halberds in battle instead. These weapons strike the perfect balance between reach and power, and are far better suited to the knights' role on the battlefield.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Inner Circle Knight	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	1	8
Inner Circle Preceptor	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	2	8
Demigryph	8	4	0	5	4	3	4	3	7

**TROOP TYPE:** Monstrous Cavalry.

**THE KNIGHTS OF THE VENGEFUL SUN**  
*The Knights of the Vengeful Sun first made a name for themselves at the Battle of Ghoule Pass. This treacherous valley was infested with greenskins, and passage to the Border Princes had become all but impossible. So it was that Count Ruprecht of Nuln sent for the Knightly Order to carve a way through. The greenskins were many, and it was not long before battle-hungry Orcs and cunning Night Goblins choked the pass, grinding down the Empire force in a war of attrition. The Knights could not bring their full strength to bear, and the battle was going badly. As artillery fire roared overhead, the Knights of the Vengeful Sun took a daring gamble, and sent forth their cadre of Demigryph Knights. They rode their powerfully agile steeds up the sides of the valley, arcing around and down upon the flank of the greenskin horde. There, they waged a cull of such unremitting violence that it broke the deadlock and, ultimately, carried the day.*

# REIKSGUARD KNIGHTS

Founded at the time of the ascension of the Reik Princes to the Empire's throne, the Reiksguard are sworn to protect the life of the Emperor. The Reiksguard is the personal army and bodyguard of the Emperor himself. As an Elector Count the Emperor also has direct command of his own provincial army – the Reikland regiments in the case of the Emperor Karl Franz – but it is the knights of the Reiksguard that form the symbol of his military strength. The Reiksguard forms an elite core of highly trained, expensively-equipped troops who are loyal to the Emperor in person.

As the best troops available to the Emperor, the Reiksguard Knights form the core of the Imperial household guard, both on the field of battle as well as at other, more stately, functions. Their Grand Master is known as the Reiksmarshal, and he is second only to the Emperor himself in matters of war. The Reiksguard is barracked in the comparative comfort of Altdorf, but they also maintain battle ready fortresses scattered throughout the whole of the Empire. The Reiksguard accompanies the Emperor on campaign and during diplomatic tours throughout the Empire and abroad. However, it is not uncommon for the Emperor to attach a unit of these renowned warriors to fight alongside another Elector Count's army. In doing so, the Emperor is effectively lending the count his personal support for the upcoming struggle.

The Order was first founded during the reign of Wilhelm, the first Emperor of the lineage of the Princes of Altdorf. Devout Templars of Sigmar, Reiksguard Knights swear to give their lives to protect the Emperor, who is the living incarnation of Sigmar. Over the decades, the Reiksguard have forged a legendary reputation for courage, often charging into the fray against opponents that would see lesser warriors flee in terror. Time and again, this stoic bravery has brought the Empire a great, if bloody, victory and the name Reiksguard is synonymous throughout the provinces with feats of selfless heroism.

The ranks of the Reiksguard are open to all men of noble birth, regardless of what city or state they originally hail from. Provided they can prove their loyalty to the Emperor, and their feats of martial prowess meet the stern expectations of the Reiksmarshal, any warrior can hope to join this illustrious brotherhood. This is considered a great military and social honour amongst the nobility of the Empire, and there is no shortage of applicants. The Reiksguard can therefore maintain the highest standards and includes the very best warriors from all the Empire's provinces, including those from as far afield as Ostland and Nordland, Wissenland and Ostermark. The ranks of the Reiksguard include the heirs to many of the wealthiest and most powerful noble houses in the Empire, including the sons of several Elector Counts.



Joining the Reiksguard is considered a military and social honour amongst the nobility, and barons, dukes and counts clamour to have their sons accepted into such an acclaimed brotherhood. After arduous training, new inductees join the Reiksgaurd in an austere, if deadly, tournament that concludes the Emperor's Tournament. This event occurs every year in Altdorf during the spring festivals. A newly knighted member is given a duty by the Reiksmarshal, the Grand Master of the order itself. This could be an order to join the Emperor's Personal guard, a political task, or attachment to a formation that marches to war under the command of an Elector Count.

Although few in number, the knights of the Reiksguard are the most important part of the Emperor's army, for they are a symbol of the Empire's nobility and martial might. As such, when a unit of Reiksguard Knights takes to battle, it will typically form up proudly in the centre of the Empire battle line around the Emperor himself, the better to inspire the common soldiery and reassure them that the blessing of the Emperor is with them. Imperial history is rich with records of decisive battles won by a timely charge of the Reiksguard, and the halls of their barracks are hung with countless trophies and enemy banners won on the field of war. Despite the potential power and influence that such a reputation offers, the Reiksguard has stayed apolitical, loyal first, last and always to the reigning Emperor.

They are also responsible for the security of all palaces and castles belonging to the Imperial family. Individual squadrons of Reiksguard Knights are commanded by noblemen, and are generally recruited from their home provinces. A commission in the Reiksguard is regarded as a fine and fitting occupation for the younger sons of the Empire's noble houses, and many of them take this as an opportunity to outshine their elder brothers, who command the armies and militias of their home provinces. There is a great rivalry between the cavalry squadrons of various nobles.

The Reiksguard are much loved throughout the Empire. When a dashing young Reiksguard returns to his home town on leave he is greeted by cheering citizens, and riotous celebrations carry on long into the night. When they accompany the Emperor on his many ceremonial processions they add to the splendour and magnificence of the occasion by dint of their awesome appearance and fabulously expensive armour. During the annual Imperial tournament the Reiksguard compete against each other for the honour of being closest to the Emperor. These events are a major highlight of the year attracting citizens from all over the Empire and beyond.

As befits their prestigious role and elite status, the knights of the Reiksguard are equipped with the very finest weapons and suits of armour available. The Reiksguard wear magnificent gilded armour, highly polished to a mirror-like finish, garlanded with scarlet sashes and emblazoned with the device of the

Reiksguard. Their helms are adorned with tall feathered red and white crests of the ruling Emperor Karl Franz, or extravagant crests elaborated of the family crest of the squadron's commander, varying widely from squadron to squadron. All ranks carry shields emblazoned with a skull and the initials of the current Emperor (KF for Karl Franz). The knights carry tall lances with pennants decorated with crowns, and ride fierce and prancing stallions. It is common and popular to sport mottoes painted on armour (either the knight's armour or shield, or the steed's barding). Examples of such mottoes include *Malleus* ("hammer"), *Sigmar*, *Desporandum*, *Victorium* and *Mortis*, amongst many others. The Reiksguard flag bears the national emblem on one side and the Emperor's emblem (currently initials KF for Karl Franz) and the Sigmar legend on the other. Their standard bears symbols associated with the Emperor, such as the laurels and the Imperial cross. The skull is often used as a dedication to Morr, but here it represents the line of Emperors past, all of whom have been served faithfully by the Knights of the Order and so, on the Reiksguards' shields, the skull is often topped with a crown or laurels.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Reiksguard Knight	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	1	8
Reikscaptain	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	2	8
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry.

**SPECIAL RULES:** Stubborn.

## REIKSGUARD FOOT KNIGHTS

The Reiksguard are divided into a mounted arm known as the *Reiksguard Knights*, or the *Imperial Cavalry*, and an infantry arm, the *Imperial Foot*. Although the infantry arm does not have the glamorous image of their cavalry counterparts, they are nonetheless a crack fighting force. They are based near the Emperor's palace and can be seen parading through the streets, escorting the Emperor on state occasions, and patrolling the city walls.

The Reiksguard foot regiments are protected by shields and ornate but heavy steel full armour resplendent with plumes and ribbons and kept polished to a mirror-like finish. They are armed with heavy swords, halberds or great two-handed swords. Regardless of how they fight, the Knights weapons are of the highest quality and their armour is highly polished to a mirror-like finish, topped with crests that carry the colours of the reigning Emperor, Karl Franz.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Reiksguard Knight	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	1	8
Reikscaptain	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	2	8

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry.

**SPECIAL RULES:** Stubborn.



# PISTOLIERS

Pistoliers are the elite light cavalry of the Imperial Army. They are young nobles who are not yet old or experienced enough to test their spurs in battle or join one of the Knightly Orders. However, the clarion call to arms pounds strongly in the veins of these youths, and many cannot wait to march to war and prove themselves on the glorious field of combat. They specialize in wielding firearms, specifically pistols. Pistoliers have only come into their own recently, as gunpowder weapons have been relatively unstable until now in the Old World. Many young nobles volunteer for the Pistoliers in search of glory or in the hopes of making a name. When not at war they spend their time feuding and fighting duels against the unknighthed sons of neighbouring nobles.

Some spirited young nobles may gather their friends and form regiments of Pistoliers of their own, but most join the ranks of the Pistolkorps, a military organisation funded by the Emperor, the Imperial Engineers School and sponsored by several Knightly Orders. Here, the nobles learn about horsemanship and war from the Outriders – grizzled veterans paid by the knights to train their sons. Most of the young men who survive their time in the Pistolkorps go on to join a Knightly Order and put the skills and scars they have earned to good use as a fully armoured knight. However, it is with great reluctance that most Pistoliers who survive their stint in the regiment trade the thrill and the flair of the Pistolkorps for the austerity of a Knightly Order.

Many Pistoliers will be fighting in battle for the first time. Being rather inexperienced, they are inclined to be hot-headed and rather impetuous. Filled with notions of heroism, many Pistoliers dash into the jaws of danger where an older warrior might wisely assess the risks and bide his time. Such fiery courage is only to be expected of Pistoliers, and indulging it is seen by their fathers

as a good way of tempering their wildness into something more dependable. Young nobles seeking a glorious life in the military usually start out as a pistolier. These dashing individuals ride into battle on swift horses, armed with a brace of blackpowder pistols. Impetuous and foolhardy, they gallop as near as possible to the most dangerous foe they can find and unleash volleys of deadly pistol shot at close range. They then ride off again to reload, or if their hot-headed nature gets the better of them, charge in wielding sword or the heavy butts of their firearms.

Pistoliers wear lighter armour than their fathers and ride more lightly built, faster horses. The armour and weapons carried by a Pistolier are provided for from the treasuries of his family, and so his style of armour, the cut and colour of his clothing, and details of his weaponry vary from horseman to horseman. It is a common fashion for them to paint their armour black with contrasting silver bands, which makes Pistoliers look very distinctive. Sometimes they will wear plumes or sashes of their province colour so that they can be recognised on the battlefield. Each Pistolier cuts a dashing figure with his flamboyant livery, plumed helmet and brace of finely crafted pistols. His allegiance is to his father, family and ultimately to his Count and Emperor. In battle, Pistoliers act as light cavalry who gallop around the enemy flanks, disrupting formations and launching devastating hit-and-run attacks with their pistols blazing away. They are a magnificent sight in their ostentatious livery as they charge on swift steeds, pistols blazing.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Pistolier	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7
Outrider	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry.

**SPECIAL RULES:** Fast Cavalry.



## THE CHARGE OF VON KLEIT'S BRIGADE

*Von Kleit, the youngest of seven noble sons, escaped theological college to form Von Kleit's Flashpans, a regiment of pistoliers recruited from among his daredevil friends. Vain, extravagant, and renowned for the splendour of their uniforms, their lightning charges against enemy flanks won them many victories.*

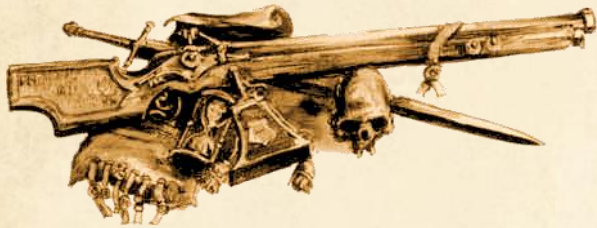
*Marius Leitdorf, Elector Count of Averland, pursued a campaign into the Border Princes in retaliation for cattle raids of the robber baron Heraclius Gasco. Von Kleit's Flashpans joined the expedition, and Von Kleit promised his men that the first to 'beard the lion in his own den' would win the pick of the spoils. Baron Gasco's luxuriant whiskers were infamous, so, armed with pistols in one hand and barber's shears in the other, the pistoliers unleashed an attack on the enemy lines.*

*Cannons roared, and the valley between the armies filled with gunsmoke. The cheers of the pistoliers died in the obscuring fog. As the echoes of cannon fire died away, a single victorious roar rang from the direction of the enemy lines. Von Kleit emerged from the acrid smoke, his uniform in tatters, his horse speeding him towards the stunned baron. With a swift motion, he sheared Gasco's beard, and with a parting shot, planted a lead ball in the baron's skull.*

*With the demise of their leader, the opposition retreated, but not before a marksman shot Von Kleit as he returned to the cheering Imperial lines. He fell clutching his trophy, a smile of triumph still on his face.*

# OUTRIDERS

Outriders are grim men who are both the commanders and drill instructors of the Pistolkorps. Outriders are rarely noblemen, but rather they are veterans elevated from the ranks of the state regiments, sergeants and officers who show an affinity for horsemanship and a talent for training new recruits. Outriders typically wear ornate armour, for noblemen pay well for their sons to learn the art of war. They also tend to sport eccentrically waxed moustaches to better differentiate themselves from their younger charges.



*Karl Muller held up a hand to silence the inexperienced Pistoliers. The Dwarf messengers had warned them of a Goblin horde in this part of the Great Forest, and the seasoned Outrider would be damned if he'd let the greenskins get the drop on him. Calming his steed, he signalled to the waiting Huntsmen, who darted forwards through the dense undergrowth, silent to a man.*

*The march here had been long, through rough terrain, and it was now almost dusk. Not the ideal time for a foray into enemy territory, especially against Goblins, which would become ever bolder with the failing light.*

*Muller's train of thought was lost abruptly as he spied movement to his left. As he reached for his repeater pistol, half a dozen black-robed Goblins tore through the undergrowth with a sudden shriek. Muller's mare reared in fright, and he lost his aim. The Goblins, however, were cut down almost as soon as they had appeared, for the young Pistoliers unleashed a fusillade into the foe. The cracking of pistol-shot shattered the dull silence of the forest. As the powder-smoke cleared, Muller caught sight of the Huntsmen through the trees, engaging more Goblins, picking off the vile creatures with unerringly accurate bowfire.*

*"For the Emperor, and for Taal!" Roared the Outrider, spurring on his steed. The Pistoliers, eager for action, followed him, and the Empire vanguard rushed from their hidden positions. Handgunners and Halberdiers formed a line, while horsemen sped through the forest to engage the enemy. Their warcries were answered by guttural shrieks, as Night Goblins and dagger-toothed Squigs emerged from the gloomy depths of the greenwood. The battle was on.*

The older, wiser Outriders that lead units of Pistoliers into battle have the job of reining in their young charges' excesses and keeping them out of the worst of danger. Although this is sometimes a forlorn hope, an Outrider's stern gaze and barked orders have prevented more than one foolhardy Pistolier from getting himself killed. Outriders see Pistoliers as promising, if intemperate youngsters who lack discipline. Despite much grumbling about not showing their elders any respect, Outriders are always extremely proud when one of their charges is inducted into the ranks of a Knightly Order.

Outriders also form into separate regiments, sometimes to show their charges exactly how it's done, but also to display their own martial discipline to any noblemen in the army that might be looking for an experienced instructor to tutor their own sons. As the Pistolkorps is funded in part by the Imperial Engineers School, Outriders are equipped with deadly repeater handguns, weapons capable of unleashing devastating storms of lead at long range. The leader of the Outriders, inevitably the keenest shot in the regiment, will often be armed with an even more outlandish weapon as befits his status, gifted to him by a patron Engineer.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Outrider	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7
Sharpshooter	4	3	5	3	3	1	3	1	7
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry.

**SPECIAL RULES:** Fast Cavalry.



# IMPERIAL DWARFS

Dwarfs are a short but burly and resilient race of warriors and craftsmen. Most live under the mountains in mighty holds, with mines extending deep beneath the earth. They are immediately recognizable by their stout frames, long hair, and thick beards. They tend to be gruff and short-tempered and they are legendary for their ability to hold a grudge. However, Dwarfs are a courageous people and unswervingly loyal to their friends and allies. They are struggling to preserve the remnants of their mountain kingdom from Orcs, Goblins, and other foul creatures.

Many Dwarfs live in the Empire and have done so ever since the time of Sigmar himself. The Reikland shelters a large community of Dwarfs who have lived in the Empire for many generations. Dwarfs are the "second people" of the Empire, its most important race outside of Humanity itself: These are not the Dwarfs of Karak Ankor, the ancient "Dwarf Empire" of the World's Edge Mountains, but expatriates whose ancestors, distant and more recent, have fled falling Dwarfholds or come to believe that the cause of the Dwarfs is lost, and that they should begin a new life among the largely sympathetic Humans of the Empire.

Expatriate Dwarfs feel a special bond with the Empire, for its founder, the divine Sigmar, led an army that massacred an army of Greenskins and saved the Dwarf Empire at the Battle of Black Fire Pass. Though it happened over 2500 years ago, the Dwarfs feel they have an enduring debt to Sigmar and his heirs. They therefore work as hard as they can to make sure the Empire itself works, contributing their talents to its welfare and serving in its armies. The Dwarfs have passed on a great deal of their technical knowledge, so that the Empire has many skilled metal workers and craftsmen who have created a bizarre arsenal of spectacular, if rather unreliable, weapons.

Dwarfs are a feature of the Empire's towns and cities, sometimes comprising as much as one tenth of the population. Although they organise themselves in their own guilds and mostly trade with each other, Dwarfs are a linchpin of the economy, providing quality goods and services to those who can afford their prices and needed loans to those who can afford their interest charges.

But Dwarfs are never entirely comfortable in the Empire, never completely escaping the feeling that they do not belong or are not wanted. Naturally clannish and reserved, they gather in their own districts and, in some Imperial towns, walled ghettos. Some Humans interpret this as snobbishness and an insult, while the Dwarfs feel a need to gather together for mutual protection.

Human feelings toward Dwarfs are mixed. A few, especially among Sigmarites, hold them in almost

religious reverence, given their crucial role in Imperial history. Others are so used to seeing Dwarfs among them and doing business with them that they see Dwarfs as little more than short Humans. Others, usually those who are unsuccessful in life, resent Dwarfs and feel sure they must have cheated to get where they are. All but the most rabid racists, however, recognise they are an essential part of the Empire.

Dwarfs are also a key force in the Imperial Army, when it takes the field. Dwarfs are not recruited into the state regiments, but each local community is ready to send its menfolk to fight on behalf of the Emperor. These blacksmiths, wheelwrights, jewellers, and other skilled craftsdwarfs can be called upon to provide troops for the province's defence or to fight in the Empire army. In times of need every Dwarf is a warrior. By ancient agreement, they owe service only to the Emperor, though Dwarfs will naturally take part in the defence of their cities and some hire themselves to local rulers as mercenaries. In the Imperial Army, Dwarfs form into their own units of pikemen and axemen, while also providing siege and engineering skills.

Dwarfs sometimes wear uniforms appropriate to their province or city state in the same way as men. However, it is equally likely for Dwarf troops to wear clothes or uniforms they have devised themselves. As these uniforms are inspired by the fashions of the Empire they are bright and colourful in a manner not normally associated with the rather sombre Dwarfs who live in the World's Edge Mountains.



	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Dwarf Warrior	3	4	3	3	4	1	2	1	9
Veteran	3	4	3	3	4	1	2	2	9

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry.

## SPECIAL RULES:

**Ancestral Grudge:** Dwarfs have the Hatred (Orcs & Goblins, Skaven, Hobgoblins) special rule.

**Relentless:** Units entirely composed of models with this special rule do not need to pass a Leadership test in order to march, regardless of the proximity of enemy units.

**Resolute:** Models with this special rule roll 3D6 for any Break tests taken in the first round of combat, and discard the highest dice.

# HALFLINGS

Halflings are a small but dexterous race who look like Human children to the untrained eye. The fact that they cannot grow beards only reinforces this impression. Although they tend to be pot-bellied, since they eat twice as often as any other race, they are capable of great stealth. When combined with their well-known skill with the sling, Halflings can prove to be surprisingly stubborn opponents. They are, however, largely a peaceful people, content to farm, eat, and smoke pipe weed. They are proud of their families and all Halflings can recite their family lineage back ten generations or more.

Halflings live in the region of the Empire known as The Moot or Mootland. They are subjects of the Emperor and their people provide regiments for the Imperial army in times of extreme need. The Moot itself is a largely peaceful land, and Halflings are a peaceful people, preferring the quiet routine of farming to military adventure. Despite this Halflings are tougher than they look, which is just as well for the Moot is not immune from the ravages of marauding Orcs from the Worlds Edge Mountains to the east.

The Halflings have lived in rural areas of the Empire for as long as anyone can remember, but it was not until the year 1010 that they were granted the lands around the upper Aver as their permanent home. The origins of the Halflings are obscure. When Human tribes settled the lands that later became the Empire, Halflings were apparently already amongst them. Their numbers, however, were small and they played little role in the wars that led to the establishment of the Empire. Indeed, Halflings are barely mentioned in history books until the year 1010. At that time the Emperor granted the Halflings a land of their own, as legend has it in recognition of their contributions to Imperial cuisine. Whatever the reason, the Halflings were given land near the upper reaches of the River Aver. This area has been known as the Moot ever since. The Halflings govern the Moot themselves, but it is still a part of the Empire. In fact, the Elder of the Moot is one of only fifteen Imperial Electors and thus wields some political power.



Most Halflings are homebodies. They enjoy peace and quiet and want nothing more than to be left alone to enjoy good food and a good smoke. This does not mean, however, that Halflings are just passive observers riding on the Empire's coattails – far from it they contribute – whether as archers and slingers for an imperial army, chefs for the well-to-do, governesses for the children of the elite, or creators of the most famous gardens in the Old World, the Halflings have played key parts in its well-being. Make a Halfling mad enough, and he will remind you again (and again...and again...) that theirs is the only non-Human elector in the Empire, and that they were given this honour for all the good they have done. Humans, on the other hand, just mark it down to another of Emperor Ludwig the Fat's bizarre decrees. It makes little difference to the Halflings, for they know which side of the roast the jam is on: Without Humans the Halflings would not have survived in this world.

Halflings in the Empire, however, also have their darker side. Because of popular misconceptions about them that serve to make people think they are harmless, they can serve various factions (and sometimes several at once) well as spies, charlatans, and even assassins. Halflings with a greedy streak often play on a fool's trust to make good pickpockets and confidence men. More than a few of the criminal gangs of the Empire have their Halfling "experts."

Like all the lands of the Empire, The Moot provides troops for the Emperors army, and not just in the quartermaster corps. Halflings are not especially warlike by nature, and their troopers are for the most part country watchmen, game wardens and foresters. Halflings are remarkably courageous, and will often stand their ground and resolutely fight on while larger creatures turn and flee. They are rather small to make first class warriors, but they are excellent shots with a bow. It is therefore as archers that they tend to be recruited into the Imperial army, although they are capable of fighting with spear and sword when the need arises. Halflings are also good woodsmen, and have an uncanny ability to pick their way quietly and swiftly through woods and forests, which means that they can accomplish tasks which would be impossible to Men. This gives them a real advantage over their foes despite their small size. Halfling scout troops have proven invaluable in forested terrain, while their slingers and archers make deadly pickets.

Halflings don't always wear uniforms at all, but occasionally a community will get together and buy a particularly gaudy bolt of cloth to make into bright new uniforms. As these costumes are assembled by the Halfling's wives and sisters they usually vary, with differently coloured trims and flamboyant cuts all designed by the ambitious seamstress to show off her skills and put her neighbour's talent in the shade.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Halfling	4	2	4	2	2	1	5	1	8
Constable	4	2	4	2	2	1	5	2	8

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry.

## SPECIAL RULES:

**Short & Nimble:** Enemies attacking models with this rule suffer -1 To Hit in close combat.

# IMPERIAL OGRES

Ogres are big, ugly humanoids, with coarse features and an imposing presence. Ogres enjoy eating, fighting, and eating some more. An Ogre is easily recognized by this massive frame and boulder-like gut. Some have been reported at ten feet tall, though given the Ogre's intimidating look, this could easily be an exaggeration. Their greyish, flabby skin conceals tough muscle and alarming endurance. Amongst most folk, this combined with their bristle-like hair and poor personal hygiene is enough reason to shun these crude beasts.

Though no one who has ever smelt an Ogre will believe this, but they are an exceedingly proud race, and none more so than the mercenaries that have ventured to the land of men for money. To an Ogre, his status is everything. It will dictate whom he might 'marry' (if one can call it that) where in the Ogre Lands he will live, when he gets to eat, what his God will think of him- in short everything that is important to an Ogre. To this crude race, might is right. A large Ogre, with a huge gut, battle scars, trophies and battle paint is clearly a high status beast—one not to be messed with! If challenged, an Ogre will rarely turn down any sort of contest, be it belching, and Gut barging, Pit Fighting or eating. To turn these down is to lose face. Better to take part and loose than refuse!

While they may be brutal and can eat nearly anything, ogres are not evil per se. Since dumb muscle is welcome in almost any army, ogres can be found throughout the Old World. They make formidable mercenaries and bands of ogre sellswords are a common sight in the Empire, Tilea, and the Border Princes. They have also been known to fight with Orcs, Goblins, and the forces of Chaos. Far to the northeast of the Empire are the Ogre Kingdoms, but few Imperial Ogres have cause to go there.

Ogres are well known for their tendency to travel, and can be found across the four corners of the world, fighting in small bands of mercenary groups which ultimately leave comparatively little evidence of their passing. In contrast, a



full migration of Ogres can be devastating, stripping all life from the lands they come across and devouring entire populations in a matter of days. It may take decades before the desolation left in their wake begins to recover, but full-scale Ogre migrations are mercifully very rare.

Contrary to most popular opinions of the race, Ogres generally mix well with most societies they encounter, assimilating local customs and traditions with an ease likely spawned from a lack of imagination or independent thought. There are small bands of Ogres living "peacefully" with the citizens of the Empire, especially in Ostland, often being incorporated into family units. Indeed there is a sizable population of Ogre's currently living in the Empire, as mercenaries or even just as citizens.

It seems an Ogre's natural place in the world is killing for money. It combines two of their favourite things, and sometimes three, as most generals don't mind them eating the enemy, as it saves burying them with the grave-detail and cuts feeding costs. Ogre bands are often recruited as mercenaries into the Empire's armies, where their great strength is highly valued.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Imperial Ogre	6	3	2	4	4	3	2	3	7
Brute	6	3	2	4	4	3	2	4	7

**TROOP TYPE:** Monstrous Infantry.

## SPECIAL RULES:

**Ogre Charge:** Each model with the Ogre Charge special rule that successfully charges an enemy has the Impact Hits (1) special rule. Models with this special rule that are part of a unit with ranks add their current Rank Bonus to the Strength of the Impact Hits they inflict.

**Ogre Pistols:** *Ogres that have sold their swords across the Empire often pick up specially modified black powder weapons as recompense for their efforts; these are regarded as symbols of great status due to their ability to emit noise and violence in equal measure. Such is the size and strength of their owners that Ogres use these with the ease a human uses a pistol. The most common of these customised weapons is an Empire handgun with a massively enlarged trigger and guard; many Imperial Ogres have at least one of these devices in their possession and some may sport a brace of these handguns across their puffed-out guts.*

Ogre Pistols follow all the rules for normal pistols, but have a range of 24".

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"Oh, people say they're stupid, but I'll tell you this – they know the clink of gold right enough. Strong as bulls they are, and seem to know little fear. I've certainly seen them face things that would make most ordinary troops soil themselves. Yes, they're often underestimated. Yes, they drink and eat and bellow, but until you've seen them punch through and flank a line, well, let's just say you learn a little respect for those flabby heads of theirs. Stout mercenaries, but don't deny them rations. They'll nod and agree and two hours later you'll be saying 'where's the horses?'"

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- Captain Schultz

# GREAT CANNONS

First developed by the Dwarfs, the cannon soon became the war machine of choice throughout the Empire. A cannon is a large muzzle-loading gun, meaning that the shot and powder are loaded from the front and ignited by lighting the charge in the rear of the weapon. Essentially, cannons are larger, deadlier versions of gunpowder weapons. As precursors to handguns and other weapons, cannons represent a powerful force on which Empire armies depend.

Cannons are dangerous if sometimes unpredictable weapons whose manufacture is limited to a few groups of human and Dwarf experts. When they work cannons can shatter the most determined enemy, pouring shot into his massed formations, levelling his cities and toppling huge monsters. But cannons often go wrong. They are unpredictable, capable of spectacular misfires that kill the crews and many around them. Weaknesses in the casting methods can leave minute cracks or other deficiencies which cause them to explode when fired. Gunpowder can fail to ignite or explode prematurely. Despite the occasional spectacular accident, cannons are extremely deadly weapons that have been instrumental in winning more than one battle on behalf of their users.

The first cannons were introduced about five centuries ago, imported by Dwarfs and modified by the Imperial Gunnery School. These early weapons were either small and cast of bronze, or large, banded wrought iron cannons. These were even more unreliable than modern cannons. These war machines sometimes fired arrow-like rounds, but were quickly replaced by stone and iron cannonballs. Recently, grapeshot has seen greater use for antipersonnel, and hailshot (bundles of small rocks, nails, glass, or scraps of metal) is equally commonplace.

As design and reliability improved, engineers fitted these large metal tubes to wooden carriages. Originally, cannons were mounted on stone frames atop walls. By making them mobile, the use of cannons became even more popular with the Empire's legions. Now, nearly every army the Empire fields has artillery support, which has been instrumental in many battles in the nation's long history – especially in the recent tumultuous times.

The Imperial Gunnery School at Nuln is the biggest cannon foundry in the world, and it is here that the Emperor's gunners receive their training. Armies of the Reikland, and later those of the other states, have always been supported by fine reliable cannons crewed by expertly trained gunners. Most Counts also maintain their own artillery train and many cities have cannons to defend their walls.

The cannons of the Gunnery School are the terror of the Empire's foes. Any artillerist worth his powder will proudly claim that the Imperial Great Cannons are easily the largest and most powerful artillery in the Old World, outclassing even the cannons of the Dwarfs. These immense guns form the backbone of an artillery battery. Thunderous cannon fire sends iron balls hammering into the ranks of enemy warriors, each impact ploughing bloody furrows through tightly packed regiments. While not the most reliable or accurate weapon, a direct hit from a great cannon will blow most things into tiny pieces. Armour is no protection against a cannon ball and the effect a well-aimed salvo can have on rightly packed regiments cannot be underestimated. Even the mightiest creature cannot ignore the power of a Great Cannon, as was ably demonstrated at the Siege of Middenheim, when Master Gunner Pumhart von Steyr decapitated a rampaging Dragon with a single well-placed shot.

Great Cannons vary in length and bore size, but they have to be small enough to be drawn on their carriages to and from battlefields. Once deployed for battle, they are rarely moved as that would involve hitching up the draught ponies. It is vital that they are put in the right position to cause maximum damage to the enemy well before the battle begins. It is recommended to deploy great cannons on high ground, the angle of elevation makes for a better field of vision, improves range and allows for greater force upon impact, due to the inevitable effects of gravity.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Great Cannon	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-
Crew	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7

**TROOP TYPE:** War Machine (Great Cannon).



# MORTARS

Mortars are shorter, heavier weapons than cannons, and far harder to move once positioned. They are designed to lob an explosive shell high into the air so that it drops down on the target from the sky. Because of the powerful downward force of the blast, they are removed from their wheel carriages before use, otherwise the wooden frame would be shattered and the weapon made useless.

Unlike the solid cannon ball a mortar shell is a hollow iron sphere and filled with gunpowder. The crew light the fuse before dropping the mortar shell into the stubby barrel of the mortar – a task, not without risk.

The mortar bomb is fired and if the fuse is the right length and does not go out, it explodes among the enemy ranks, filling a large area with shreds of lacerating metal. While a cannon ball may plough through a line of troops and kill two or three victims, a mortar shell explodes with a tremendous bang, scattering mud, dirt, and fragments of burning iron scything through enemy ranks over a wide area. A well placed mortar shell can therefore kill a great many victims at once.

Mortars are often used in sieges, where armies are more static, and their high trajectory is perfect for firing projectiles over walls to damage buildings and densely packed infantry.

In capable hands, mortars are very effective at blasting great holes open in enemy formations, The effect a

successful strike can have on an enemy is marked; there is nothing like having to march over the bloody, twisted remains of former comrades to put the wind up a foe!

Firing a Mortar is always a tense moment, for the quality of fuses is highly variable and it is not unknown for one to burn through before the crew have finished loading the shell. As a result, Mortar crews tend to be superstitious and carry a large number of good luck charms about their person.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Mortar	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-
Crew	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7

**TROOP TYPE:** War Machine (Stone Thrower).

## SPECIAL RULES:

**Mortar Shells:** Mortars have the following profile and rules:

Range:	Strength:	Special Rules:
12-48"	3(6)	Armour Piercing (1), Multiple Wounds (D3)

The Mortar uses the large template. In case a Misfire is rolled, consult the Black Powder War Machine Misfire chart.



# HELBLASTER VOLLEY GUNS

The Helblaster Volley Gun – or 'von Meinkopt's macro-mainspring of multitudinous precipitation of pernicious lead', to give it the proper title – is one of the most infamous black-powder weapons ever invented, its devastating firepower able to tear apart an entire regiment in a crackling volley of ear-splitting reports. A relatively new innovation, the volley gun can lay down a withering hail of shot in a very short time.

The Helblaster Volley Gun is the lethal creation of the deranged Engineer von Meinkopt, and the terrifying reputation of this weapon has spread to all corners of the Old World. . Though slow to reload and cumbersome to move, these factors are a minor inconvenience compared to the bloody carnage the gun can cause.

On a sturdy frame are nine small-bore-cannon barrels, lined up in three rows of three and are turned by means of a central crank, which means that it can unleash devastating hails of shot that shred its unfortunate target in a firestorm of leaden death. When the first set of three is fired in a devastating blast of fire and shrapnel, the crew rotate the frame to move the next row of cannons into position. They can fire these barrels, rotate and fire the third set and finally reload all nine barrels, or they can rotate, reload, fire, rotate, reload, fire and so on for a more sustained firing rate.



The destructive capability of the volley gun is enormous. The advantage of being able to fire several shots at once, then follow it up with another salvo is obvious and any enemy would think twice before getting in the way of such a machine. Clever placement can severely limit the movement of an enemy who recognises the great threat the volley gun holds; and if he does not recognise the threat? So much the better, he will pay a high price for his stupidity.

This device is a terribly effective weapon at cutting down enemy ranks – the sheer velocity of its shot capable of penetrating even thick armour. A full volley will rip through the toughest regiment causing immense casualties in the blink of an eye, though with such devastating power comes great risk.

The disadvantage of the Helblaster is that it is impossible to reload on the battlefield – each barrel has to be removed and fitted with a new charge before it can be replaced on the gun. The other, and more serious, disadvantage of the Helblaster is that the complexity of the device is notoriously prone to jams, misfires and explosive malfunctions. In fact, the chances of being able to fire for a prolonged time are slim, as the weapon is quite likely to malfunction, and once it has misfired it is nearly useless. As a result, those crewmen who operate a machine so prone to catastrophically blowing them to tiny pieces tend to be paid up with the priests of Morr.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Helblaster	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-
Crew	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7

**TROOP TYPE:** War Machine.

## SPECIAL RULES:

**Volley Gun:** A Helblaster Volley Gun has the following profile and rules:

Range:	Strength:	Special Rules:
24"	5	Armour Piercing (1)

The Helblaster may fire up to three Artillery dice worth of shots in each of your Shooting phases. Roll one dice at a time. If a Misfire is rolled, roll immediately on the Black Powder War Machine Misfire chart before rolling the next Artillery dice. If a May not Shoot result is rolled, this only applies to the current Artillery dice rolled. If a Malfunction result is rolled, this only applies to the current and the next Artillery dice rolled (if this is the third Artillery dice rolled this turn, the first Artillery dice the next turn is wasted). If a Destroyed! result is rolled, all previously Artillery dice shots this turn are still resolved before the war machine is removed. After all Artillery dice are rolled, resolve the number of shots as normal.



# HELSTORM ROCKET BATTERIES

After watching the spectacular fireworks of a Cathayan emissary to Altdorf, Master Engineer Herman Faulkstein was inspired to transform this eastern technology into a weapon. His early research blew apart entire laboratories of the College of Engineers while he attempted to discover the secrets of rocket-powered flight, but the permanently soot blackened Engineer never lost faith that his designs had a military value.

Faulkstein's original rockets were wildly inaccurate; madly corkscrewing weapons that had no chance whatsoever of hitting anything other than (eventually) the ground. Further refinements such as fins, long sticks added to the base of a rocket and a launch carriage to direct the early portion of its flight further improved stability and accuracy – though neither were particularly impressive. However, when the rockets did manage to land on target, the results were devastating, with entire enemy regiments blown apart by an earth-shaking cascade of shrieking, explosive rockets. After the Boris Todbringer, Elector Count of Middenland, was almost blown to smithereens by an errant volley of rockets (though he was nowhere near the intended target) they were dubbed 'Helstorm' rockets after the colourful language used by the count on the unfortunate Engineer.



	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Helstorm	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-
Crew	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7

**TROOP TYPE:** War Machine (Stone Thrower).

## SPECIAL RULES:

**Helstorm Rockets:** A Helstorm Rocket Battery has the following profile and rules:

Range:	Strength:	Special Rules:
12-48"	4(4)	Armour Piercing (1)

A Helstorm Rocket Battery fires in the same manner as an ordinary Stone Thrower, except that you scatter 3 templates from its target position rather than 1. When scattering any templates after the first, only the scatter dice is rolled; the result from the artillery dice first rolled applies to all shots fired that turn. In addition, all shots made with a Helstorm counts as being fired indirectly. If a Misfire is rolled, roll immediately on the Black Powder War Machine Misfire chart.

### THE IMPERIAL GUNNERY SCHOOL

*The Empire is well known throughout the Old World for using blackpowder artillery in its armies. The Empire's artillery is the best in the world and its manufacture and maintenance are controlled by the Emperor himself.*

*The driving force behind the development of war machines in the Empire consists of two organizations: the Imperial Gunnery School at Nuln and the School of Engineers in Altdorf. Through a healthy competition, both schools work towards perfecting the business of mass killing. In Nuln, engineers concentrate their efforts at improving cannon, while the Altdorf engineers focus on mobile technology, allowing them to move cannon to different battlefields to meet the threat of invading forces. Aiding the Human effort are the loyal Dwarfs of the Empire, who long ago mastered gunpowder and are themselves on the cutting edge of war machine development.*

*The Imperial Gunnery School in Nuln is the biggest cannon foundry in the Empire and nearly every artillery piece employed by the Emperor's armies is cast there.*

*A sprawling network of forges and workshops, the Imperial Gunnery School is home to The Empire's veteran gunsmiths, who toil endlessly to build and maintain the Empire's artillery trains. Dwarf-built, steam-powered air pumps vent the acrid fumes of the foundries, but in turn cloud parts of the city in thick smog. The success of the Gunnery School is a point of pride to all in Nuln, and the military commanders of other provinces pay handsomely to have their gunners trained by the expert captains of Nuln.*

# WAR WAGONS

The Empire War Wagon is one of the many unusual war machines developed by the Imperial School of Engineers. They were created to provide a mobile fire platform for Imperial Troops. The War Wagon is an extremely heavy version of a chariot, consisting of an upright tower pulled by two fully armoured horses and crewed by a team of State Troops. The high walls of the tower protect the crew from arrows and attack from the ground. Thanks to the War Wagon's height the soldiers can fire over the heads of troops below, and if it is surrounded by enemies the crew can defend themselves from behind its wooden ramparts. Other versions of the war wagon carry just one large cannon. These mobile artillery pieces are moved up into position and fired right into enemy regiments with devastating effect.

War Wagons can also be formed into a defensive position called a laager – this is a circle or rough square of wagons with cannons positioned between them. This is a static defence, a wooden castle forming a solid and impenetrable barrier to enemy attack. When fighting against more mobile opponents it has been known for Imperial armies to form a gigantic laager of War Wagons and cannons, with infantry regiments inside firing through gaps, and cavalry regiments inside ready to dash out and chase off any vulnerable enemy.

The Emperor has quite a few War Wagons ready for battle. They are housed in the royal barracks along with the Reiksguard, and their crews are specially trained State Troops. The crew favour a blue or blue and red costume, but individuals often dress to their own taste and no attempt is made to impose a uniform on them.

The crew are armed with a variety of experimental weaponry from the Imperial Engineers. The Imperial Engineers are technical innovators whose products are carried by some of the most unusual troops in the Imperial army. Although often unreliable, the weapons carried by the crew of a War Wagon



are sufficiently varied that even if some of them malfunction, some of the others are bound to work. The great battle tower crushes enemies under its iron-shod wheels, while the soldiers sheltered inside rain down fire on their foes with their new and deadly weapons.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
War Wagon	7	-	-	5	5	5	-	-	-
Crew	-	3	3	3	-	-	3	1	7
Warhorse	-	3	0	3	-	-	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Chariot (Armour Save 4+).

**SPECIAL RULES:** Large Target (5).

**Mixed Weaponry:** Each crew of a War Wagon are armed with their own experimental weapon. Unlike other units, each crew model may choose to allocate their missile attack at a different target if they wish. The crew also ignore the Move or Fire special rule of any weapon they carry. In addition to the Repeater Handgun and Hochland Long Rifle, the crew of the War Wagon are also armed with the following weapons:

- **Blunderbuss:** *The blunderbuss fires a hail of shot including lead balls, rusty bolts, bent nails, and other assorted scrap metal.*

Range:	Strength:	Special Rules:
12"	4	Armour Piercing, Multiple Shots (D3), Quick to Fire

Blunderbusses do not suffer any penalties To Hit for firing Multiple Shots or for firing at a charging enemy.

- **Man Catcher:** *The Man Catcher is an iron collar on a long pole. The collar is ringed with spring-loaded spikes and can be slipped over an enemy's head, breaking his neck and killing him instantly.*

A model armed with a Man Catcher has the Killing Blow special rule.

- **Hook Halberd:** *The hook halberd is a long halberd which includes a hook to catch passing riders and pull them from their mounts.*

Polearm. Against Ca and MC, attacks made with a hook halberd gains +1 To Hit.

- **Ball and Chain:** *This consists of a heavy studded ball suspended on a long chain hanging from a pole. The wielder swings the heavy ball over the side of the War Wagon, knocking riders from their mounts and sending foot troopers flying.*

Flail. Each successful Hit with a Ball and Chain is multiplied into D3 Hits.

# STEAM TANKS

The Steam Tank is a monstrous armoured creation, belching smoke as it powers towards the enemy, cannon-fire echoing from within its thick, steel hull. A thick, armoured skin protects the whole Steam Tank and the advance of this near unstoppable behemoth is terrifying to behold, as arrows ricochet harmlessly off its armoured sides and weapons barely scratch its surface as it crushes its enemies beneath its armoured bulk.

The steam tank was designed by the genius Leonardo de Miragliano, who was inspired by stories of the steam-powered juggernauts made by the Dwarfs in days of old. He wanted to create a self-propelling device which could crush the enemy and pour shot at the same time. After years of research and painful experimentation, he perfected the design for the first steam tank, and the ways of war in the Empire were changed forever. As weapons of war they proved to be sluggish and generally unreliable but certainly very noisy and impressive.

Sadly, of the twelve he built, only eight now remain. Two exploded while being tested, one was destroyed fighting the Chaos Hordes in the northern wastes, and a fourth sank without trace while attempting to traverse a marsh during the battle of La Tour in Bretonnia. The remaining eight machines are polished and maintained with meticulous care by the Imperial School of engineers who constantly strive to improve on the design and make and to build new machines. However, the original plans have been lost and, none of the Empire's fine engineers have yet to reach Miragliano's fervid genius. However, since Leonardo's disappearance, many of

the secrets of their construction have been lost, and the surviving Steam Tanks are becoming increasingly unreliable and inefficient. It is a rare day indeed when all eight of these ponderous machines can be persuaded to run at the same time.

The whole vehicle is enclosed by a mixture of steel plates and roof tiles, making it almost immune to missile fire from bows and crossbows. Even a direct hit from a cannon or stone thrower won't always destroy the steam tank, although this is the easiest way of knocking one out. The Engineers School have so far managed to recover and rebuild machines which have been destroyed in battle.

The eight remaining Steam Tanks have all been severely damaged at different points in time, but the basic chassis of the Steam Tank is extremely survivable. Whenever one of these machines is destroyed in combat, all efforts are made to recover all the broken fragments, and wherever possible, the machine is meticulously rebuilt. No two surviving examples are quite the same and they are armed with a varied assortment of light gunpowder weapons, steam driven repeater guns, and even torsion powered weaponry. The surviving machines are polished and maintained by the Engineers School and occasionally receive a fresh coat of paint or new decorative iron work. Over the years the maintenance and repair of these machines has been largely a matter of experimentation and luck. Prudent Emperors put their faith in more conventional arms, but the potential of the Steam Tanks ensures these contraptions a place in the armies of the hopeful and the desperate.



The Steam Tank is powered by a large pressurised boiler that siphons superheated steam through a series of pipes and pistons. With an intricate system of levers, the engineer commander directs this steam towards the area where he needs the power, drawing it away from other areas. For instance, he can direct the steam towards the pistons that drive the wheel mechanisms and send the tank forwards, hissing and whistling.

Alternatively he can feed the steam towards the tank's steam powered weapons systems. However, there is a limited amount of steam power for the commander to work with, for he must be careful not to build too much pressure within the boiler, and so must be economical with its use. It is a delicate, if somewhat unpredictable, art to judge how much pressure the Steam Tank's boiler can hold. The more pressure that builds, the faster the land-ship can travel, and the more options the engineer has at his disposal. If too much pressure builds, the Engineer runs the risk of rupturing the boiler, an event that typically entails a catastrophic effect. In several battles, a Steam Tank has suddenly exploded because of a fatal overpressure, destroyed in a cloud of super-heated vapour and spinning iron shards.

The first Steam Tanks was not built with any instruments for determining the pressure in the boiler. Instead, the engineer had to gauge how much pressure had built within the boiler by the intensity of the whistling sounds and the amount of hissing sounds of steam that escaped from imperfectly sealed piping around the boiler, and the clouds of vapour that accumulated around him. The twelve original Steam Tanks suffered frequent mishaps and malfunctions, and the great inventor himself was almost always seen sporting bandages covering various scalds and burns. In recent times, the Imperial Engineers of Altdorf have devised a series of gauges and whistles that show the pressure within the boiler, although they are still somewhat inaccurate, and much relies on the experience and instinct of the individual engineer commander.

The Masters of the Imperial School of Engineers constantly design new experimental weapons systems with which to outfit the remaining Steam Tanks, many of which are never put into practice, often wisely. Each time a Steam Tank is rebuilt, the engineers seek to improve on the original design, fitting it with new experimental weaponry and refining the control of the boiler.

Young Engineers are reluctant to volunteer as Steam Tank crew, as the boilers are renowned for bursting apart, turning the tank into a giant pressure cooker and boiling those inside alive. The Steam Tank is also very uncomfortable to ride in and whenever the main cannon is fired, the noise rebounds deafeningly inside, shaking the machine and churning the stomachs and brains of the crew. As a result, most Engineer Commanders prefer to lean out of the Steam Tank's top hatch where they can partially escape the cramped confines. This vantage point also provides the commander with a superior view of the battlefield, and many take the opportunity to bolt on a rifle or draw a pistol for a little target practice of their own.

The most common weapons fitting for the Steam Tank is the unusual steam powered battle-cannon, which was fitted on one of the early machines, the *Conqueror*. This large and impressive cannon has a breech fed with pressurised steam from the boiler. It is by necessity smaller than the standard great cannons often fielded by armies of the Empire, although its manoeuvrability and survivability make up for this. Pressurised steam is less potent than gunpowder and so the

cannon has a shorter range than muzzle-loaded cannons but otherwise it works in the same way. It is of course impossible to use a conventional cannon inside the Steam Tank due to the muzzle being outside the tank, and also due to the inevitable risk of explosion. This was the closest design to Leonardo's original plan, although an additional turret-mounted steam gun has become almost standard. This innovative weapon bleeds off steam from the boiler and releases it in an explosive outburst, dousing enemies in close proximity with superheated steam and vapour.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Steam Tank	*	-	-	6	6	10	-	-	-
Engineer Commander	-	3	3	3	-	-	3	1	7

**TROOP TYPE:** Chariot (Armour save 1+)

**SPECIAL RULES:** **Animated Construct, Large Target (4), \*Random Movement (variable), Terror.**

**Steel Behemoth:** A Steam Tank, and its crew, can shoot missile weapons with the Move or Fire special rule even if it moved in its Movement phase. In addition, a Steam Tank cannot overrun or pursue a fleeing enemy – it automatically restrains and is unable to perform combat reforms.

**Steam Points:** At the start of your turn, declare how many Steam Points your Steam Tank is generating – this can be any number between 0 and 5. After you have generated your Steam Points (if any), roll an artillery dice to see if the Steam Tank's boiler holds out. If the result is greater than the Steam Tank's current number of Wounds, or if you roll a misfire, roll a D3 and then, for each Steam Point the Steam Tank currently has, add 1 to the result and consult the Steam Boiler Mishap table.

You can expend Steam Points in three ways: through the Steam Engine, or Steam Weapons. You can expend up to 3 Steam Points in each of these categories, as long as you have enough Steam Points remaining. Any Steam Points left unused at the end of your turn are lost.

**Steam Engine:** The more Steam Points you expend in the Steam Engine, the further the Steam Tank moves in the Movement phase. Declare how many Steam Points you will expend in the Steam Engine at the start of your Compulsory Moves sub-phase. If you choose not to expend any Steam Points in the Steam Engine, the Steam Tank's Movement will be 0 that turn and it cannot move at all in the Movement phase. For each Steam Point you chose to expend, the Steam Tank's Random Movement increases by D6".

If the Steam Tank charges an enemy unit, it will inflict an additional D3 Impact Hits for each Steam Point expended in the Steam Engine that turn.

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"There are no problems that cannot be solved with cannons..."

- Chief Engineer Boris Kraus of Nuln

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If the Steam Tank is in base contact with an enemy unit, it cannot move but can instead expend Steam Points in the Steam Engine to grind foes beneath its wheels in the close combat phase. Select one enemy unit in base contact – it immediately suffers D3 Impact Hits for each steam point expended in this way.

### STEAM BOILER MISHAP TABLE

- 1-4 **Valve Locked:** Roll a D6. On a 1-2, you cannot expend Steam Points in the Steam Engine this turn. On a 3-4, you cannot expend Steam Points in the Steam Gun this turn. On a 5-6, you cannot expend Steam Points in the Steam Cannon this turn.
- 5 **Minor Leak:** The Steam Tank immediately loses D3 Steam Points.
- 6 **Emergency Vent:** The Steam Tank immediately loses D6 Steam Points. The Steam Tank, and any unit in base contact, immediately suffers 2D6, Strength 2 hits, distributed as from shooting (roll for each unit).
- 7 **Dangerous Overpressure:** Roll a D6. The Steam Tank immediately gains a number of Steam Points and loses a number of Wounds equal to the result.
- 8 **Kaboom:** All units within 6" of the Steam Tank (Friend or foe) immediately suffer 2D6 Strength 4 hits, distributed as from shooting (roll for each unit). After resolving any damage, the Steam Tank is removed as a casualty.

**Steam Gun:** The more Steam Points you expend in the Steam Gun, the higher the pressure of the resultant gout of steam. If the Steam Tank is unengaged, declare how many Steam Points you will expend in the Steam Gun at the start of your Shooting phase. If the Steam Tank is engaged in close combat, declare how many Steam Points you will expend in the Steam Gun at the start of your Close Combat phase. In either case, if you choose not to expend any Steam Points in the Steam Gun, you cannot fire it that turn.

If only a single Steam Point is expended, the Steam Gun is treated as a Strength 2 Breath Weapon, which uses the Engineer Commander's Initiative. The Strength of the Breath Weapon is increased by 1 for each additional Steam Point expended in the Steam Gun. (For example, if 3 Steam Points are expended, the Steam Gun is treated as a Strength 4 Breath Weapon.) The Steam Gun has a 360 degree arc of fire. Unlike other Breath Weapons, the Steam Gun can be used once each turn.

**Steam Cannon:** A Steam Cannon is a cannon, but instead of gunpowder, it is fired by pressurised steam. The more Steam Points that are expended in the Steam Cannon, the greater its maximum range will be. If you

choose not to expend any Steam Points in the Steam Cannon, or if the Steam Tank is in base contact with an enemy unit, you cannot fire it that turn.

If you expend a single Steam Point, the Steam Cannon can fire with a maximum range of 12". For each additional Steam Point you expend, the maximum range of the Steam Cannon is increased by 12". The Steam Cannon can only be fired directly ahead. The Steam Cannon is a Cannon with the following profile:

Range:	Strength:	Special Rules:
12"/24"/36"	10	Multiple Wounds (D6)

If the first artillery dice rolls a misfire, the Steam Cannon does not fire and the Steam Tank immediately loses D3 Wounds with no armour saves allowed. The Steam Cannon cannot fire grapeshot.

### THE MAN BEHIND THE MACHINE

*The infamous Steam Tank was invented by the inspired (some would say crazed) Leonardo de Miragliano. He was a brilliantly talented man whose mind was never at rest. It is said that he was never without his sketchbook, and he was ever scribbling his mad ideas and inventions within its leather-bound pages. The Steam Tank was his highest recognised achievement, an inspired design that has never since been recreated. Leonardo was a remarkable pioneer in the area of technological advancement, and it was he that founded the Imperial Engineering School in Altdorf, and was its first Chief Engineer. Talented, forward thinking young men flocked from miles around to sit in awe through Leonardo's famed lectures. Many saw his work as frivolous and even dangerous, but it was quickly realised that his inventions could be harnessed to benefit the Empire, strengthening its armies, and thus his talents were encouraged.*

*It is said that Leonardo was astounded and fascinated when he witnessed one of the creations of the Dwarfs, an ocean going steam vessel made of solid metal. He filled countless sketchbooks with intricate drawings and writings that revolved around the arcane machine, and his thoughts on how he could recreate such a wonder. His early attempts were disastrous affairs. On his second attempted launch of the aptly named steam-powered boat Anchor of Solidity, he barely escaped with his life as it sank beneath the sea within minutes, steam hissing and spitting violently. The half-drowned Leonardo lost none his ambition or passion, however, though he transferred his ideas onto land. Thus the Steam Tank was born, for he took the basic designs for his ironclad steamship and modified them to make his famed steam powered land-ship.*

*Although it has been attempted countless times, no engineer has thus far succeeded in recreating a Steam Tank from scratch. Leonardo mysteriously disappeared, his work left unfinished, and his sketches and designs lost with him. 'Original' designs surface from time to time, although these are usually proved to be fakes. Rumours abound over the fate of the brilliant inventor, many obviously false, often ludicrously so. Some say that he at last created a successful design for a submersible travelling vessel and that he disappeared below the sea, intent on exploring lost underwater realms. Other more realistic views say that he was killed for political reasons, either by an enemy of the Empire or by one of his many conservative protractors within the Empire, who denounced him constantly and feared the change that his inventions heralded.*

# ARCANE BATTLE ALTARS

The vaults of the Colleges of Magic contain many wondrous artefacts that, in times of dire need, Battle Wizards might wield. Amongst the most powerful are the Arcane Battle Altars.

When the Elven Loremaster Teclis founded the Colleges of Magic, he gifted each Order with a handful of crystal orbs to help the fledging wizards harness the Winds of Magic. Each orb is infused with the essence of one of the eight magical winds and it is even whispered that a portion of Teclis' own power is bound within every one of them. The Orbs of Aqshy are thus wreathed in searing flames and the Orbs of Chamon shift like flowing mercury between a golden sheen to polished silver and back again. The Orbs of Hysh radiate a blinding white light so intense that they have been mistaken for miniature suns, whilst the Orbs of Azyr are as dark as deepest space, lit only by the swirling mass of constellations moving within it. Only the Patriarchs of the respective colleges can sanction their use. They are amongst the most powerful and treasured magical artefacts in the colleges' possession and the loss of any of them is a grievous blow to the Order in question.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Arcane Battle Altar	7	-	-	5	5	5	-	-	-
Acolyte	-	3	3	3	-	-	3	1	7
Warhorse	-	3	0	3	-	-	3	1	5



**TROOP TYPE:** Chariot (Armour Save 5+).

**SPECIAL RULES:** Large Target (5).

**Locus of Power:** For each friendly Arcane Battle Altar on the battlefield at the start of your magic phase, add 1 dice to your power pool.

## LUMINARK OF HYSH

A Luminark of Hysh is a large and complex magical war machine created by the Wizards of the College of Light Magic. Each consists of an array of enchanted mirrors and aether-lenses, resembling the innards of a vast magical telescope mounted atop a great wheeled platform. These mystical weapons are crewed by a pair of Acolytes – students of the Patriarch of the Light College himself – who tend to the machine's array of precision instruments. As the Acolytes set about focussing lenses, tilting prisms and polishing mirrors, they continuously intone spells to channel the Wind of Hysh. As the invocations gain in tempo and volume, the Orb of Sorcery at the machine's core glows with increasing ferocity until a blinding white light leaps through the Luminarium's arcane optics, manifesting in a destructive beam of soulfire so intense that it vaporises anything in its path.

The Light College has precious few Luminarks, and deploying any of them on the battlefield constitutes a terrible dilemma for the Order's Patriarch. This is because each Luminark forms a critical part of the sorcerous safeguards that keep the most evil artefacts recovered by the Empire imprisoned within the college's vaults. The removal of any part of this prison's magical defences runs the risk of that evil escaping, and should such a thing happen, the consequences could well spell doom for the Empire.

Each Luminark is surrounded by an aura of light that reaches out to protect those Empire soldiers who bask in its glow. Warriors so blessed find enemy sword strokes turned aside by invisible forces, or incoming volleys of arrows transformed into harmless bursts of multi-coloured light moments before they would have struck.

### SPECIAL RULES:

**Aura of Protection:** The Luminark of Hysh and all friendly units within 6" of have a Ward save (6+).

**Solheim's Bolt of Illumination:** *The Luminark focuses the Wind of Hysh, projecting the energies as a searing beam of light that scythes through enemy ranks with the power of a solar flare.*

Innate bound spell (power level 4). *Solheim's Bolt of Illumination* is a **magic missile** with a range of 36". It causes a Strength 8 hit that has the Multiple Wounds

(D3) and Flaming Attacks special rules, and penetrates ranks in the same manner as a shot from a bolt thrower. Armour saves are not permitted against Wounds caused by *Solheim's Bolt of Illumination*. If the target has the Daemonic Undead or Vampiric special rule, all failed To Wound rolls caused by this spell are re-rolled.

## CELESTIAL HURRICANUM

In times of desperate need, when the signs and portents indicate the fate of the Empire itself lies in the balance, the Patriarch of the Celestial Order may eschew subtlety and sanction the use of one of his Order's largest and most destructive weapons – a Celestial Hurricanum. These battle altars were originally built to help Celestial Wizards in their studies of the heavens, to aid them in making more accurate predictions of the future. At the heart of each Hurricanum lies one of the college's most revered artefacts – one of Teclis' Orbs of Sorcery, which enables the Hurricanums to do more than just observe the orbits of passing comets; they actually alter their paths and even cause them to come crashing down from the heavens. Mounted upon sturdy carriages and attended by the Order's Acolytes, the Hurricanums have since been turned into devastating weapons of war.

Celestial Hurricanums harness the Wind of Azyr. In battle, the sorcerous energies surrounding it grow in strength from a steady breeze to a whirling hurricane. By adjusting the huge orrery atop the altar, the



Acolytes can summon the very wrath of the heavens. Lightning bolts smite the Empire's foes and icy hailshards flense flesh from bone. More impressive still are those rare times when the Acolytes achieve a perfect alignment and fiery comets come streaking out of the skies.

What is more, Celestial Hurricanums constantly 'leak' magical power, and Empire soldiers who march beside them often report seeing visions of the imminent future. They are able to predict the actions of the foe with uncanny accuracy, and know exactly where and when to strike a critical blow.

### SPECIAL RULES:

**Portents of Battle:** The Hurricanum and all friendly units within 6" re-roll 1's when rolling to Hit.

**Storm of Shemtek:** *The Celestial Hurricanum assails the foe with everything from light drizzle to lightning bolts.*

Innate bound spell (power level 4). *Storm of Shemtek* is a **direct damage** spell with a range of 24". Place the small round template over the target and scatter it D6". The result of the D6 is also used to determine the type of storm that is summoned (see the chart below). If a Hit! is rolled, the template does not scatter. If the template hits a unit with the Fly special rule, it suffers D6 Strength 4 hits, in addition to any other effects (even if a Sudden Downpour is summoned).

#### D6 Result

- 1 Sudden Downpour:** The target is pelted with rain – the unit is a bit soggy, but no damage is inflicted this time.
- 2 Iceshard Tempest:** All models hit by the template suffer a Strength 2 hit with the Ice Attacks special rule. In addition, they suffer a -1 modifier to all To Hit rolls (both shooting and close combat) until the start of the caster's next Magic phase. Shooting attacks that do not use Ballistic Skill are unaffected.
- 3 Raging Tornado:** If a target unit lies beneath the template's central hole and is not engaged in close combat, roll a scatter dice and rotate the unit so that it is facing that direction (if a hit is rolled, the casting player chooses the direction). If, by rotating the unit, it would come within of another unit or impassable terrain, simply stop rotating the unit as soon as it moves to within 1".
- 4-5 Lightning Strike:** The model under the template's central hole suffers a Strength 6 hit. Other models hit by the template suffer a Strength 3 hit. This is a Lightning Attack.
- 6 Meteor Strike:** The model under the template's central hole suffers a Strength 6 hit with the Multiple Wounds (D6) Special rule. All other models hit by the template suffer a Strength 3 hit.

# THE IMPERIAL ZOO

Emperor Karl Franz has few serious eccentricities, but amongst his fervent passions is the furtherance of the Imperial Zoo, a vast complex of beast-pens and mosaic-covered caverns. Within its halls reside strange creatures that have been given as gifts from foreign potentates or hunted and captured from the hidden corners of the world.

The Imperial Zoo was founded in Altdorf by the hated Emperor Dieter IV and is home to some of the most dangerous monsters of the Old World. This menagerie contains all manner of grotesque monstrosities such as the Abomination of Stirland, the Spawn of Hochland, the Drakwald Gibberbeast and many more are held captive here and thus it is one of the most popular attractions in the city.

Over the course of his reign Karl Franz has acquired whole families of eagle-headed Griffons whose leonine bodies are borne aloft on powerful feathered pinions, sting-tailed Wyverns from the high peaks, and even triple-headed Chimeras. In addition to being one of the wonders of the Old World, the zoo also has a practical function, stabling the Emperor's war steeds – Warhorses, Griffons and Pegasus. The gigantic menagerie within has always housed stables of Pegasus and Hippogriff for the elite of the knightly orders to ride to war, but its furthest recesses are home to even larger and fiercer creatures. In its furthest recesses can be found the Imperial Dragon, an elder beast that lies brooding upon a mountain of golden Imperial heirlooms and the soot-blackened bones of incautious stewards.

## WARHORSE

Heroes and men of noble birth ride fierce battle steeds to war. These fiery-tempered stallions are strong enough to carry a fully armoured man, and are trained to kick and bite while their master fights from their back. The Knightly Orders of the Empire ride champing war horses into battle.

A Knight riding a war horse is at a considerable advantage, as his horse will attack the enemy with courage and determination equal to his own. In addition to their powerful kick, war horses can trample and crush any foe who fall under their flailing legs.

A Warhorse is a steed that has been trained to carry its rider into the chaos of battle without fear and to lash out with its iron-shod hooves. The most prized Empire Warhorses are those reared in Averland, for they are renowned for their strength and speed.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** War Beast.

## IMPERIAL PEGASUS

Pegasi are winged beasts that resemble the mightiest of draft horses with elegant feathered wings. Their coats sparkle under the sun in a manner reminiscent of light playing over new-fallen snow. It is cunning and intelligent beyond the measure of any ordinary steed. Their hides are white and glisten like snow, while their wings are broad with long elegant feathers. While they may appear to be graceful beasts, they are every bit as sturdy as well-trained warhorses. When carrying riders they are fearless, and will employ their mighty hooves with deadly accuracy, capable of staving a soldier's head in with a well-placed blow. While they seldom take to the ground, preferring the sky, when they do they are swift runners. Pegasi that haven't been battle trained are far more likely to fly away than fight, excepting when their foals are in danger.

To be properly tamed they must be caught and reared as foals, they cannot be bred by men lest they will lose their ability to fly. Pegasi foals are taken from their nests about the peaks of the Grey Mountains in the Old World, whose snow-tipped peaks overlook the vast Forest of Loren. Hunters from both the Empire and Bretonnia brave the dangers of the mountain passes to secure Pegasi foals which they can sell for a high price to nobles. The greatest ability of the Pegasus is to carry its rider high into the air.





"Give me a Pegasus over a Griffon any day. They are far more loyal, just as noble, and easier to control. Spur a Pegasus and he'll do as you wish. Spur a Griffon and you're liable to be torn to pieces at the beast's earliest convenience. It is true that they don't have quite the same impact on a foe's morale, but what of it? I would rather rely on my sword arm than my mount's ferocity, not that I haven't seen my Calypsan down more than a few Greenskins since his foaling."

- Lord Albrect von Helmgart

Pegasi are primarily sought after as steeds for noblemen and sorcerers, for they seem to anticipate their master's every move. It takes many years of patient training to gain the trust of a Pegasus, but once that trust is established, they are loyal mounts that will obey their master's every command.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Imperial Pegasus	8	3	0	4	4	2	4	2	6

**TROOP TYPE:** War Beast.

**SPECIAL RULES:** Fly (9).

#### UPGRADES:

**Iron-hard Hooves:** An Imperial Pegasus with this upgrade re-rolls failed To Wound rolls.

**Swift as the Wind:** An Imperial Pegasus with the Swift as the Wind upgrade re-rolls any dice results of a 1 when determining its charge range.

## IMPERIAL GRIFFONS

Griffons are wild and dangerous creatures that hunt from the tallest crags of the Worlds Edge Mountains, soaring on huge, feathered wings, occasionally flying to the lowlands when food is scarce. They are fearsome beasts that have fierce heads with a hooked beak like that of a huge bird of prey and can easily sever a man's limb. Their forequarters too are feathered, with scaly limbs bearing powerful claws that are bird-like reminiscent of a hawk's talons, they keep sharp by regular scoring against stone, and easily able to tear through plate armour. Behind its huge feathered wings, the Griffon's body is furred and it has huge taloned paws and a tail like that of a great hunting cat such as a lion or tiger. Their pelts can vary enormously in appearance; some Griffons have great golden pelts like mountain lions, others have skins which are spotted or striped like the pelisses worn by the heroic Knights Panther, or which are as black as night. Whatever accident or mutation led to their creation has long since been forgotten.

Feral Griffons are canny creatures and expert hunters, able to anticipate their prey's every move. Once a target has been spotted, a Griffon will relentlessly stalk it,



waiting days if need be for the correct moment to strike. The ear-splitting shriek of a diving Griffon is highly feared and has been known to send entire armies ducking for cover, lest one of their numbers be the beast's chosen quarry.

Griffons prefer their meat raw and screaming, though they'll scavenge if no other prey presents itself. This is fairly rare, though, as their hunting grounds tend to range for hundreds of miles around their chosen mountain aerie. Their eyesight is as sharp as the raptors that they resemble and they can see motion from miles away. Griffons swoop down on their prey, screaming war cries as they come, causing fear in all but the hardest souls. They continue to attack until no opponent is left moving. Griffon mounts must be forcibly restrained from hunting down fleeing opponents, as it is in their nature to rend all foes that flee from them. Survivors of Griffon attacks often have dreams of being hunted down and rent limb from limb for years afterward.

The Griffon is a sacred symbol in the Empire. So sacred, that it is not by coincidence that the Order of the Griffon was so-named. Despite being large and monstrous creatures, Griffons have reputations as noble beasts and loyal beasts, two qualities that resonate with the rulers and warrior classes of the Empire. This is in



part due to their proud and regal bearing – Griffons are not ravenous and frenetic like Manticores. Instead a Griffon strikes with swift and precise grace, its motion poised and controlled. Yet this elegance in no way undermines its deadliness, for a Griffon is more than capable of using its talons and razor beak to rip a foe apart. Skilled and efficient fighters, Griffons do not kill indiscriminately, although they show no reluctance when hunting or protecting their territory. They are fierce and merciless, but never cruel.

Griffons can be ranked amongst the most intelligent of beasts. There are many types of Griffon in the world and the ones favoured by the Empire will most likely have been reared at the Imperial Zoo in Altdorf. These beasts have been specifically bred to be larger and even more ferocious than those encountered in the wilds.

A rare few serve as mounts for the richest and most powerful Imperial nobles, who are willing to pay vast

"They are the finest of mounts, but never forget how dangerous they are. See these scars? They weren't given to me by an enemy. As a boy, all I dreamed of was a chance to show my worth, to test my mettle on the field of battle. All the courage I mustered for my first combat was but little compared to what it took for me to climb onto a Griffon's saddle. Astride the back of a Griffon, you know what it is to be in command, both the sweet and the bitter. You can see the sweep of the entire battlefield and know how your cause fares at all times. You can watch your enemies fall and see your men die. With a Griffon, you can turn the tide of war... but never forget that they resent the saddle and the one who sits upon it."

- Count Matthias Ostermark

### THE IMPERIAL DRAGON

*Dragons are monstrous beasts with great, sweeping wings that bear them and their rider effortlessly through the sky. Huge and terrifying, they can rend their foes with powerful talons and swallow a Man whole in their fanged jaws.*

*There is but one Dragon kept in the Imperial Zoo, a ferocious beast raised from an egg said to have been taken from the deepest cave in the Black Mountains. Only the Emperor Karl Franz himself dares to ride this mighty Dragon for only he has the strength of will to dominate its cold, aloof mind.*

sums of gold for a single egg or chick. Brave Empire adventurers seek out Griffon nests and steal their chicks to raise in captivity, singling out the strongest, cleverest and most ferocious for their lords. Only in this way can a Griffon ever be made tame enough to allow anyone to ride it, and even then they are temperamental and ferocious beasts. Griffons are never entirely tame, no matter how many years of domestication they've endured.

However, if captured relatively young and subjected to suitable training, they make for incredible loyal mounts, and can even be taught to anticipate a wide range of commands. Once trained to carry a man in battle, Imperial Griffons are incredibly dedicated to their riders, and many Elector Counts prize these ferocious creatures as loyal mounts. So has the Griffon become the steed of choice for many heroes of the Empire, and many Elector Counts can boast a Griffon in their menageries.

The screeching cry of a Griffon is terrifying to hear for an enemy and many are the tales of entire regiments being broken by a powerful Elector Count wielding his Runefang while astride his Griffon. The cry of a Griffon is often enough to send enemies running.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Imperial Griffon	6	5	0	6	5	5	4	4	7

**TROOP TYPE:** Monster.

**SPECIAL RULES:** Fly (8).

#### UPGRADES:

**Shrike Talons:** The Griffon gains +1 to its Strength in the turns it charges.

**Razorbeak:** The Griffon gains the Armour Piercing (1) special rule.

**Two Heads:** The Griffon gains +1 Attack.

**Bloodroar:** Enemy units must roll an additional D6, discarding the lowest result, for Leadership tests caused by this beast's Terror special rule.

# KARL FRANZ

## The Emperor, Elector Count of Reikland, Prince of Altdorf

Since the time of Sigmar, some of the Empire's rulers have turned out to be wise and just, and some corrupt or tainted by madness. Thankfully, the current incumbent, Emperor Karl Franz, Prince of Altdorf and Elector Count of Reikland, is of the former variety.

As Emperor, Karl-Franz' duties extend far and wide, throughout and beyond the Empire. Much of the time, he is concerned with the state of the northern defences, for the tribes of the north are ever on the warpath and invasion remains a constant threat. The orc and goblin tribes that plague the World's Edge and the Grey Mountains consume much of the Imperial Court's attentions too, for the passes must be kept open and the Empire's ancient allies, the dwarfs, must be aided in their constant war.

As Prince of Altdorf, Karl-Franz must balance the interests of the myriad factions that compete for status and resource in the city. Should the Colleges of Magic be granted too many concessions, the Altdorf University may withdraw its support. If the School of Engineers is exempted certain obligations, the merchant houses might take their trade elsewhere. These and a hundred other concerns encroach upon Karl-Franz' attention each day, despite the efforts of his regents and deputies.



As Elector Count of Reikland, the Emperor Karl-Franz occupies the highest tier in the pyramid of status and influence that rules the province. Despite their internecine struggles and alliances, all nobles in the state of Reikland owe him fealty and must act upon his word as the law. An impossibly complex web of blood and patronage extends outward from the Emperor's Court, made all the more complicated by the fact that he bears the titles of Emperor, Prince of Altdorf, and Elector Count of Reikland, as well as patriarch of his own house. In practice, Karl-Franz is almost entirely occupied with his duties as Emperor, and delegates the administration of Altdorf and of Reikland to any one of several close and trusted peers.

Karl-Franz must see to the smooth running of this most prestigious of states. As Count of Reikland, it is within Karl-Franz' power to bestow or withdraw titles, as happened when Ubersreik was declared a freetown. Though rarely exercised, he has the power to strip a noble of his title and nominate a successor. If the noble house in question is fortunate, the title will pass to another in the same line. If the crime is sufficiently dire, the entire family could be stripped of its rights and privileges, essentially revoking its title. The nobles competing for status in and around Ubersreik are well aware that to overstep the limitations of their rank might result in such a harsh censure, so they keep the less salubrious aspects of their conflict well away from the sight of the Court of Karl-Franz.

Karl Franz is said to be the greatest statesman in the Old World. He is acclaimed as a patron of arts and science, as a military innovator, and as a valiant warrior. Thanks to his efforts, the Empire has flourished during his reign. The Imperial Engineers School has grown, the Colleges of Magic have thrived, and the army has marched from victory to victory. The Emperor frequently takes personal command of his soldiers, wielding Ghal Maraz, the fabled hammer of Sigmar, like the warrior god of old, smiting enemies of the Empire with every blow. In the years since his election, the Emperor has earned a magnificent record of conquests.

When Karl Franz was elected, the Empire was enjoying a rare period of prosperity and stability, but the Emperor is not an idle man. Since taking the throne he has proved himself an extremely capable general, readying his armies for war and not only driving back the Norse raiders that plague the coasts of the Empire but counterattacking deep into enemy territory. During the battle of Nordland Fjord, when a vast fleet of Norscan wolfships invaded the Empire across the Sea of Claws, Karl Franz appeared to abandon the armies of Nordland to the predations of the Chaos-worshipping invaders storming through the shallows

onto dry land. Mere hours later he returned, having rescued Tsarina Katarin of Kislev from the warhost of Marauders that had ambushed her royal carriage several leagues away. Borne aloft behind Karl Franz in the saddle of his War Griffon, the Ice Queen wove a great enchantment that froze over the entire bay, preventing any more invaders from arriving and allowing the Empire to engage the Norscan warbands one by one.

Over the course of his reign, Emperor Karl Franz has proven to be an incredibly astute leader. Soon after his coronation, his advisors foresaw an invasion of Chaos Warriors from the north. Karl Franz led the Imperial armies deep into the Shadowlands in a deliberate attempt to destabilise the gathering tribes there. Though many battalions of Empire soldiers died in the running battles that took place upon the tundra, they stymied the Chaos invasion before it had even begun. When the Elves of Ulthuan brought news of a Dark Elf fleet heading towards the coast of Nordland, Karl Franz was ready to meet them upon the beaches and, with the help of their High Elf allies at the Battle of Redfjord, the Empire troop fought so hard that not a single Dark Elf made it onto dry land. Karl Franz even managed to harness the madness of Count Marius Leitdorf, infamous for waging wars against forests, swarms of bees and imagined fishmen. Under Karl Franz's guidance, Leitdorf proved to be a valiant if unpredictable warrior before meeting his end at the claws of a hulking Orc chieftain. Karl Franz avenged the Count with a blow from Ghal Maraz, later claiming he was no more than a vessel of Sigmar's wrath at the time, what extent Karl Franz meant this as a metaphor has been the subject of much debate.

A man of action, Karl Franz is not afraid to take the fight to the enemy. When Castle Vorghaus was besieged by the massed tribes of Goblins that infested the forests all about, the Empire garrison therein laughed at the greenskins' pitiful attempts to breach their walls. Their laughter died when six gigantic spiders stalked out of the woods, ramshackle howdahs full of Goblin Chieftains mounted upon their backs. The gigantic spiders trapped the veteran troops sent to intercept them with great gobbets of webbing and scuttled over the high walls of the castle with ease. Just as all seemed lost, Karl Franz plunged from the skies upon Deathclaw, below him a bodyguard of Demigryph-riding knights. The avian beasts tore into the arachnid monstrosities with beak and claw, and the Goblin tribes were soon routed.

It was Karl Franz who led the charge of the Reiksguard against the Bretonnians at the battle of Norduin. There was the Emperor's personal valour that finally broke the resistance of the Bretonnian flank guard and drove them from the narrow defile which they had defiantly held throughout the battle. The Emperor was then able to quickly take advantage of the Bretonnians' vulnerability, leading the Reiksguard behind the main Bretonnian army and charging into its exposed rear.

On the Field of Blood, it was the Emperor's courage that steadied the Imperial line against the charges of a bloodthirsty Orc army during Waaagh! Spleenrippa. Against the Chaos horde of Morkhalhai the Savage, the Emperor led his Greatswords into the very heart of the marauder army, where he crushed the enemy warlord's skull with Ghal Maraz.

Karl Franz has also established himself as an unparalleled statesman. When a frenzied horde of Minotaurs stormed through the western reaches of Wissenland, flattening everything on their way towards the sylvan realm of Athel Loren, the Elves of the woods diverted the path of the River Weiss so that the blood-mad monsters were forced to turn back into the Empire. Karl Franz entered the haunted forests to treat with the Wood Elf court, and such was the passion and conviction of his speeches that the King of the Woods himself agreed to fight at Karl Franz's side against the rampaging tribe. Together the two armies won a timely victory against the beasts.

There is little doubt that Karl Franz is one of the greatest generals of his age. He stands at the forefront of the battles against those that would see his beloved realm torn asunder, and it is a responsibility that weighs heavily upon his shoulders. Under Karl Franz's rule, the Empire has become a well-coordinated and disciplined engine of war. In his heart, Karl Franz knows it can be no other way, for these are desperate times.





	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Karl Franz	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	10

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry (Special Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:** Hold the Line, Immunity (Psychology).

**Leader of Men:** *The presence and unflinching courage of the Emperor greatly raises the morale of his soldiers, inspiring even the humblest of fighters to mighty acts of determined heroism.*

The Emperor must be your army's General. His Inspiring Presence ability has an additional range of 6", and any models using his Leadership may re-roll failed Panic tests. In addition, his Hold the Line special rule also affects units of Reiksguard Knights.

**MAGIC ITEMS:**

**Ghal Maraz (Magic Weapon)**

*Ghal Maraz, meaning Skull-splitter in the Dwarf tongue, is the legendary two-handed hammer wielded by Sigmar himself when the Empire was forged over two and a half millennia ago. The weapon was given to Sigmar by Kurgan Ironbeard, the ancient Dwarf King, and it is passed down from Emperor to Emperor. This is amongst the most potent magical artefacts ever crafted by the Dwarfs of old, in the days when their power was at its height. It is a magnificent rune-forged weapon that embodies Mankind's triumph over the forces of darkness, and it has been the symbol of the Emperor's office ever since the founding of the Empire. When it strikes the righteous power of the God Sigmar flows into it with a flash of raw magic. Many are the times it has lived up to the title Skull Splitter, for the Empire's rulers have ever led their people to battle upon the field of war.*

Hits from Ghal Maraz wound automatically with the Ignores Armour saves and Multiple Wounds (D3) special rules.

**Dragon Tooth, the Reikland Runefang (Magic Weapon)**

*As the Elector Count of Reikland Karl Franz has the right to wield his Runefang in battle. When he does so it is almost always to make a political statement, namely that his actions are done in his capacity as the ruler of his province, and not the Empire as a whole.*

Magic Weapon. All hits from the Reikland Runefang wound automatically and Ignores Armour saves.

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"The Empire must abide. We may be weary, we may be a long way from home. But by Sigmar, we will resist the evil forces that would see Mankind fall with every drop of our blood, every thrust of our blades, every ragged breath. There can be no failure in this battle for the fate of the world. If the armies of the Empire do not emerge victorious from this long war, then there will be no world left to win."

*- Emperor Karl Franz,  
addressing his troops at the Battle of Mount Eyrle*

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**The Emperor's Armour (Magic Armour)**

*The Emperor's armour was made for Karl Franz by Dwarf smiths and incorporates some of the actual armour worn by Magnus the Pious at the Battle of Kislev. It is made of black gromril and is richly gilded and splendidly adorned with runes and symbols of power as well as plumes and silken ribbons.*

Full plate armour. This armour allows Karl Franz to re-roll failed armour saves.

**The Silver Seal (Talisman)**

*The Emperor wears an enchanted medallion, the Silver Seal, upon a chain around his neck. This Seal radiates protective power and wards against harmful blows, and even counters magic spells cast against the Emperor. It was made by the Warrior Mage Fredrick von Tarnus in the time of the great Chaos Wars when Magnus the Pious reunited the Empire and marks the union between the wizards of the Empire and the Emperor.*

The Silver Seal grants Karl Franz a Ward save (4+) and the Magic Resistance (2) special rule.



**DEATHCLAW**

The Emperor Karl Franz is famous for his extensive collection of creatures at the Imperial Zoo in Altdorf, including the Griffon Deathclaw, reputed to be the mightiest Imperial Griffon that ever lived, which the Emperor has ridden into battle on many occasions. Taken from its nest as a chick and raised by the Emperor himself, the Griffon has formed an unusually close bond with his master and has learned to obey commands. Deathclaw frequently flies freely above Altdorf, returning to his cage at nightfall (much to the relief of the citizens).

A powerful bond exists between the beast and its master, one forged in countless battles and many many years of adventure. During the battle of Blood Keep Deathclaw stood over the prone form of the wounded Emperor for three hours, defying his enemies to come near and slaying several who tried, until the Reiksguard could hack a path to their fallen lord. Although the Emperor was so badly wounded that it took many months for him to recover his strength, it was thanks to the uncanny loyalty of Deathclaw that he survived to fight another day.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Deathclaw	6	6	0	6	5	5	4	5	8

**TROOP TYPE:** Monster.

**SPECIAL RULES:** Fly (8).



# KURT HELBORG

## Reiksmarshal of the Empire

Kurt Helborg is the Captain of the Reiksguard – the Reiksmarshal – and Emperor Karl Franz's most trusted military commander. The moustachioed knight is one of the more easily recognised figures in Reikland both by reputation and description. Tall and strong, Helborg is the very image of a heroic general; his engraved armour is polished to a mirror sheen and his sword arm is as strong as his courage is unbending. Kurt Helborg rides into battle atop Krieglust, a massive grey gelding said to have been sired by the finest stud in the Emperor's stables. Kurt Helborg also wields the legendary Solland Runefang, a mighty artefact of significant symbolic importance. That the Reiksmarshal has been entrusted with this magical heirloom is a symbol of the Emperor's conviction in Helborg's ability, and so devout a warrior is he that he would sooner die than betray that trust.

Helborg is an unusual figure amongst the upper echelons of Imperial society, having risen through the ranks to his lofty position, a true show of Helborg's formidable prowess in battle. Over the years, Helborg has fought hundreds of battles, from minor skirmishes, to leading armies of his Reiksguard, pennants waving in the wind, against innumerable hordes of the Empire's enemies. A formidable general as well as combatant, Helborg finds the concept of defeat completely foreign.



As captain of the Reiksguard, Helborg commands the Empire's most deadly warrior corps. When these warriors are personally led by their inspirational leader, they are an almost unstoppable force, an implacable tornado of steel that fearlessly thunders across the battlefield, driving the enemies of the Empire into the blood-soaked ground.

Kurt Helborg is reputed to be the greatest swordsman in the Old World, though this is an accolade hotly contested by the Emperor's Champion, Ludwig Schwarzhelm. These two grim warriors are bitter rivals who regularly compete on the tournament field to finally answer the question of who is the mightiest warrior of the Empire. So far, honours are roughly even, though at the last meeting Helborg went slightly ahead, much to Ludwig Schwarzhelm's chagrin.

As the Reiksmarshal, Kurt Helborg is also commander of all the Empire's armed forces, second only to the Emperor himself. As such, he has spent most of his life in battle, and is one of the most experienced generals in the Old World. Kurt Helborg has led the Reiksguard and Imperial armies in wars fought all across the Old World, from the dark forests of the Empire and icy wastes of Kislev to the blazing deserts of Araby. As a general, he is virtually without peer, leading entire armies of knights in thunderous charges of gleaming plate armour and glittering lance points. As a mighty warrior, he fights where the combat is thickest, his Runefang cleaving the foe without mercy.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Kurt Helborg	4	7	6	4	4	3	6	4	9
Krieglust	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry (Special Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:** Immunity (Psychology), Master of Battle, Stubborn.

**The Emperor's Chosen:** *The Reiksguard swear oaths to fight to the death in defence of the Emperor and no Knight would dare dishonour the order by failing to live up to this.*

If Kurt Helborg joins a unit of Reiksguard Knights, his unit gains may re-roll failed Break tests for as long as he remains in the unit.

"Reiksguard Knights, your Emperor is calling! Death or glory await us, but if we die, we will die as warriors, with swords in hand, and there can be no better death than that."

- Kurt Helborg, the Reiksmarshal

## MAGIC ITEMS:

### **Grudge Settler, the Solland Runefang (Magic Weapon)**

*The Empire province of Solland never truly recovered from the destruction wrought by the Orc Warboss Gorbard Ironclaw, and its lands have long since been absorbed by the neighbouring province of Wissenland. Thus, when the Solland Runefang, which had been lost in battle, was recovered and returned to the Empire, there was no longer an Elector Count of Solland to wield it. Instead, it was decreed that the Emperor would take ownership of the magical blade. It soon became tradition for the incumbent Emperor to entrust the Runefang to the care of one of the Empire's greatest heroes, and that honour currently sits with the Reiksmarshal, Kurt Helborg.*

All hits from the Solland Runefang wound automatically and Ignores Armour saves.

### **Dawn Armour (Magic Armour)**

*A Master Wizard of the Gold Order forged this suit of plate under the first rays of the sun. The enchantment concealed in the metal will repair any damage within an eye blink.*

Full plate armour. This armour ignores Strength penalties from attacks and Armour Piercing, so Kurt Helborg's armour save can never fall below 3+.

### **Rod of Command (Enchanted Item)**

*A gift from the Teclis to Magnus the Pious, the Rod of Command has the power to instil courage even in the face of the most dire of perils. When the battle seems lost, the bearer can summon the powers of the rod to turn a certain rout into steadfast resistance.*

One use only. The first time the character and his unit has to take a Break test, they automatically pass it.

### **Laurels of Victory (Enchanted Item)**

*Kurt Helborg is one of the most celebrated heroes in the Empire, and he wears laurels enchanted by wizards of the Grey Order. The magic within the laurels magnifies Kurt's stature in the eyes of his enemies to the point that few can muster the courage to stand before his wrath.*

Each unsaved Wound caused by Kurt Helborg is multiplied by 2 when calculating the combat result.

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"Always remember that von Kessel. Act thoughtfully, act intelligently, and act boldly, but always remember to act! If your Emperor demands your service, then you will damn well serve. Or you will hang. And if I hear you publicly doubt yourself again, I will kill you myself."

- Reiksmarshal Trenkenhoff

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# LUDWIG SCHWARZHELM

## The Emperor's Champion

Ludwig Schwarzhelm is the champion of Karl Franz and the bearer of the Emperor's personal standard. Ludwig is a towering figure of a man, renowned throughout the Empire for his mighty physique, stern expression and deadly martial skill. The Emperor's champion is said to have never smiled in his life and this reputation as an uncompromising, incorruptible warrior is one Ludwig has consciously cultivated over the years. His role is to uphold the Emperor's justice during trials of combat, which are the judicial right of high-ranking nobles accused of breaking one of the Emperor's laws. Such is Ludwig's deadly reputation that many a noble so accused has confessed their guilt before a sword has even been lifted. Ludwig is also Karl Franz's principal bodyguard and his mere presence has so far proven enough to discourage any attempts on the Emperor's life.

In addition to his formidable skills as a master swordsman, Ludwig also acts as a potent reminder of the Emperor's authority, travelling to various provincial capitals to ensure that Imperial edicts are being obeyed. Ludwig's Sword of Justice has tasted the blood of many an Empire noble after an unannounced visit from the stern faced champion has revealed them to be little more than robber barons. Karl Franz has an unyielding sense of fairness and honour, and he does not look kindly upon those lords who flaunt their wealth whilst their populace languishes in abject poverty. The arrival of Ludwig Schwarzhelm at the gates of an Elector Count's castle is greeted with some trepidation, even amongst those loyal to the Emperor, for Schwarzhelm is notoriously inflexible and critical of those he perceives as lacking strong

moral fibre and faith. On one occasion, Ludwig was forced to fight for his life after unmasking a Chaos cult hidden at the very heart of the von Rauken family of Ostland. However, as dawn broke the following morning, it was the Emperor's champion who marched alone, but victorious, from the castle; his armour rent and battered and his sword dripping with blood.

When the Emperor travels his lands, it is with the unsmiling Ludwig Schwarzhelm at his side, and Karl Franz's diplomatic words are backed up by the silent yet ever-present threat of his champion's keen blade. In battle, the Emperor's champion rallies the Empire army to Karl Franz's banner, and takes on the role of bodyguard, saving his liege-lord's life many times.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Ludwig	4	6	5	4	4	2	5	3	8
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry (Special Character).

### SPECIAL RULES:

**The Emperor's Bodyguard:** If Karl Franz suffers a Wound (before armour saves are taken) and Ludwig Schwarzhelm is in the same unit, roll a D6. On a 1, the Wound is resolved as normal, but on a 2+ the Wound is intercepted and reallocated to Ludwig Schwarzhelm. If Karl Franz suffers more than one Wound simultaneously, randomise between them to determine which Ludwig attempts to intercept first. No more than one Wound can be re-allocated to Ludwig Schwarzhelm in this way in each phase. Wounds suffered by the Emperor in a challenge cannot be re-allocated – it is a duel of honour, and Ludwig Schwarzhelm will not interfere.

**The Emperor's Herald:** If you take Ludwig Schwarzhelm, he must be your army's Battle Standard Bearer. Ludwig Schwarzhelm can never be your army's General.

### MAGIC ITEMS:

#### Sword of Justice (Magic Weapon)

*The Sword of Justice is an ancient weapon that has been passed down from champion to champion through the reigns of successive Emperors. It is traditionally borne by the Emperor's Judicial Champion in trials by combat when the Emperor's will is challenged. It is studded with ancient Dwarf runes of vengeance which give it the power of unswerving accuracy and deadly retribution.*

Attacks made with the Sword of Justice have the Killing Blow special rule. In addition, all failed To Wound rolls made with the Sword of Justice are re-rolled.

#### The Emperor's Standard (Magic Standard)

*Ludwig Schwarzhelm is entrusted to carry one of the Emperor's personal banners. This magnificent standard has been wrought with subtle magic so that the hearts of all true soldiers of the Empire who gaze upon it are filled with courage.*

The Emperor's Standard follows all the rules for a Battle Standard, except that the range of Ludwig Schwarzhelm's Hold Your Ground! special rule is 18".





# VOLKMAR THE GRIM

## The Grand Theogonist

Volkmar the Grim is the head of the Cult of Sigmar and the most powerful religious leader in the Empire. He is a pious and foreboding man who is utterly devoted to the destruction of Chaos in all its forms, but he is also a mighty warrior who is not afraid to face the peril of battle. When the Grand Theogonist accompanies an army into battle, he typically rides atop the resplendent War Altar of Sigmar, inspiring the soldiers around him to great acts of heroism as he strikes the followers of Chaos down with powerful blows and words of divine force. Volkmar is a holy terror on the battlefield, a man who fights with the fury of Sigmar himself. It is said that Volkmar's soul was forged of steel and he fights the malign influence of Chaos with every fibre of his being.

Though possessed of a warrior's soul, Volkmar the Grim is a wise man who knows that Chaos cannot be defeated with strength of arms alone. The Grand Theogonist is convinced that the answer to truly ending the threat from the North lies buried in the archives of the Empire's vaults of ancient scrolls and holy scriptures. For days at a time, the Grand Theogonist locks himself in the secret repositories filled with tomes of forbidden lore, in search of an answer to ending the dark menace of Chaos. Such a task is epic in the extreme and, so far, the Grand Theogonist has gathered together only a few fragments and scraps of pertinent knowledge. However, what Volkmar has learnt speaks of a great prophecy, a final battle between good and evil that will either see the threat of Chaos crushed forever, or the Empire, and the entire world, destroyed in a tide of flame and bloodshed.



As Grand Theogonist, Volkmar is one of the most powerful men in the Empire, one of Karl Franz's staunchest allies and a wise counsellor. Even though Volkmar is one of the sternest adherents of the Cult of Sigmar's teachings, political rivals and malicious rumour-mongers have, in recent years, cast doubts upon his devotion to the ideals of the Empire's warrior god. The Grand Theogonist doesn't waste time by trying to quash rumours or defend himself against such gossip, content simply to let his actions within his holy order and on the battlefield speak for themselves – none who have witnessed Volkmar in battle ever have reason to doubt his devotion again.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Volkmar	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	2	9

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry (Special Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:** Battle Prayers, Divine Power, Righteous Fury.

**Grand Theogonist:** Volkmar the Grim has a +1 bonus to any attempt to cast a Battle Prayer. In addition, if Volkmar is your army General, Flagellants count as Core Units rather than Special Units.

### MAGIC ITEMS:

#### Staff of Command (Magic Weapon)

*This staff is the Grand Theogonist's badge of office. It draws magical power from the War Altar of Sigmar and channels it into the Grand Theogonist's aging limbs, suffusing them with strength.*

As long as Volkmar the Grim is mounted upon the War Altar of Sigmar, all close combat attacks made with the Staff of Command are resolved at +2 Strength, at other times it gives +1 Strength.

#### Jade Griffon (Talisman)

*This talisman is carved from a huge piece of enchanted jade and is said to have been blessed by Magnus the Pious himself. It hangs upon the Grand Theogonist's chest, where it draws magic power from the War Altar and glows with a green inner light that suffuses Volkmar with regenerative powers. If the Grand Theogonist suffers harm the Jade Griffon uses the power of the War Altar to instantly heal him, enabling him to sustain wounds which would kill an ordinary man.*

The Jade Griffon makes the bearer regain 1 Wound suffered earlier in the game at the start of each turn, up to their starting value.

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"Volkmar. Just look at him. He never wavers and never yields. Some say he never even sleeps. Everything about him is bent to that one great task of holding back the darkness. He can't do it alone, but then again, he doesn't need to, for his sheer resolve inspires men like us to greatness."

- Sir Albrecht Valdorf, Preceptor of the Righteous Lance

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# BALTHASAR GELT

## The Supreme Patriarch

Balthasar Gelt came to Altdorf from the city of Marienburg, having bought passage on a merchant ship coming from his native Black Gulf with gold that he had transmuted from lead ingots. He quickly left the seaport for the Colleges of Magic before the effects wore off, and now rumours abound that the swindled sea captain has placed a rich bounty on Balthasar's head – though few would dare attempt to collect it.

Since his early years, Balthasar had always been fascinated by alchemy, inspired by the science of the transmutation of metal, and especially by the mystic search for the Philosopher's Stone. The transmutation of common artefacts and vile metals into precious metal and gold – the noblest metal of – all has always fascinated Balthasar. Driven by his obsession, he spent many years combining his knowledge of alchemy, learnt in far-off lands, with the magical Lore of Metal. He spent many years experimenting on combining science with the Lore of Metal, his fierce intelligence and open-minded approach leading him to a greater understanding of this branch of magic than any of his fellow students or tutors, and made Balthasar quite popular with the Alchemists' Guild. Driven by this powerful force, and sustained by a natural talent for manipulating the energies of the Winds of Magic and he rose quickly through the ranks of the Gold Order. Within a mere decade, Balthasar had become the Patriarch of the Golden College, the youngest wizard to ever hold the title.

Balthasar's research into new formulations of black powder even made him popular with the Imperial Engineers School, an organisation that often dismisses magic as superstitious nonsense, who benefited from his research into new types of blackpowder. However, during these studies, a freak explosion almost ended Balthasar's quest for knowledge forever, though some remembered the sea captain's bounty and believed it was no accident.

### THE TRICKERY OF WIZARDS

*In the Imperial year of 2516, the Empire stood on the brink of civil war as Theoderic Gausser – the Elector Count of Nordland – sought to enact his territorial ambitions against neighbouring Hochland. The Emperor asked Balthasar Gelt to intervene on his behalf, and the Supreme Patriarch travelled to Nordland's capital of Castle Salzenmund. Though ostensibly there as an ambassador, Gelt secretly transmuted the gold earmarked for Theoderic's armies and mercenaries into worthless bars of lead before returning to Altdarf on the back of a Pegasus. The hired swords refused to fight without payment and the looming threat of civil war was narrowly averted. In revenge, Theoderic has sworn he will have Gelt's head.*

Somehow he survived, and from that day on he has only ever been seen swathed in shimmering, metallic robes and wearing a golden face mask. Some say that beneath his mask his skin has turned to pure gold, while others whisper that he is horribly disfigured, though the truth of the matter is known only to Balthasar. One thing is certain: the accident only furthered his will to succeed, and this determination increased his powers to new heights. After defeating Thyrus Gormann of the Bright Order in a ritual magical duel, Balthasar became Supreme Patriarch of the Colleges of Magic, replacing the long-standing prominence of Fire with that of Metal. Since that day, the new Supreme Patriarch, surrounded by a golden halo, has appeared on many battlefields, heartening the Emperor's armies as he soars overhead on his Pegasus. With a single gesture, Balthasar Gelt can transform his enemies into lifeless golden statues or turn their bones into molten iron. With such power at his command, Balthasar has secured victory for the Empire on numerous occasions.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Balthasar Gelt	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	1	8
Quicksilver	8	3	0	4	4	2	4	2	6

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry (Special Character).

**MAGIC:** Balthasar Gelt is a Level 4 Wizard. He uses spells from the Lore of Metal.

**SPECIAL RULES:** Fly (9), Loremaster (Lore of Metal).

**Al-kahest:** Al-kahest uses the following profile:

Range:	Strength:	Special Rules:
6"	n/a	Flaming Attacks, Ignores Armour saves, Magical Attacks, Quick to Fire

If the vial hits, it Wounds any target on a 4+.

### MAGIC ITEMS:

#### Staff of Volans (Arcane Item)

*This staff was made by the warrior mage Fredrick von Tarnus after the Great War against Chaos and belonged to Volans, the first Supreme Patriarch of the Colleges of Magic, who was taught by Teclis of Ulthuan during the Great War Against Chaos, and it has been the symbol of office of the Supreme Patriarch ever since. It allows the Patriarch to bend the Winds of Magic more easily to his will.*

Arcane Item. The Staff of Volans grants Balthasar Gelt a +2 bonus on all attempts to cast spells.

### Amulet of Sea Gold (Talisman)

*This ancient Elven heirloom was unearthed by Balthasar Gelt in the ruins of one of the abandoned colonies of the Elves on the Estalian coast. It glows with protective energies that become increasingly more powerful in the presence of evil sorcery.*

The Amulet of Sea Gold grants Balthasar Gelt the Magic Resistance (1) special rule, and adds +1 to the Magic Resistance for each enemy wizard currently on the battlefield, up to a maximum of 3.

### Cloak of Molten Metal (Enchanted Item)

*This mystic robe creates a shimmering series of images that perfectly match Balthasar's appearance. These images are forever rotating in a dazzling whirlwind of iridescent colours, masking the Patriarch's true battlefield position even to the most eagle-eyed marksman.*

The Cloak of Molten Metal grants Balthasar Gelt a Ward save (3+) against shooting attacks.

*When asked: "What is the name of the stone that burns?"  
Thou shalt respond: "Sulphur, to be mixed with mercury."*

*When asked: "What is the name of the universal solvent?"  
Thou shalt respond: "Al-kahest."*


*When asked: "What is the name of the remedy for all maladies?"  
Thou shalt respond: "Panacea Universalis."*

*When asked: "What is the name of the acme of the Art?"  
Thou shalt respond: "The Elixir of Life."*

*When asked: "What is the name of the noblest of metals?"  
Thou shalt respond: "Gold."*

*- Balthasar Gelt, "The training of the Alchemist"*





Thyrus Gormann was confident. He had won the ritual duel for the last three times in succession and his powers were stronger than ever. His mastery of the fiery element was unmatched. Clad in the red robes of his Order. Thyrus was wearing all the symbols of his position as Master of the Bright College and Supreme Patriarch. Standing almost seven feet tall hands on the hilt of his magic sword, Thyrus was an imposing figure. He was ready on the ritual position of the Ruling Patriarch in the great Hall of the Duels. The huge chamber was shaped like an eight sided prism. The thick walls, the ceiling and the floor were made of gloss smooth obsidian. That black stone was the bane of magic. Totally refractory and inactive Thyrus could feel his powers dimmed by the presence of so much of it all around him. Under the symbol of their own Wind of Magic, the Masters of the other Orders were standing in alcoves carved in the eight walls, protected by powerful enchanted barriers.

Replacing the Patriarch in the position of the College of Fire was Hans Feuerbach, Thyrus most gifted apprentice. The obsidian chamber and the presence of the eight most powerful wizards in the Empire were necessary to contain the powers that the two contestants would soon unleash. After all, the winner of the duel would gain the title of Supreme Patriarch for the next eight years. The objective of the challenge was to reach the centre of the Hall, where an altar stood, shaped in the guise of the Great Wheel of Magic Levitating above its hub was the Staff of Volans, the Staff of the Patriarchs. The first contender to lay his hands on the Staff would have his powers immediately amplified by the ancient artefact. At that point the other wizard normally surrendered, if he knew what was good for him. Anything was allowed to stop the opponent from approaching the altar, and in the past there had been fatalities among the contestants.

The position of the Challenger was still empty. Thyrus opponent was late. Maybe "Maybe the upstart is scared," thought the Patriarch. The three opponents he had defeated were all Masters of their own Order, while this Balthasar Celt was just a young Alchemist. A promising one, though. Thyrus had witnessed his brilliant progress through the selections for the position of Challenger, but Gold Wizards had never struck Thyrus as great warriors. The main tactic when fighting them was to keep a reasonable distance to stay out of reach of their touch. Failure in doing so could result in being turned into golden statue, and Thyrus had other plans for the future.

Finally, the Challenger walked into the Hall through the Gold entrance. The gate was immediately sealed behind him. Thyrus examined his young opponent and realised immediately, that there was no trace of hesitation in him. He could not see the face of Balthasar because of the mask he always wore, but could clearly understand from the posture of his robed body and from his resolute stride that the Gold Wizard was not there to lose. Balthasar Celt assumed his codified position, eight steps in front of the Gold wall, and stood ready. After the preparatory ritual, silence fell on the Hall and tension began to build. The Challenger had to take the first step towards the Hub, thus starting the duel.

Balthasar moved in. A gesture, few words of power, and a golden light surrounded him. The young wizard suddenly melted into a pool of liquid gold that zigzagged towards the altar. Thyrus laughed and formulated a counterspell, while summoning the mystic Crimson Bands to hold his opponent. When he saw the Gold Wizard trapped, Thyrus cast a second spell. He was immediately enveloped by fiery wings and lifted into the air and towards the Staff. A surge of golden energy vaporised the Bands. Then suddenly Thyrus crashed to the floor with a scum. The robe of the Bright Wizard, his wide mangle and everything he was carrying had suddenly turned to lead! Balthasar started to walk towards the altar.

In a split second the body of Thyrus was enveloped by intense flames that quickly melted the lead and the Patriarch was back on

his feet. A Scarlet Scimitar, the concrete manifestation of Thyrus' anger, materialised in the air and streaked towards Balthasar. The Scimitar was met in mid-flight by a Burnished Gauntlet, similarly conjured, and the two spells cancelled each other out in a flash.

Next Balthasar fought back and a Golden Cage imprisoned the red wizard. Thyrus felt Mocked by the refusal of his opponent to use offensive spells and a ray of intense heat erupted from his outstretched hand. The fiery energy carved a great hole in the cage and hurtled towards the Gold Wizard. Balthasar raised his left gloved hand and the beam was stopped by a shimmering golden shield. Thyrus kept up the pressure and the ray focused to a very thin lance of red energy, Balthasar's shield was growing dimmer under the attack and he obviously could not resist much longer.

The right hand of the Gold Wizard rose and glowed for an instant, with no apparent effect. The Patriarch was triumphant, soon the Challenger would have to surrender or be turned into a pile of charred bones. Then Thyrus suddenly realised that something strange was happening to his legs. He felt a sensation of icy coldness starting to spread up his lower limbs. Thyrus had to interrupt the attack. He looked down. With terror he realised that his body was in the process of turning to gold! How was it possible? He had not been touched, unless... His own heat ray! The ray had established a contact between the two wizards. The cursed Balthasar must have channelled the gold energy along Thyrus' own spell! For a second the Patriarch was in the grasp of sheer panic. Such skill! Such control!

Then his warrior spirit took control once more and he directed all his fiery energies in a desperate attempt to stop the transmutation. He concentrated on the cold feeling of the metal and fought it back with all the fire in his veins. After a difficult struggle, the Patriarch managed to stop the gold energy at his waist. He raised his head again, just in time to see Balthasar now only a few yards from the altar.

With his legs still paralysed, the Patriarch raised his arms and evoked the most powerful defensive spell of his Order. A great Wall of Fire appeared between Balthasar and the altar. The creation stretched from one wall of the vast chamber to the other, and reached the vaulted ceiling. Thyrus directed all his remaining energies to raising its temperature. Soon the barrier was burning white with heat. No living creature could go through without being destroyed. The two wizards had reached a stalemate it seemed. Thyrus could not move and could not lose his concentration to keep up the Wall. Balthasar was at an arm's length from the Staff and still could not reach it. The Patriarch was thinking hard, he had a very short time to find a solution. Then once more he witnessed the impossible. Was it an arm of solid gold which stretched through the Wall and grasped the staff? The bright light of his spell made it difficult to see clearly. Then it was all over.

The chamber was filled by a flash of golden light that dazzled the Masters in their shielded alcoves. When they could see again, Balthasar was standing in the centre of the Hall, the Staff firmly in his hands. In front of him was a golden statue, only the eyes and mouth of the Patriarch were still flesh. The calm voice of Balthasar echoed in their minds: "Thyrus Gormann, you forgot that the essence of Metal is in equal parts Stone and Fire. This has caused your defeat. I could take your life now, but the Empire needs your powers against its many enemies, your Order requires your leadership and I would rather have you as a friend. Do you recognise my authority?"

"Aye, you won the duel in a fair fight. You are our Supreme Patriarch now and you will have my respect and my loyalty... until we meet again here in eight years."

"I'll be ready, Gormann," answered Balthasar. "I'll be ready."

# THYRUS GORMANN

## High Wizard of the Bright Order

Thyrus Gormann, High Wizard of the Bright College of magic, has been the Supreme Patriarch and the leader of all the wizards in the Empire for many years. He has wielded considerable political influence during his term in office, since he is a close personal friend of the Emperor. Recently he has been defeated by a young Gold wizard, going under the name of Balthasar Gelt. Thyrus has accepted defeat and has sworn loyalty to the new Patriarch, but his fiery blood will certainly see him in the position of the Challenger when the next Duel is held. However, Thyrus does not put personal ambition before his duty to the Empire, and often attends the Imperial court in Altdorf and is one of Karl Franz's oldest and most trusted advisors. He has wielded considerable political influence during his term in office (and since) because of it.

Thyrus Gormann is an imposing figure. His scarlet robes shift and flicker like flame, bronze thuribles of hot coals hang from his belt, and his tall, thrice-conicaled hat shivers with tongues of fire. His eyes glow red when his volcanic temper is tested, though he also has a quick humour. Six feet two inches tall, with broad shoulders, an oiled and sculpted beard of fiery copper and a fierce hawk-like nose, he has more an air of a seasoned general than a Magister, and in a sense he is both. But there is no doubt that in his robes of office he is a commanding presence, and many around the court are wary of his tempestuous nature. Quick to laugh, even quicker to anger, and with command of powerful Bright magic at his fingertips, he is not the sort of person who suffers fools at all. He has obviously greatly enjoyed the power that being Supreme Patriarch brings, and some say that having to return to being merely the High Wizard of the Bright College will break him.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Thyrus Gormann	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	1	8
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry (Special Character).

### THE BATTLE OF THE LITTLE BIG BASH

The Big Bash River runs through the area known as Badlands, marking the territory of warring Orc tribes. It has been the scene of many savage battles and the bones of countless Orc warriors litter the river bed. Upstream runs a tributary called the Little Big Bash. It was to this desolate place that Count Reinhard Von Stern, an intrepid but eccentric explorer from the Empire known as 'Mad Strangler Stern', led his brave warrior adventurers. He was searching for the legendary golden city of Amdahar, supposed to lie beyond the Badlands. No one knows whether he found it. After the Battle of the Little Big Bash he led his army south and vanished forever from history.

**MAGIC:** Thyrus is a Level 4 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Fire.

**SPECIAL RULES: Loremaster (Lore of Fire).**

**Fire Lord:** Thyrus may add +1 to the result of each of the dice rolled when determining the number of hits caused by his spells.

**MAGIC ITEMS:**

**The Bright Sword (Magic Weapon)**

*This mighty sword has runes inscribed along the blade by Thyrus himself.*

This magic sword gives Thyrus +1 when rolling To Wound as well as Flaming Attacks.

**Firebrand Staff (Arcane Item)**

*This magic staff channels the energies of Fire Magic.*

Thyrus may add 12" to the range of his spells.

**The Fire Stone of Agni (Arcane Item)**

*A holy stone that still burns with the volcanic fires used in its creation.*

Once per turn, Thyrus may add +2 Power Dice to casting one of his spells.

**The Blazing Ruby (Talisman)**

*The energies of this powerful item manifest themselves as intense flames that envelop the wizard, protecting and sustaining him.*

The Blazing Ruby confers the Ward save (5+) and the Immunity (Flaming Attacks) special rules.



# BORIS TODBRINGER

## Elector Count of Middenheim

Graf Boris Todbringer is the current Elector Count of Middenland. He is a distinguished warrior and brilliant statesman, having been the head of his family, the Todbringers, for almost three decades. Boris is one of the most ferocious warriors in the Empire and the province of Middenland is one of the most powerful and independent of the Imperial states. As the Count of Middenland he is a fervent devotee of the Cult of Ulric whose chief temple is situated in Middenheim. When Karl Franz was elected Emperor after the death of his father, only Boris Todbringer of Middenland opposed him. Boris lost the vote despite the support of the High Priest of Ulric, but has since proved to be the most loyal and energetic of Karl Franz's Counts.

Boris Todbringer married very early; his first wife, Maria von Richthofen, died one year later giving birth to Stefan, whom Boris named as heir to his title. A few months previous, Boris had learned he was father to another son, Heinrich, born to a lady-at-court. There are (unconfirmed) rumours that Heinrich was conceived the night before the Graf's marriage to Maria.

Baron Stefan was named the Graf's heir a day after his birth. Unfortunately he grew to be a drooling and palsied invalid, subject to fits of extreme violence and mania. However, his condition improved with the appointment of the Tilean doctor Luigi Pavarotti as Stefan's personal physician. In complete contrast to Stefan, the Graf's eldest son Baron Heinrich Todbringer is blessed with considerable intellectual gifts and physical prowess. Despite this, his illegitimate birth disqualifies him from inheriting his father's title of Graf of Middenheim.

At the age of 47, the Graf took another wife, Anika-Elise Nikse, daughter of the Baron Werner Nikse of Nordland. Unfortunately the marriage produced no children, and Anika-Elise died ten years after the marriage. Graf has one more child, Katarina, born to a lady-at-court prior to his second marriage.

Boris is now advancing in years, and there are whispered rumours that personal and political problems weigh heavily on the Count's mind. His battles with the Beastmen of the Drakwald, in particular the banebeast Khazrak whose eye he took and in turn lost his own right eye to, are a ceaseless struggle. It is also said that the loss of his second wife, Anika-Elise, almost twenty years ago was a blow he has still to fully recover from. However, if these rumours are true, Boris Todbringer is a determined man indeed, for outwardly he remains as vigorous as ever, a fearsome fighter and leader. He regularly leads the armies of Middenland personally, smiting enemies with his Runefang and urging his soldiers on to victory.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Boris Todbringer	4	6	3	4	4	3	6	4	9
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry (Special Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:** Hatred (Beastmen), Hold the Line.

**Crush the Weak:** Boris Todbringer has the Hatred special rule against enemies with a Leadership characteristic of 6 or lower.

### MAGIC ITEMS:

#### Legbiter, the Middenland Runefang (Magic Weapon)

All hits from a Runefang wound automatically and Ignores Armour saves.

#### The Talisman of Ulric (Talisman)

*An ancient heirloom of the Todbringer family, the Talisman of Ulric is currently worn on a chain around the neck of Boris Todbringer, Elector Count of Middenland and regarded as one of the most ferocious warriors in the Empire. To the Todbringer, the Talisman of Ulric, a silver symbol of a wolf's head, is as much a badge of office as is the family's Runefang. It is infused with the power and courage of Ulric, and offers protection from harm.*

At the start of every player turn, unless he has been removed as a casualty, Boris Todbringer instantly recovers any lost wounds, up to his starting total of 3. In addition, it gives Boris Todbringer Magic Resistance (1) and Immunity (Psychology).



# MARIUS LEITDORF

## Elector Count of Averland

Renowned as the Mad Count of Averland, Marius Leitdorf's reputation has spread far across the Old World. Most knew Marius for his eccentricities; he was sullen and morose, was prone to bouts of screaming rage during which no one could reason with him, had periods of melancholy and deep depression where he would lock himself away and would speak to no-one for weeks, and his mercurial conduct at court. Indeed, it is common knowledge that he relied on the advice of his warhorse, Daisy Kurt von Helboring II, as much as any of his advisors. His intense and unpredictable moods earned him many enemies throughout the Empire. In fact, his outrageous behaviour and roguish improprieties with the daughters and wives of the noble houses were such that few other counts welcomed him in their courts. One of Leitdorf's harshest critics was Kurt Helborg, who according to the Mad Count 'had a poor moustache, worse dental hygiene, and a sense of humour to rival a Troll'. On the last point, at least, Marius' judgement was correct, and the enmity between the two was legendary.

"They call me mad - mad! But 'twas I who stopped those invading unicorns. None other! Mad indeed..."

- Marius Leitdorf, Mad Count of Averland

Marius's taste for fine silks, velvet, and exquisitely fashioned clothing is legendary and lead some to class him (quite wrongly) as an ineffective fop. However, Leitdorf's reputation did him a gross disservice for while he was clearly 'unconventional' in his manners and flamboyant in his clothing, he had an incisive mind. Indeed, he was an accomplished poet and an inventor of some standing. Furthermore, Leitdorf was an exceptional swordsman unequalled except perhaps by the Reiksmarshall Kurt Helborg – a match that has never been put to the test despite years of mutual enmity. Marius was also a military tactician who led his armies with considerable flair and skill. In fact, a number of great



victories are owed to his insane courage and uncanny insights, and Karl Franz counted Leitdorf amongst his most trusted allies. It was with genuine regret that the Emperor saw Marius fall in battle whilst they led their armies against a massive Orc invasion. With his passing, the Empire was robbed of one of its greatest, if most unpredictable, heroes.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Marius Leitdorf	4	7	5	4	4	3	6	4	9
Daisy	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry (Special Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:** Hold the Line!

**The Mad Count:** At the start of every friendly turn, Marius Leitdorf must take a Leadership test on 3D6, discarding the lowest result. If passed, he behaves himself and acts normally this turn, otherwise roll a D6 and consult the table below:

- Lunatic Ravings:** *Marius recites poetry, does impressions of the Reiksmarshall and sings bawdy songs about rotund maidens.*  
For the remainder of the turn, Marius is treated as though he has failed a Stupidity test.
- Berserk Rage:** *The Mad Count's favourite shirt is ruined and he enters an unreasoning rage.*  
Marius has the Frenzy special rule, and cannot lose it, until he rolls on this table again.
- Paranoid Delusions:** *Leitdorf is convinced that both his allies and his own shadow are out to get him.*  
Marius immediately makes one close combat attack against a randomly chosen friendly model in base contact (if there are none, treat this result as Lunatic Ravings instead).
- Tactical Brilliance:** *After consulting his warhorse, Daisy, Marius realises his army needs to be reformed at once.*  
Every friendly unit within 12" of Marius may immediately make a Reform manoeuvre. These units can still move, charge, march and shoot as normal during this turn.
- Outrageous Insult:** *The Mad Count mocks his foe's girth, poor dress sense and find odour.*  
The closest enemy character to Marius has the Hatred (Marius Leitdorf) special rule for the rest of the game. This has no effect on units that have Immunity (Psychology).
- Insane Bravado:** *Marius believes himself to be invincible and charges off to smite his foes.*  
Marius is treated as having rolled a Berserk Rage result. In addition he has the Stubborn special rule and must accept any challenge until he rolls on this table again.

**MAGIC ITEMS:**

**Mothers Ruin, the Averland Runefang (Magic Weapon)**  
*Marius fought with two blades, the Runefang in one hand and a long-bladed dagger in the other, a mode of warfare he has mastered better than anyone.*

Two hand weapons. All hits from the Averland Runefang wound automatically and ignores Armour saves.

# ALDEBRAND LUDENHOF

## Elector Count of Hochland

Although Hochland is not an especially large or important province, its Count is one of the most valiant leaders in the Empire. Aldebrand, Elector Count of Hockland, Grand Baron of Hochland, Marshal of the Talabec Reach, Defender of the Shrines, and Baron of Hergig, is very tall and thin, but immensely strong and fit, making him a match for larger, heavier opponents in combat. He has an unquenchable enthusiasm for hunting, and especially for hawking.

The Barony of Hochland was governed by Baroness Hildegard Tussen-Hochen from the town of Bergsburg to the north-west of the barony and it is one of the smallest Imperial provinces. However, the thriving town of Hergig remained a thorn in the Baroness's side. It had surpassed Bergsburg in wealth and would continue to grow and eventually usurp the capital's dominance if Count Aldebrand Ludenhof had any pretensions to the governorship. The Count's son, Konrad Ludenhof, was rumoured to be tutored by Erasmus of Nuln to be groomed for the tasks of an Elector Count, but he was still young, and his father had not shown any hostility to Hildegard's rule, yet, although the size of Hergig's army and its close ties with the Knights of the Silver Mountain was a cause for concern.



North Hochland was ravaged several years ago by a horde of Beastmen from the woods on the slopes of the Middle Mountains. Count Aldebrand Ludenhof proved his prowess in battle by defeating the Beastmen and slaying the Khornate leader. The sacked farmsteads were given compensation from the Count's personal fortune so that they could rebuild their lives. Baroness Hildegard, cynically perhaps, viewed this action of financial support with suspicion and believed that the Count was trying to 'buy' support for his challenge to the rulership of the Barony. Meanwhile, Count Ludenhof said "it is nothing more than a gentleman should do."

What was the present cause for concern was the unwanted border skirmishes with Ostland troops. The Tassenincks, the rulers of Ostland, seemed to have recurring confusions over where the borders of Hochland began and theirs ends. This had caused more

than one diplomatic incident and several small scale skirmishes with both sides losing men and, sometimes, land. Grand Prince Hals von Tasseninck had proven to be quite a warmonger and only the intervention of Talabheim, of which Hochland is attached to, has prevented all out war between the two provinces. Naturally there lay a suspicion between any Hochland and Ostland soldiers who happen to meet.

With trouble brewing between Talabecland and Ostland in 2514, Baroness Hildegard Tussen-Hochen was compelled to name Count Aldebrand Ludenhof, betrothed to her daughter Sophia, as Grossmarschall of Hochland. Later that year, troubles in Bergsburg and her failing health forces the Baroness to abdicate in favour of the Count. The 2515 Volkshalle Edict elevated Hochland to Electoral status.

In 2516, Aldebrand's son fell ill with a mysterious illness. He was treated by a cloaked doctor who instructed him to drink a potion should the symptoms return. Upon drinking the tainted elixir, he was transformed into a hideous mutant that slaughtered a dozen of the Count's most trusted advisors before sloping off to the north to join its new master, Festus the Leechlord. Aldebrand has sworn that he will have Festus's head in revenge.

Aldebrand's palace lies outside the capital of Hergig, surrounded by prime hunting estates. He is especially proud of his large collection of hunting birds, which occupies a substantial mews and tends to spill out into the palace itself, so that every room has at least one large bird of prey on its perch. Even in battle the count carries a hawk upon his arm.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Aldebrand	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	9
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry (Special Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:** **Hold the Line.**

**Aldebrand's Hawk:** The hawk may target models using the Sniper special rule. The target must pass a Weapon Skill test or suffer a Strength 3 hit.

**Goblin Bane, the Hochland Runefang (Magic Weapon)**

All hits from the Averland Runefang wound automatically and Ignores Armour saves.

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"We survive, and where there is survival, there is hope."

- Aldebrand Ludenhof, Elector Count of Hochland

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# VALMIR VON RAUKOV

## Elector Count of Ostland

The Elector Counts of Ostland live on the north eastern border of the Empire beyond which lie the dangerous Troll Country and the Northern Wastes. It has always been a poor region where the constant threat of danger breeds a hardy race of people.

The original rulers of Ostland were the von Tessinck family. After the death of Hals von Tessinck and his son, the throne passed to the von Raukov line. The Elector Count of Ostland is Valmir von Raukov. Like his father before him, he has spent a lifetime fighting against Chaos warbands, raiding Norse, and marauding Orcs, not to mention the occasional forays of bandits from Kislev. Even his own realm is not wholly safe, for the forests and mountains are full of renegades, Beastmen, Trolls, Giants and countless other foes. Valmir von Raukov is a tough warlord whose constant vigil has protected the northern borders of the Empire for many years.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Valmir	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	9
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry (Special Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:** Hold the Line.

### MAGIC ITEMS:

#### Brain Wounder, the Ostland Runefang (Magic Weapon)

All hits from the Ostland Runefang wound automatically and Ignores Armour saves.

#### The Dragon Bow (Magic Weapon)

*A relic from the ancient Elven colonies in the Old World, the Dragon Bow of Ostland is inscribed with mighty runes which confer tremendous strength to its user. Its arrows are tipped with dragon horn and guided by magic to the heart of their target, enabling its wielder to outshoot the best archers in the Empire.*

The Dragon Bow has the following profile:

Range:	Strength:	Special Rules:
36"	5	Multiple Shots (3), Volley Fire

"And as we lay here prostrate, Nordland and Talabecland plot to land the final blow"

- Valmir von Raukov, Elector Count of Ostland



# MAGNUS THE PIOUS

## Saviour of the Empire, Bane of Chaos

Magnus the Pious is one of the most famous historical figures in the Empire and one of its greatest Emperors. Magnus was a genius with many wild and frightening ideas, and a fanatical belief in the nationhood of the Empire and the divinity of Sigmar. His family packed him off to the great University of Nuln where they hoped his energies would be dispersed in academic study. This proved a vain hope, as the young student soon acquired a following of like-minded people. They travelled around the Reikland, and soon Magnus's rousing speeches earned him a massive following amongst the common folk of the Empire.

"Three things make The Empire great - faith, steel and gunpowder!"

- Magnus the Pious

Magnus marched northwards from city to city, addressing the people in the market places, and gathering a huge army about him. The Elector Counts and Burgomeisters recognised in Magnus a leader they were all prepared to follow, and soon the citizen army was swollen by provincial troops and the troops of the Elector Counts. By the time the army reached Middenheim it was the largest single army in the history of the Empire and Magnus was forced to divide his host in two as no one place could provide enough food and water to support it.



The first army, consisting mostly of Kislevites and fast moving mounted troops, marched to Praag in the hope of relieving the siege. They arrived too late to save Praag but did destroy part of the Chaos army's rearguard. The second army, led by Magnus himself, marched to Kislev hoping to re-provision at the capital before continuing northwards. They discovered the city already under attack by the Chaos Hordes and attacked immediately. In the battle that followed the Chaos Hordes were defeated and Magnus returned home in triumph.

"I can see in your eyes that you fear this enemy. I can see in your eyes that you wonder how we can fight such terrible monsters. Men of the Empire, I have the answer: We fight then: with our steel, we fight them with our courage, but above all we fight them with our faith in Sigmar!"

- Magnus the Pious, at the Battle of the Gates of Kislev

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Magnus the Pious	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	10
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry (Special Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:** **Hold the Line!**, **Immunity (Psychology)**, **Leader of Men** (see Karl Franz), **Righteous Fury** (see Warrior Priests).

**Power of Sigmar:** *Magnus the Pious is protected by the awesome power of Sigmar guarding over him.*

Magnus the Pious has the Magic Resistance (2) and Ward save (5+) special rule. In close combat Magnus may make a special Attack at Strength 10 with the Multiple Wounds (D3) special rule instead of his normal attacks.

### MAGIC ITEMS:

#### The Gilded Armour (Magic Armour)

*This golden suit of armour was a gift from the Elves of Ulthuan to Magnus the Pious after the Great War Against Chaos. It repels weapons with an invisible force.*

Heavy armour. Models attacking the wearer in close combat must pass a Strength test before rolling to hit for every Attack directed at the target. If the test is failed, the Attack is lost. Attacks that do not roll to Hit are unaffected.



# MARKUS WULFHART

## Huntmarshal of the Empire

Markus Wulfhart is the finest scout in all the Empire, a huntsman from Middenland whose life was irrevocably shattered when the Drakwald Cyclops – a one-eyed Bonegrinder Giant – razed his hometown of Drakenburg to the ground, slaughtering its inhabitants. Burning with the desire for revenge, Wulfhart tracked the great monster to its lair. A skilled marksman, he blinded his quarry with a single shot from his bow before closing with the stumbling giant and severing its rope-like hamstrings with repeated blows of his sword. As the giant crashed to the ground, Markus showed it no mercy, and with blade in hand, he hacked at its neck a dozen times until the monster's head was severed.

Wulfhart had slain the beast that had butchered his kin, but he knew that there were many more monsters still lurking in the dark forests. He swore that no other settlement would suffer the fate of Drakenburg if he could help it, and so he set out to hunt the various monsters that preyed on the Empire, and only when every last one of them was slain would he rest.

As recognition for his deeds, Markus was offered a knighthood by Karl Franz himself, and with it the luxury of a nobleman's estate. However, Wulfhart declined, wishing only to be allowed to continue his self-imposed quest. The Emperor was impressed with Markus' grim determination and so gifted him with a magical bow from the Imperial vaults. Karl Franz also bestowed Markus with the title of Huntsmarshal – the Emperor's Captain of Scouts – and tasked him with recruiting a band of like-minded followers.



Wulfhart's Hunters are an elite, if rag-tag, regiment of scouts, hand-picked by Markus from across the Empire. Nowhere else in the Emperor's armies can a more disparate group of warriors be found; Middenlanders fight beside troops from as far afield as Averland, and city-born men rub shoulders with those raised in rural backwaters. However, any regional differences are quickly eroded and bonds of comradeship are forged as they fight against a common foe. Under Markus' single-minded leadership, Wulfhart's Hunters have become the most accomplished group of monster slayers in the Empire. Together, they have slain the Talonbeast of Stirland, the Ostermark Ice Dragon and the Chimera of Flamespire Peak, just to name a few. Whilst lesser men might have been paralysed with fear facing down such terrifying foes, the aim of Wulfhart and his chosen men has never wavered as they prepare to let loose the arrows that will rid the Old World of one more monstrosity.



	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Markus Wulfhart	4	5	6	4	4	2	6	3	8

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry (Special Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:** Hatred (Monsters), Immunity (Psychology), Scouts.

**Monster Hunter:** Models with this special rule re-roll all failed To Hit rolls when shooting at monsters.

**Wulfhart's Hunters:** If your army includes Markus Wulfhart, one unit of Huntsmen may be upgraded to be Wulfhart's Hunters for +2 points/model. This unit gains the Monster Hunter and Immunity (Psychology) special rules.

### MAGIC ITEMS:

#### The Amber Bow (Magic Weapon)

*This bow was carved from a Drakwald Oak and enchantments were placed upon it by Amber Wizards. Its shots are guided by magic to the hearts of fierce monsters.*

Longbow. All shots fired by the Amber Bow are resolved at Strength 4. Against Monsters, the Amber Bow always wounds on 4+ (unless it would normally need a lower result) and has the Multiple Wounds (D3) special rule.

"The gods have seen fit to populate the Old World with all manner of foul monsters. They've also seen fit to grant me a keen eye and a strong bow to hunt them with."

- Markus Wulfhart, the Huntsmarshal of the Empire

# LUTHOR HUSS

## Prophet of Sigmar

In the early years of Karl Franz's reign, a boy appeared at the gate of a Sigmarite monastery near Wissenburg and pleaded to be allowed to join the monks. When asked about ranks of the warrior his past, the boy did not answer. All he would say was his name, Luther Huss, though his burning desire to fight Chaos was soon clear to all.

Many years of hard training, intense study and inflexible discipline followed. The lean boy grew up to become a tall, muscular young man, a formidable warrior and uncompromising priest who's fighting skills were soon a match for his instructors. He also proved an eager student of the liny of Sigmar and, at the completion of his studies, he could engage his old teachers in subtle dialectic duels. One thing remained for Luthor to earn a place amongst his brothers, he needed to face Darkness in battle and defeat it.

Luthor left the monastery and walked across the Empire, preaching faith in Sigmar and looking for a sign, a chance to prove his worth against Chaos. He finally had his chance in Weismund, a small town at the edge of the Drakwald Forest. When Luthor reached Weismund, he found a great commotion among the population. Squads of the town's militia were in full alarm, peasants and woodmen were flooding to the relative safety of the town's palisade with their

livestock. It looked as though they were preparing for a siege. Luthor soon found out that a large band of Beastmen had attacked the area and many isolated communities hail already been destroyed.

Painful memories of his childhood flickered through the novice's mind, He was soon busy striding around the town, inspiring the defenders with fiery speeches and helping them get ready for the imminent attack. Help had been sent for, hut the nearest garrison of regular troops was in Helmgart, and reinforcements would take days to reach Weismund. Suddenly the foul Children of Chaos were upon the town. When the Beastmen attacked, Luthor displayed the divine might of Sigmar himself: The Warrior Priest became his deity's vessel upon the world and he bore the gifts of the immortal god. Every swing of Luthor's hammer struck a mutant monster dead, every word of power uttered caused a Beastman to burst into flames, and his supernatural aura turned aside enemy blades. Great were the feats of valour that Luthor accomplished, the power of Sigmar was strong with him that day. His mighty Warhammer struck down many abominations and a supernatural aura protected him during the fight. The blows of the enemies were unable to pierce his armour and the evil sorcery of the shaman who was leading the Beastmen was totally powerless against Luthor. Even a huge bull-headed horror succumbed to the implacable priest.



After two days of uninterrupted fighting, an imperial relief force reached the town and the Beastmen fled back into the forest. Luthor joined the troops in their pursuit, but when the soldiers reached the edge of the wood, they stopped, judging it folly to continue under the dark canopy Groves. Luthor was undeterred and followed the fleeing creatures of Chaos, determined to wipe them all out and cleanse the land of their filth. The soldiers set up camp close by, in case the Beastmen decided to return. Soon everybody was convinced that the ferocious novice had surely been killed, but after three days Luthor emerged once more from the forest. His armour in tatters, his exhausted holy covered in the blood of his enemies, Luthor reached the camp dragging behind him the massive horned head of the shaman.

After this victory against Chaos, Luthor returned to the monastery, where he was ordained. From that day on he joined his brothers on the battlefield, where he distinguished himself fighting the minions of Darkness.

Luthor quickly rose through the ranks and eventually was chosen to join the delegation representing his order at the Sigmarite Council in Altdorf. The reason for this Council was the election of a new Arch-lector to replace Manfred of Nuln who had disappeared in the north during his crusade against the Chaos Warlord Archaon. Luthor was deeply troubled by what he witnessed in the council. He saw fat clergy more concerned with politics and business than in pursuing the holy mission bestowed upon them by Sigmar the fight against Chaos.

The Grand Theogonist Volkmar was absent from the council; the old man was spending more and more time in the high pinnacle at the top of the Temple of Sigmar. For days at a time he would lock himself in the secret repository of the tomes of forbidden lore in search of an answer to the dark menace gathering in the far north. Malign rumours circulated in the council, and some even doubted Volkmar's sanity because of the many hours he spent reading those unholy grimoires. Without the Theogonist's guidance, the influence of the Arch-lectors was growing. They were steering the position of the clergy of Sigmar towards the achievement of their selfish political aims. With all the fervour of his burning faith, Luthor openly denounced this spiritual relaxation, attacking the Lectors in the Council with hard words of reproach.

"To fight Chaos on the battlefields, not to grow rich and fat in the golden halls of the capital; that is the purpose of our Cult!" boomed Luthor's voice at the Council.

Needless to say, that did not win him much popularity with the Arch-lectors and he was ordered to apologise by his superiors in the Order. The young and pious Luthor could not obey that order, which was in open contradiction with everything he had always believed in. He finally decided to resign his position and leave

the assembly. Furthermore, he exiled himself from the opulent cathedrals of the capital, pausing only long enough to gather his warhammer and hymnal.

The battlefield was where Luthor would pay tribute to his god, and from that day onward, Luthor has travelled throughout the Empire, preaching against the corruption of the heads of the Cult of Sigmar and inciting the faithful to seek the will of Sigmar without the mediation of the clergy. Luthor has become the nightmare of every corrupt priest, the scourge of the unfaithful and the bane of those who consorted with the Dark Gods.

Whispered rumours circulated that he was responsible for the deaths of several priests in Altdorf suspected of embezzling money from the collection plates and harbouring Chaos Cultists. Tales of such grisly justice meted out at his hands have driven the Arch-lectors to once again ask the Theogonist to excommunicate Luthor, but the holy man has never agreed with them. Indeed, Luthor has never attacked Volkmar in his speeches. The enigmatic smile that appears on the Theogonist's face when Luthor is mentioned to him has led many to think that the old man knows something important about Luthor's ultimate destiny. Something he cannot or does not want to reveal.

Luthor Huss appears most often whenever the forces of the Empire are facing evil and unholy enemies. Beastmen, Skaven, the Living Dead – all are blasphemies against Sigmar and all must be smitten by the faithful! Luthor fights with righteous fury beside the soldiers of the empire, his example and inspiring words are a great aid against those unholy foes, his powers stronger than those of any other priest of Sigmar.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Luthor Huss	4	5	3	4	4	2	4	2	8
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5

**TROOP TYPE:** Cavalry (Special Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:** Battle Prayers, Divine Power, Righteous Fury.

**Chosen of Sigmar:** Luthor Huss has a Ward save (4+). In addition, once per game, he may harness the very power of Sigmar. Luthor must declare that he is harnessing this power at the start of any Close Combat phase. Roll a D3 – Luthor adds this number to his Weapon Skill, Strength, Toughness, and Attacks characteristics until the end of the turn.

**Fiery Demagogue:** In addition to Hammer of Sigmar, Shield of Faith and Soulfire, Luthor Huss also knows the following Battle Prayer:

- **Unbending Righteousness:** Luthor Huss and his unit gain the Stubborn special rule until the start of the next friendly Magic phase.

# VALTEN

## Champion of Sigmar

Valten was born in a Reikland village called Lachenbad, where he had an uneventful childhood, growing up as the son of a blacksmith and learning his father's craft as all boys did. Although he was blessed with strength and intelligence, the only truly unusual thing about the young Valten was a strange birthmark on his chest, shaped like the twin-tailed comet of Sigmar. This caused a great stir at his birth, for the comet is a powerful omen – but whether for good or ill depends on the whim of the gods. Many villagers felt that either way Valten would surely bring momentous events to Lachenbad, and that this was something it could well do without. They insisted that leaving the boy to die in the forest or drowning him in the stream was the only way to avoid disaster. Nevertheless, his parents declared that no one should lay a hand on the child, and Valten's father Kurt was respected and fearsome enough that none argued.

It soon became apparent that the young Valten was a gifted child. Even before he had uttered his first words many people commented that his eyes seemed to show a strange understanding of whatever they fell upon. He was bigger and stronger by far than other boys his age, able to best them in wrestling and other physical games with ease. At first people muttered that this remarkable strength was simply proof of the boy's abnormality and that he should have been strangled at birth, but Valten was a happy child with an infectious enthusiasm, and became so well-liked that thoughts of his portentous birth were soon forgotten.

It was on the eve of Valten's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, though, that the superstitious doomsaying of his birth was proved well-founded. From the depths of the Reikwald, the Beastmen came. Led by a powerful Beastlord named Rargarth, Lachenbad had not seen a horde even a tenth of the size in living memory. Bent on pillage and plunder, the Beastmen seemed unstoppable and the few men of Lachenbad that could wield weapons had no hope of standing against them.

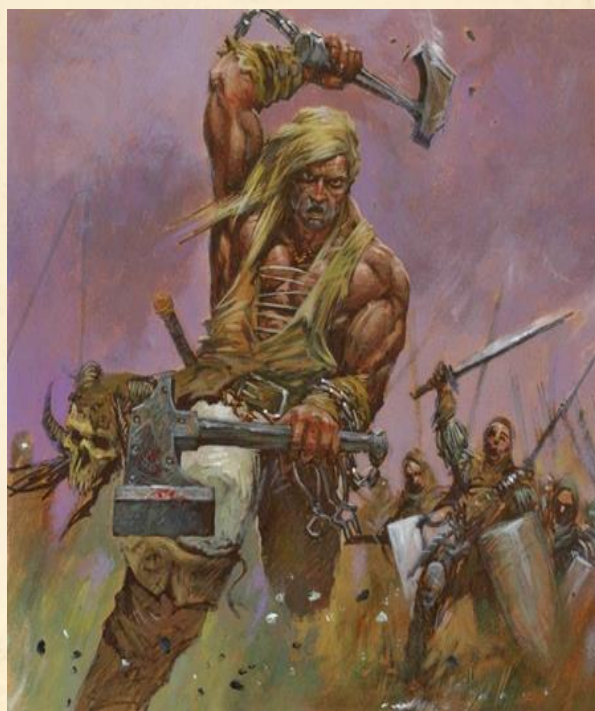
With primal howls and brays they descended on the village, and the terrified people scattered before them, fleeing for their lives. The Beastmen gave no quarter, and cut down anyone they found, man, woman or child, and gleefully hurled flaming torches onto the thatched roofs.

But Valten refused to run. He made his way to his father's smithy, and smashed aside the Beastmen who tried to bar his way with great blows from his fists. Taking up two hammers from the forge he set about the horde like a hurricane with cries of anger and vengeance. Beast after beast was crushed by Valten's hammers, and all who came near him died. The panicking villagers saw this, and were heartened by

this incredible display of bravery. They took up their swords, pitchforks and scythes, and ran to join the blacksmith's son. Following the boy, they cut through the warband until Valten stood before Rargarth himself.

Valten launched himself at the Beastlord. He swung a hammer in a massive arc but Rargarth raised his giant scimitar and parried the strike. Such was the force of the blow that the blade was broken in two, and the hammer torn from Valten's grasp. Unfazed, Rargarth snarled and struck out with the remnants of the weapon. Valten ducked back, fast but not fast enough; the rusted metal slashed across his chest, opening a horrible wound and sending him reeling. Rargarth gave a triumphant grin, exposing yellow and rotted fangs, and brought down the halfblade for the killing blow. But Valten raised his remaining hammer at the last second. There was an almighty clash as the blade slammed into the metal hammer, and the titanic strength of the Beastlord forced Valten to one knee. Incredibly his guard held.

Amazement appeared on Rargarth's bestial features as he strained against the wounded boy, but to no avail. Impossibly, Valten began to rise, shaking with effort as he pushed upwards against Rargarth's blade, until finally he was on his feet. Valten kicked out, sending the Beastlord stumbling backwards, and before the creature could recover, he hurled his remaining hammer with awesome force straight at the monster's head. It struck Rargarth between the eyes like a meteor, shattering his skull and killing him instantly.



With their leader dead, the Beastmen turned to panicked flight, and the exultant villagers chanted Valten's name. Though Lachenbad had been half-razed, it was saved from total destruction by the amazing prowess and courage of a single boy. The stories of Valten's deed spread like wildfire around the surrounding villages and towns, and before long all manner of parties were showing an interest in the boy who had become a hero.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Valten	4	6	5	4	4	2	5	4	9

**TROOP TYPE:** Infantry (Special Character).

**SPECIAL RULES:**

**Against The Odds:** *Valten's courage knows no limits, and even impossible odds do not faze him.*

Enemy units can never gain the combat resolution bonus points for attacking in the flank or rear in a combat involving Valten. In addition, Valten and any unit he leads have Immunity (Psychology) and are Stubborn.

**Awesome Presence:** *Valten is not a military officer. He does not give rousing speeches or offer rewards to fighters around him, nor does he yell orders or threats in battle. Instead, others are inspired by his awesome presence, and fight even harder as they see Valten strike down foe after foe.*

Wounds inflicted by Valten in close combat are counted towards the Empire combat resolution score of any combat within 12" of him, not just the one he is taking part in. Valten may never be the army's General.

**Iron Resolve:** *Valten has steel sinews and a will of iron, and is able to grit his teeth and fight on despite wounds that would kill lesser men ten times over.*

Valten has a Ward save (5+). If Valten is killed, take a Leadership test for him at the end of that phase. If he passes, his astounding strength of will allows him to ignore the wound and continue fighting. He remains alive on 1 Wound, and the wounds that killed him are discounted. The effects of combat resolution, are worked out after determining whether Valten recovers. This rule does not apply if he is fleeing and is run down by chargers or pursuers, or slain by a Killing Blow.



# HEIRLOOMS OF MAGIC

This section contains the rules and background for some of the most iconic and powerful magical artefacts used by the Empire. These may be used in addition to the magic items found in the Warhammer rulebook.

## RUNEFANG 70 points Magic Weapon, General of the Empire only

*At the dawn of the Empire, the Dwarf Runesmith Alaric the Mad forged a dozen magical swords for Sigmar's twelve chieftains as payment Sigmar's help in reclaiming the Dwarven stronghold of Zhufbar from marauding Orcs. Each was a masterpiece, requiring all the skill and ancient knowledge of runecraft to create. The Runefangs are thus blades of unsurpassed power, able to carve through gromril plate and Dragon scale. The Runefangs are traditionally held by the ten Elector Counts of the Empire as treasured heirlooms, passed down from father to son. They are amongst the oldest and most treasured artefacts still surviving in the Old World, and today the Runefangs are synonymous with the status, power and authority of the Elector Counts. Each Runefang is the symbol of office of a particular province and as such, each has its own name and history. When the time comes for a new Emperor to be elected the assembled, the Elector Counts vote by placing their Runefangs at the base of their advocate's personal banner. Of the twelve Runefangs, only ten are currently in the hands of Elector Counts, for the provinces of Solland and Drakwald no longer exist. The Solland Runefang is currently entrusted to the Reiksmarshal of the Empire. The final blade is kept in the Imperial Armoury in Altdorf and occasionally presented by the Emperor to a heroic General who is fighting in the service of the Empire.*

All hits from a Runefang wound automatically and Ignores Armour saves.



## THE MACE OF HELSTURM 50 points Magic Weapon

*The first Grand Theogonist, Johann Helsturm, used this doublehanded mace in battle. It is said that his faith in Sigmar was strong enough to shatter the walls of a castle, and that the mace retains a portion of that holy might to this day. When wielded by a warrior whose devotion is beyond reproach, the head of this weapon glows so brightly it bursts into flame. As the mace is swung overhead it leaves twin trails of fire in its wake, and when it smashes into its foes, it hits with the force of a meteor strike.*

Great weapon. Instead of attacking normally, the bearer can choose to forfeit all of his normal Attacks to make a single, special Attack. If this Attack hits, it is resolved at Strength 10 and has both the Flaming Attacks and Multiple Wounds (D3) special rules.

## THE ARMOUR OF METEORIC IRON 40 points Magic Armour

*This suit of armour, long ago forged by the Dwarf smiths of Zhufbar, is today held in the Imperial Armoury at Altdorf. Cunningly wrought from a rare star metal and stamped with protective runes, it is said that no mortal blade can pierce the Armour of Meteoric Iron. Sword strikes, arrows, and even cannonballs, have all rebounded harmlessly against the Armour of Meteoric Iron, the twin-tailed comet emblazoned on its breastplate not so much as scratched by the blows. Only the greatest heroes of the Empire may don it.*

The Armour of Meteoric Iron grants the wearer both a 1+ armour save and a Ward save (6+).

## HELM OF THE SKAVENSLAYER 15 points Magic Armour

*The legendary helm of Count Mandred Skavenslayer was crafted from the skull of the Skaven warlord who fell at the Battle of the Howling Hills. Even after Mandred's assassination at the hands of the foul ratmen several decades later, it is said that a portion of his vengeful spirit lived on within the macabre helm, filling those who gaze upon its gruesome visage with fear and dread. Such is its reputation amongst the vile rat-spawn that the mere sight of the Skavenslayer's Helm drives them to frenetic action as they battle their instinctive fear and loathing of the object in equal measure.*

The wearer of the Helm of the Skavenslayer gains a 6+ armour save and the Fear special rule. Against models from a Skaven army, the wearer causes Terror instead. However, all Skaven gain the Hatred special rule while attacking the wearer.

## SHROUD OF MAGNUS 60 points Talisman

*This ancient shroud was laid upon the body of Magnus the Pious after his death. On it one can still see the features of the Saviour of the Empire, his countenance as noble in death as it was in life. The presence of this revered relic among their ranks fills the soldiers with faith and strengthens their resolve. They will fight on even against the most dreadful of enemies.*

This item gives the bearer a Ward save (5+) and Magic Resistance (2). In addition, any unit joined by the character wearing the Shroud have Immunity (Fear, Terror).



## VAN HORSTMANN'S SPECULUM 35 points

### Enchanted Item

*Though the Empire's soldiers stand bravely against the dangerous monsters and dark champions that assail them each day, they are no match for these foes on their own. Prior to being corrupted by the Ruinous Powers and his uncovering as a Chaos worshipper, the Wizard Egrimm van Horstmann managed to craft a solution to this problem. The result was a small magical mirror hanged around the wearer's neck with the ability to switch the fighting qualities of the wearer with that of their enemy. Fearing the possibility of being corrupted by van Horstmann's influence, the Light College has since added a series of strong protective wards to the device to limit its power.*

When the wearer fights in a challenge, he must 'swap' the Weapon Skill, Strength, Toughness, Initiative and Attacks characteristics on his profile with his enemy (but not the enemy's mount, if he has one). So, the wearer fights with his enemy's Strength, Toughness, Initiative and Attacks whilst his enemy fights with the wearer's Strength, Toughness, Initiative and Attacks. Note that you cannot choose not to use Van Horstmann's Speculum and you must swap all of the listed characteristics for the duration of the challenge, not just some of them.

## ALDRED'S CASKET OF SORCERY 35 points

### Enchanted Item

*The casket has the power to entrap and contain the power of magic forever, as Aldred unwittingly discovered when he opened it in the presence of the Supreme Patriarch of the Colleges of Magic. Aldred was not seen thereafter.*

Bound Spell (power level variable). At the start of each of his Magic phases, the bearer may remove and capture one randomly determined spell from an enemy Wizard within 12" of him on a roll of 4+. The bearer can then cast the captured spell in any of his own Magic phases by releasing it from the casket just like from a Bound Spell, whereupon the spell is then removed from the game. Any number of spells may be captured by the casket, and the bearer can cast each one once, either over several magic phases or all at the same time if they prefer. The power level of the spell cast by the casket will be equivalent to the normal casting value of the spell.

## RING OF VOLANS 20 points

### Enchanted Item

*Volans, the founder of the Colleges of Magic, was one of the first men to learn magic from the High Elves and the greatest of the human pupils of Teclis. It was he who instructed the patriarchs of the colleges to commit their newfound knowledge into a single tome so that Teclis' teachings would never be lost. In all the Empire, it is the only source of arcane knowledge that does not distil the secrets of magic into one of its eight separate winds. However, the human mind is unable to master the full spectrum of sorcery, and every wizard who has*

*attempted to read from the tome has been driven out of his mind. A magical seal was thus placed upon the book to protect anyone else from a similar fate, a lock that only Volans' ring can open. This ring has ever since shared a mystical connection to the forbidden tome, and both resonate with raw magical power. The Ring of Volans is carved from a single emerald, capable of storing a spell and the magical energy to use it. A warrior who possesses the Ring of Volans is able, for a small time at least, to harness a tiny fraction of one of the eight Winds of Magic.*

One use only. Bound Spell (power level variable). At the beginning of the game, choose one of the eight Lores of Magic from the Warhammer rulebook and generate a spell from it as if the bearer were a Level 1 Wizard. That spell is bound within the Ring of Volans is automatically cast with a power level equal to the normal casting value of the spell, no power dice are required.

## THE IMPERIAL BANNER 85 points

### Magic Standard

*Woven upon Elven silks and embroidered with the commandments of Sigmar, the standard which carries the ruling Emperor's blazon fills nearby troops with a supreme sense of duty and pride. This banner shines with a soothing light that reaches into the hearts of warriors in despair, filling them with courage and renewing their will to fight on.*

All units within 12" of this banner roll 3D6 for their Leadership tests, and discards the highest dice.

## GRIFFON STANDARD 50 points

### Magic Standard

*Other than depictions of the mighty Warhammer of Sigmar, no symbol holds as high a place in the Empire's esteem as that of the Griffon. The Griffon Banner was the personal standard of Magnus the Pious, and ever since the Great War Against Chaos it has been a symbol of noble bravery, sacrifice and valour throughout the Empire. The men of Reikland have carried this standard in many a battle. The renowned Griffon Standard of the Empire rests in the Great Cathedral of Sigmar and brought forth in times of war. In the folktales of the Empire, the Griffon is a stalwart and stubborn beast that refuses to be bested in combat, no matter how outmatched it may be. In honour of this, a unit flying the Griffon Standard resolutely stands its ground, and it is said that no unit that ever carries it in good cause can be broken no matter how many fall. Subtle enchantments are woven into the banner, and when the soldiers of the Empire carry it into battle, they fight with the courage and determination of Magnus himself.*

A unit bearing the Griffon Banner doubles any combat result bonus granted for having extra ranks. However, the unit carrying the Griffon Banner cannot pursue a fleeing enemy and must hold their ground instead.





## THE EMPIRE ORDER OF BATTLE

*The armies of the Empire are professional, well-disciplined and led by some of the finest generals in history. Facing attack from every border, the soldiers of the Empire defend humanity against countless invaders. They form the bastion that keeps the Emperor's enemies from overrunning, the civilized realms of the Old World. As a commander of an Empire army, it is by your courage and leadership that the soldiers of the Empire will hold the line and face the horrors that assail them.*

*This section of the book helps you to turn your collection of Empire miniatures into an army of the Emperor's soldiers, ready for a tabletop battle. At the back of this section, you will also find a summary page, which lists every unit's characteristics profile, for quick and easy reference during your games or Warhammer.*

## USING THE ARMY LIST

The army list is used alongside the 'Choosing an Army' section of the Warhammer rulebook to pick a force ready for battle. Over the following pages you will find an entry for each of the models in your army. These entries give you all of the gaming information that you need to shape your collection of models into the units that will form your army. Amongst other things, they will tell you what your models are equipped with, what options are available to them, and their points costs.

## UNIT CATEGORIES

As described in the Warhammer rulebook, the units in the army list are organised into five categories: Lords, Heroes, Core Units, Special Units and Rare Units.

## ARMY LIST ENTRIES

Each army list entry contains all the information you need to choose and field that unit at a glance, using the following format:

HALBERDIERS										6 points per model
Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Halberdier	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	Infantry
Sergeant	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	7	Infantry

**Unit Size:** 10+

**Special Rules:**

- State Troops

**Equipment:**

- Polearm

**Options:**

- May upgrade one Halberdier to a Sergeant.....10 points
- May upgrade one Halberdier to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Halberdier to a standard bearer.....10 points
  - May have a magic standard worth up to.....25 points
- The entire unit may wear one of the following:
  - Light armour.....1 point per model
  - Medium armour.....2 points per model
- The entire unit may take shields.....1 point per model

- Name.** The name by which the unit or character is identified.
- Profiles.** The characteristic profiles for the model(s) in each unit are provided as a reminder. Where several profiles are required these are also given, even if they are optional (such as unit champions).

- Troop Type.** Each entry specifies the troop type of its models (e.g. 'infantry, monstrous cavalry' and so on).

- Points value.** Every miniature in the Warhammer range costs an amount of points that reflects how effective it is on the battlefield."

- Unit Size.** This specifies the minimum size for each unit, which is the smallest number of models needed to form that unit. In some cases units also have a maximum size, or can even comprise just a single model.

- Equipment.** This is a list of the standard weapons and armour for that unit. The cost of these items is included in the basic points value.

- Special Rules.** Many troops have special rules that are fully described earlier in this book or in the Warhammer rulebook. The names of these rules are listed here as a reminder.

- Options.** This is a list of optional weapons and armour; mounts, magic items and other upgrades for units or characters, including the points cost for each particular option. Many unit entries include the option to upgrade a unit member to a champion, standard bearer or musician. Some units may carry a magic standard or take magic items at a further points cost.



# LORDS

## KARL FRANZ

320 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Karl Franz	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	10	Infantry (Special Character)
Deathclaw	6	6	0	6	5	5	4	5	8	Monster

### Magic Items:

- Dragon's Tooth, the Reikland Runefang
- The Emperor's Armour
- The Silver Seal

### Special Rules (Karl Franz):

- Hold the Line
- Immunity (Psychology)
- Leader of Men

### Options:

- May swap Runefang for Ghal Maraz.....30 points
- May be mounted on one of the following:
  - Warhorse (with barding).....24 points
  - Imperial Pegasus.....30 points
  - Deathclaw.....210 points

### Special Rules (Deathclaw):

- Bloodroar
- Fly (8)

## KURT HELBORG

310 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Kurt Helborg	4	7	6	4	4	3	6	4	9	Cavalry (Special Character)
Krieglust	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-

### Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Barding

### Mount:

- Krieglust (Warhorse)

### Magic Items:

- Grudge Settler, the Solland Runefang
- Dawn Armour
- Rod of Command
- Laurels of Victory

### Special Rules:

- The Emperor's Chosen
- Immunity (Psychology)
- Master of Battle
- Stubborn

## VOLKMAR THE GRIM

175 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Volkmar the Grim	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	2	9	Infantry (Special Character)

### Equipment:

- Light armour

### Magic Items:

- Jade Griffon
- Staff of Command

### Special Rules:

- Battle Prayers
- Divine Power
- Grand Theogonist
- Righteous Fury

### Options:

- May be mounted on the War Altar of Sigmar.....150 points



"All men dream, but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity; but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men. Their dreams are dreams of hope, of improvement, of change. Amongst these arise the damnable followers of Chaos."

- From the Lectures of Grand Theogonist Volkmar

## BALTHASAR GELT

350 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Balthasar Gelt	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	1	8	Cavalry (Special Character)
Quicksilver	8	3	0	4	4	2	4	2	6	-

### Equipment:

- Hand weapon

### Magic Items:

- Staff of Volans
- Amulet of Sea Gold
- Cloak of Molten Metal

### Special Rules:

- Al-kahest
- Fly (9)
- Loremaster (Lore of Metal)

### Magic:

Balthasar Gelt is a Level 4 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Metal.

### Mount:

- Quicksilver (Imperial Pegasus)

# LORDS

## THYRUS GORMANN

370 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Thyrus Gormann	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	1	8	Cavalry (Special Character)
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-

### Equipment:

- Light armour
- Barding

### Mount:

- Warhorse

### Magic Items:

- The Bright Sword
- Firebrand Staff
- The Fire Stone of Agni
- The Blazing Ruby

### Special Rules:

- Fire Lord
- Loremaster (Lore of Fire)

### Magic:

Thyrus Gormann is a Level 4 Wizard who uses spells from the Lore of Fire.

## BORIS TODBRINGER

270 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Boris Todbringer	4	6	3	4	4	3	6	4	9	Cavalry (Special Character)
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-

### Equipment:

- Full plate armour
- Shield
- Barding

### Mount:

- Warhorse

### Magic Items:

- Legbiter, the Middenland Runefang
- The Talisman of Ulric

### Special Rules:

- Crush the Weak
- Hatred (Beastmen)
- Hold the Line!

## MARIUS LEITDORF

220 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Marius Leitdorf	4	7	5	4	4	3	6	4	9	Cavalry (Special Character)
Daisy	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-

### Equipment:

- Heavy armour
- Barding

### Mount:

- Daisy (Warhorse)

### Magic Items:

- Mothers Ruin, the Averland Runefang

### Special Rules:

- Hold the Line!
- The Mad Count

## ALDEBRAND LUDENHOF

205 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Aldebrand Ludenhof	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	9	Cavalry (Special Character)
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-

### Equipment:

- Full plate armour
- Barding

### Mount:

- Warhorse

### Magic Items:

- Goblin Bane, the Hochland Runefang

### Special Rules:

- Aldebrand's Hawk
- Hold the Line!

## VALMIR VON RAUKOV

220 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Valmir von Raukov	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	9	Cavalry (Special Character)
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-

### Equipment:

- Heavy armour
- Barding

### Mount:

- Warhorse

### Magic Items:

- Brain Wounder, the Ostland Runefang
- The Dragon Bow

### Special Rules:

- Hold the Line!

# LORDS

## MAGNUS THE PIOUS

275 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Magnus the Pious	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	10	Cavalry (Special Character)
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-

- Equipment:**
- Hand weapon
  - Barding
- Mount:**
- Warhorse
- Magic Items:**
- The Gilded Armour
- Special Rules:**
- Hold the Line!
  - Immunity (Psychology)
  - Leader of Men
  - Power of Sigmar
  - Righteous Fury

## GENERAL OF THE EMPIRE

100 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
General of the Empire	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	9	Infantry (Character)

- Equipment:**
- Hand weapon
  - Medium armour
- Special Rules:**
- Hold the Line!
- Options:**
- May be armed with one of the following:
    - Additional hand weapon.....3 points
    - Lance (mounted only).....8 points
    - Great weapon.....8 points
    - Polearm (on foot only).....8 points
  - May be armed with one of the following:
    - Pistol.....6 points
    - Bow.....5 points
    - Handgun.....5 points
  - May upgrade medium armour to one of the following:
    - Heavy armour.....3 points
    - Full plate armour.....6 points
  - May take a shield.....3 points
  - May be mounted on one of the following:
    - Warhorse.....18 points
      - May be upgraded to have barding.....6 points
    - Imperial Pegasus.....30 points
    - Imperial Griffon.....175 points
  - May take magic items up to a total of.....100 points



## WIZARD LORD

165 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Wizard Lord	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	1	8	Infantry (Character)

- Equipment:**
- Hand weapon
- Magic:**
- A Wizard Lord is a Level 3 Wizard who uses spells from one of the eight Battle Magic lores in the *Warhammer* rulebook.
- Options:**
- May be upgraded to Level 4 Wizard.....35 points
  - May be mounted on one of the following:
    - Warhorse.....18 points
      - May be upgraded to have barding.....6 points
    - Imperial Pegasus.....30 points
    - Imperial Griffon (Lore of Beasts Wizard only).....175 points
    - Arcane Battle Altar.....100 points
  - Must be upgraded to Celestial Hurriganum (Lore of Heavens Wizard only).....25 points
  - Must be upgraded to Luminark of Hysh (Lore of Light Wizard only).....20 points
  - May take magic items up to a total of.....100 points



# LORDS

## GRAND MASTER

145 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Grand Master	4	6	6	4	4	3	6	4	9	Cavalry (Character)
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-

*Note: You must include at least one unit of Knightly Orders if your army includes a Grand Master.*

### Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Full plate armour
- Barding

### Special Rules:

- Immunity (Psychology)
- Master of Battle

### Mount:

- Warhorse

### Options:

- May be armed with one of the following:

- Lance.....8 points
- Great weapon.....8 points

- May take a shield.....3 points
- May replace Warhorse with Demigryph\*.....35 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....100 points

*\*You must include at least one unit of Demigryph Knights in order to be mounted on a Demigryph.*

## 0-2 ARCH LECTOR

100 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Arch Lector	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	2	9	Infantry (Character)

### Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Medium armour

### Special Rules:

- Battle Prayers
- Divine Power
- Righteous Fury

### Options:

- May be armed with one of the following:

- Additional hand weapon.....3 points
- Great weapon.....4 points

- May upgrade medium armour to heavy armour.....3 points
- May take a shield.....3 points

- May be mounted on one of the following:

- Warhorse.....18 points
  - May be upgraded to have barding.....6 points
- The War Altar of Sigmar.....150 points

- May take magic items up to a total of.....100 points



## 0-1 WAR ALTAR OF SIGMAR

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
War Altar	7	-	-	5	5	5	-	-	-	Chariot (Armour save 5+)
Warhorse	-	3	0	3	-	-	3	1	5	-

### Drawn by:

- 2 Warhorses

### Magic Items:

- The Golden Griffon

### Special Rules:

- Holy Fervour
- Large Target (5)
- The Power of Sigmar
- Stubborn
- Ward save (4+)

### Options:

- The War Altar of Sigmar may be upgraded to have the Horn of Sigismund.....10 points



# HEROES

## LUDWIG SCHWARZHELM

170 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Ludwig Schwarzhelm	4	6	5	4	4	2	5	3	8	Cavalry (Special Character)
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-

- |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Equipment:</b>  | <b>Mount:</b>  | <b>Magic Items:</b>  | <b>Special Rules:</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full plate armour</li> <li>• Barding</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warhorse</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sword of Justice</li> <li>• The Emperor's Standard</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Emperor's Bodyguard</li> <li>• The Emperor's Herald</li> </ul> |



## MARKUS WULFHEART

100 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Markus Wulfhart	4	5	6	4	4	2	6	3	8	Infantry (Special Character)

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Equipment:</b>   | <b>Magic Items:</b>   | <b>Special Rules:</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand weapon</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Amber Bow</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hatred (Monsters)</li> <li>• Immunity (Psychology)</li> <li>• Monster Hunter</li> <li>• Scouts</li> <li>• Wulfhart's Hunters</li> </ul> |



## LUTHOR HUSS

155 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Luthor Huss	4	5	3	4	4	2	4	2	8	Cavalry (Special Character)
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Equipment:</b>   | <b>Mount:</b>  | <b>Special Rules:</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great weapon</li> <li>• Heavy armour</li> <li>• Barding</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warhorse</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Battle Prayers</li> <li>• Chosen of Sigmar</li> <li>• Divine Power</li> <li>• Fiery Demagogue</li> <li>• Righteous Fury</li> </ul> |



## VALTEN

260 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Valten	4	6	5	4	4	2	5	4	9	Infantry (Special Character)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Equipment:</b>  | <b>Special Rules:</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two hand weapons</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Against the Odds</li> <li>• Awesome Presence</li> <li>• Iron Resolve</li> </ul> |



# HEROES

## CAPTAIN OF THE EMPIRE

60 points

### Profile

Captain of the Empire

M WS BS S T W I A Ld  
4 5 5 4 4 2 5 3 8

### Troop Type

Infantry (Character)

### Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Medium armour

### Special Rules:

- Hold the Line!

### Options:

- May be armed with one of the following:
  - Additional hand weapon.....2 points
  - Lance (mounted only).....6 points
  - Great weapon.....6 points
  - Polearm (on foot only).....6 points
- May be armed with one of the following:
  - Pistol.....4 points
  - Bow.....5 points
  - Handgun.....5 points
- May upgrade medium armour to one of the following:
  - Heavy armour.....2 points
  - Full plate armour.....4 points
- May take a shield.....2 points
- May be mounted on one of the following:
  - Warhorse.....12 points
    - May be upgraded to have barding.....4 points
  - Imperial Pegasus.....20 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....50 points

### ARMY BATTLE STANDARD

One Captain in the army may carry the Battle Standard for +25 points. The Battle Standard Bearer can have a magic banner with no points limit. However, a model carrying a magic standard can only carry other magic items up to a total of 25 points.



## BATTLE WIZARD

65 points

### Profile

Battle Wizard

M WS BS S T W I A Ld  
4 3 3 3 3 2 3 1 7

### Troop Type

Infantry (Character)

### Equipment:

- Hand weapon

### Magic:

A Battle Wizard is a Level 1 Wizard who uses spells from one of the eight Battle Magic lores in the *Warhammer* rulebook.

### Options:

- May be upgraded to Level 2 Wizard.....35 points
- May be mounted on one of the following:
  - Warhorse.....12 points
    - May be upgraded to have barding.....4 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....50 points



## WARRIOR PRIEST

70 points

### Profile

Warrior Priest

M WS BS S T W I A Ld  
4 4 3 4 4 2 4 2 8

### Troop Type

Infantry (Character)

### Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Medium armour

### Special Rules:

- Battle Prayers
- Divine Power
- Righteous Fury

### Options:

- May be armed with one of the following:
  - Additional hand weapon.....2 points
  - Great weapon.....4 points
- May upgrade medium armour to heavy armour.....2 points
- May take a shield.....2 points
- May be mounted on a Warhorse.....12 points
  - May be upgraded to have barding.....4 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....50 points

# HEROES

## MASTER ENGINEER

45 points

### Profile

Master Engineer

M WS BS S T W I A Ld  
4 3 4 3 3 2 3 1 7

### Troop Type

Infantry (Character)

### Equipment:

- Hand weapon

### Special Rules:

- Master of Ballistics
- 'Stand Back, Sir!'

### Options:

- May be armed with one of the following:
  - Repeater pistol.....6 points
  - Repeater handgun.....6 points
  - Hochland Long Rifle.....15 points
  - Grenade launching blunderbuss.....6 points
- May take Pigeon bombs.....20 points
- May wear light armour.....2 points
- May be mounted on a Mechanical Steed.....20 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....50 points



## WITCH HUNTER

45 points

### Profile

Witch Hunter

M WS BS S T W I A Ld  
4 4 4 4 4 2 4 2 8

### Troop Type

Infantry (Character)

### Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Pistol

### Special Rules:

- Accusation
- Grim Resolve
- Magic Resistance (2)
- Tools of Judgement

### Options:

- May be armed with any of the following:
  - Great weapon.....4 points
  - Brace of pistols.....4 points
  - Crossbow.....3 points
- May wear light armour.....2 points
- May be mounted on a Warhorse.....12 points
- May take magic items up to a total of.....50 points



## CHARACTER MOUNTS

### Profile

Warhorse  
Mechanical Steed  
Imperial Pegasus  
Demigryph  
Imperial Griffon

M WS BS S T W I A Ld  
8 3 0 3 3 1 3 1 5  
7 1 0 4 4 1 1 1 -  
8 3 0 4 4 2 4 2 6  
8 4 0 5 4 3 4 3 7  
6 5 0 6 5 5 4 4 7

### Troop Type

War Beast  
War Beast  
War Beast  
Monstrous Beast  
Monster

### Special Rules

#### (Mechanical Steed):

- Impact Hits (D3)
- Natural Armour (6+)

### Special Rules

#### (Pegasus):

- Fly (9)

### Special Rules

#### (Griffon):

- Fly (8)

### Options:

- An Imperial Griffon may take any of the following:
  - Shrike Talons.....5 points
  - Razorbeak.....5 points
  - Bloodroar.....10 points
  - Two Heads.....15 points
- An Imperial Pegasus may take any of the following:
  - Iron-hard Hooves.....5 points
  - Swift as the Wind.....5 points

# CORE UNITS

## HALBERDIERS

5 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Halberdier	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	Infantry
Sergeant	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	7	Infantry

**Unit Size:** 10+

**Special Rules:**

**Options:**

**Equipment:**

- Polearm

- State Troops

- May upgrade one Halberdier to a Sergeant.....10 points
- May upgrade one Halberdier to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Halberdier to a standard bearer.....10 points
  - May have a magic standard worth up to.....25 points
- The entire unit may wear one of the following:
  - Light armour.....1 point per model
  - Medium armour.....2 points per model
- The entire unit may take shields.....1 point per model

## SPEARMEN

4 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Spearman	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	Infantry
Sergeant	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	7	Infantry

**Unit Size:** 10+

**Special Rules:**

**Options:**

**Equipment:**

- Spear

- State Troops

- May upgrade one Spearman to a Sergeant.....10 points
- May upgrade one Spearman to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Spearman to a standard bearer.....10 points
  - May have a magic standard worth up to.....25 points
- The entire unit may choose one of the following:
  - Replace spears with pikes.....1 point per model
  - Shields.....1 point per model
- The entire unit may wear light armour.....1 point per model



## SWARDSMEN

5 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Swordsman	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	1	7	Infantry
Duellist	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	2	7	Infantry

**Unit Size:** 10+

**Special Rules:**

**Options:**

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon
- Shield

- State Troops

- May upgrade one Swordsman to a Duellist.....10 points
- May upgrade one Swordsman to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Swordsman to a standard bearer.....10 points
  - May have a magic standard worth up to.....25 points
- The entire unit may wear light armour.....1 point per model

# CORE UNITS

## HANDGUNNERS

8 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Handgunner	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	Infantry
Marksman	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	Infantry

**Unit Size:** 10+

**Special Rules:**

**Options:**

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon
- Handgun

- State Troops

- May upgrade one Handgunner to a Marksman.....10 points
  - A Marksman may exchange his handgun for one of the following:
    - Brace of pistols.....free
    - Hochland long rifle.....15 points
    - Repeater handgun.....5 points
- May upgrade one Handgunner to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Handgunner to a standard bearer.....10 points
  - May have a magic standard worth up to.....25 points
- The entire unit may wear light armour.....½ point per model

## CROSSBOWMEN

8 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Crossbowman	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	Infantry
Marksman	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	Infantry

**Unit Size:** 10+

**Special Rules:**

**Options:**

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon
- Crossbow

- State Troops

- May upgrade one Crossbowman to a Marksman .....10 points
- May upgrade one Crossbowman to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Crossbowman to a standard bearer.....10 points
  - May have a magic standard worth up to.....25 points
- The entire unit may wear light armour.....½ point per model

## ARCHERS

6 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Archer	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	Infantry
Marksman	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	Infantry

**Unit Size:** 10+

**Special Rules:**

**Options:**

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon
- Bow

- State Troops

- May upgrade one Archer to a Marksman.....10 points
- May upgrade one Archer to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Archer to a standard bearer.....10 points
  - May have a magic standard worth up to.....25 points
- The entire unit may wear light armour.....½ point per model
- The entire unit may be upgraded to Skirmishers.....1 point per model

## FREE COMPANY MILITIA

3,5 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Militia Fighter	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	6	Infantry
Militia Leader	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	6	Infantry

**Unit Size:** 10+

**Special Rules:**

**Options:**

**Equipment:**

- Two hand weapons

- Militia

- May upgrade one Militia Fighter to a Militia Leader.....10 points
- May upgrade one Militia Fighter to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Militia Fighter to a standard bearer.....10 points
- The entire unit may swap one hand weapon for one of the following:
  - Pistols.....2 points per model
  - Bows.....2 points per model
  - Crossbows.....4 points per model
- The entire unit may wear light armour.....½ point per model
- The entire unit may be upgraded to Ambushers.....free

# CORE UNITS

## KNIGHTLY ORDERS

20 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Knight	4	4	3	3	3	1	3	1	8	Cavalry
Preceptor	4	4	3	3	3	1	3	2	8	Cavalry
Inner Circle Knight	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	1	8	Cavalry
Inner Circle Preceptor	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	2	8	Cavalry
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-

**Unit Size:** 5+

**Mount:**

- Warhorse

**Options:**

- May upgrade one Knight to a Preceptor.....10 points
  - May upgrade one Knight to a musician.....10 points
  - May upgrade one Knight to a standard bearer.....10 points
  - May have a magic standard worth up to.....50 points
  - The entire unit may be upgraded to Inner Circle Knights\*.....5 points per model
- \*Inner Circle Knights wear full plate armour and counts as Special Units.*

**Equipment:**

- Lance
- Heavy armour
- Shield
- Barding

## PISTOLIERS

19 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Pistolier	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	Cavalry
Outrider	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	Cavalry
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-

**Unit Size:** 5+

**Special Rules:**

- Fast Cavalry

**Options:**

- May upgrade one Pistolier to an Outrider.....10 points
- May exchange one pistol for one of the following:
  - Brace of pistols including a repeater pistol.....5 points
  - Repeater handgun.....5 points
- May upgrade one Pistolier to a musician.....10 points

**Equipment:**

- Brace of pistols
- Medium armour

**Mount:**

- Warhorse



# SPECIAL UNITS

## GREATSWORDS

8 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Greatsword	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	1	8	Infantry
Count's Champion	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	2	8	Infantry

**Unit Size:** 10+

**Special Rules:**

**Options:**

**Equipment:**

- Great weapon
- Light armour

- State Troops
- Stubborn

- May upgrade one Greatsword to a Count's Champion.....10 points
- May upgrade one Greatsword to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Greatsword to a standard bearer.....10 points
  - May have a magic standard worth up to.....50 points
- The entire unit may replace light armour with one of the following:
  - Medium armour.....1 point per model
  - Heavy armour.....3 points per model

## 0-1 REIKSGUARD KNIGHTS

27 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Reiksguard Knight	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	1	8	Cavalry
Reikscaptain	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	2	8	Cavalry
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-

*Note: If Karl Franz or Kurt Helborg is your Army General, the 0-1 Restriction is lifted.*

**Unit Size:** 5+

**Special Rules:**

**Options:**

**Equipment:**

- Lance
- Full plate armour
- Shield
- Barding

**Mount:**

- Warhorse

- May upgrade one Reiksguard Knight to a Reikscaptain.....10 points
- May upgrade one Reiksguard Knight to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Reiksguard Knight to a standard bearer.....10 points
  - May have a magic standard worth up to.....50 points

## 0-1 REIKSGUARD FOOT KNIGHTS

13 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Reiksguard Knight	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	1	8	Infantry
Reikscaptain	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	2	8	Infantry

*Note: If Karl Franz or Kurt Helborg is your Army General, the 0-1 Restriction is lifted.*

**Unit Size:** 10+

**Special Rules:**

**Options:**

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon
- Full plate armour
- Shield

- Stubborn

- May upgrade one Reiksguard Knight to a Reikscaptain.....10 points
- May upgrade one Reiksguard Knight to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Reiksguard Knight to a standard bearer.....10 points
  - May have a magic standard worth up to.....50 points

## HUNTSMEN

9 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Huntsman	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	Infantry
Tracker	4	3	5	3	3	1	3	1	7	Infantry

**Unit Size:** 5+

**Special Rules:**

**Options:**

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon
- Bow

- Skirmishers
- Scouts

- May upgrade one Huntsman to a Tracker.....10 points
- May upgrade one Huntsman to a musician.....10 points

# SPECIAL UNITS

## FLAGELLANTS

9 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Flagellant	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	5	Infantry
Prophet of Doom	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	2	5	Infantry

Unit Size: 10+

Special Rules:

Options:

Equipment:

- Flail

- The End is Nigh!
- Frenzy
- Unbreakable

- May upgrade one Flagellant to a Prophet of Doom.....10 points
- May upgrade one Flagellant to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Flagellant to a standard bearer.....10 points
- The entire unit may swap flails for two hand weapons.....free

## IMPERIAL DWARFS

7 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Dwarf Warrior	3	4	3	3	4	1	2	1	9	Infantry
Veteran	3	4	3	3	4	1	2	2	9	Infantry

Unit Size: 10+

Special Rules:

Options:

Equipment:

- Hand weapon
- Light armour

- Ancestral Grudge
- Relentless
- Resolute

- May upgrade one Dwarf Warrior to a Veteran.....10 points
- May upgrade one Dwarf Warrior to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Dwarf Warrior to a standard bearer.....10 points
- The entire unit may be armed with one of the following:
  - Spears.....1 point per model
  - Polearms.....2 points per model
  - Great weapons.....2 points per model
  - Crossbows.....5 points per model
  - Handguns.....5 points per model
- The entire unit may take shields.....1 point per model



## HALFLINGS

3 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Halfling	4	2	4	2	2	1	5	1	8	Infantry
Constable	4	2	4	2	2	1	5	2	8	Infantry

Unit Size: 10+

Special Rules:

Options:

Equipment:

- Hand weapon

- Short & Nimble

- May upgrade one Halfling to a Constable.....10 points
- May upgrade one Halfling to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Halfling to a standard bearer.....10 points
- The entire unit may be armed with one of the following:
  - Spears.....1/2 point per model
  - Shortbows.....3 points per model
- The entire unit may take shields.....1/2 point per model

## IMPERIAL OGRES

28 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Imperial Ogre	6	3	2	4	4	3	2	3	7	Monstrous Infantry
Brute	6	3	2	4	4	3	2	4	7	Monstrous Infantry

Unit Size: 3+

Special Rules:

Options:

Equipment:

- Two hand weapons

- Ogre Charge

- May upgrade one Ogre to a Brute.....10 points
- May upgrade one Ogre to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Ogre to a standard bearer.....10 points
- The entire unit may swap one hand weapon for one of the following:
  - Great weapons.....3 points per model
  - Polearms.....3 points per model
  - Ogre pistols.....3 points per model
- The entire unit may wear light armour.....3 points per model





# SPECIAL UNITS

## SISTERS OF SIGMAR

6 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Sister of Sigmar	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	Infantry
Sister Superior	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	7	Infantry

**Unit Size:** 5+

**Special Rules:**

**Options:**

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon

- Faith in Sigmar

- Hatred

- Immunity (Fear)

- May upgrade one Sister of Sigmar to a Sister Superior.....10 points
- The entire unit may be armed with bucklers.....½ point per model
- The entire unit may wear light armour.....1 point per model
- The entire unit may be upgraded to Skirmishers.....free

## OUTRIDERS

20 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Outrider	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	Cavalry
Sharpshooter	4	3	5	3	3	1	3	1	7	Cavalry
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-

**Unit Size:** 5+

**Special Rules:**

**Options:**

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon
- Repeater handgun
- Medium armour

**Mount:**

- Warhorse

- May upgrade one Outrider to a Sharpshooter.....10 points
- A Sharpshooter may exchange his repeater handgun for one of the following:
  - Brace of pistols including a repeater pistol.....free
  - Grenade launching blunderbuss.....5 points
  - Hochland long rifle.....5 points
- May upgrade one Outrider to a musician.....10 points
- The entire unit may take barding.....1 point per model



## GREAT CANNON

100 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Great Cannon	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	War Machine (Great Cannon)
Crew	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	-

**Unit Size:** 1 Great Cannon & 3 Crew

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon

**Options:**

- May take an additional Crew.....6 points

## MORTAR

100 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Mortar	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	War Machine (Stone Thrower)
Crew	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	-

**Unit Size:** 1

Mortar & 3 Crew

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon

**Special Rules:**

- Mortar Shells

**Options:**

- May take an additional Crew.....6 points

# RARE UNITS

## DEMIGRYPH KNIGHTS

60 points per model

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Inner Circle Knight	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	1	8	Monstrous Cavalry
Inner Circle Preceptor	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	2	8	Monstrous Cavalry
Demigryph	8	4	0	5	4	3	4	3	7	-

**Unit Size:** 3+

**Mount:**

- Demigryph

**Options:**

- May upgrade one Inner Circle Knight to an Inner Circle Preceptor...10 points
- May upgrade one Inner Circle Knight to a musician.....10 points
- May upgrade one Inner Circle Knight to a standard bearer.....10 points
- May have a magic standard worth up to.....50 points
- The entire unit may swap their lances for polearms.....free

**Equipment:**

- Lance
- Full plate armour
- Shield
- Barding

## HELBLASTER VOLLEY GUN

100 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Helblaster	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	War Machine
Crew	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	-

**Unit Size:** 1 Helblaster  
Volley Gun & 3 Crew

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon

**Special Rules:**

- Volley Gun

**Options:**

- May take an additional Crew.....6 points



## HELSTORM ROCKET BATTERY

100 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Helstorm	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	War Machine (Stone Thrower)
Crew	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	-

**Unit Size:** 1 Helstorm  
Rocket Battery & 3 Crew

**Equipment:**

- Hand weapon

**Special Rules:**

- Helstorm Rockets

**Options:**

- May take an additional Crew.....6 points

## WAR WAGON

120 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
War Wagon	7	-	-	5	5	5	-	-	-	Chariot (Armour save 4+)
Crew	-	3	3	3	-	-	3	1	7	-
Warhorse	-	3	0	3	-	-	3	1	5	-

**Unit Size:** 1

**Equipment:**

- Repeater Handgun
- Hochland Long Rifle
- Blunderbuss
- Man Catcher
- Hook halberd
- Ball and chain
- Light armour
- Barding

**Special Rules:**

- Large Target (5)
- Mixed Weaponry

**Crew:** 6 Crew

**Drawn by:** 2 Warhorses

# RARE UNITS

## 0-8 STEAM TANK

250 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Steam Tank	*	-	-	6	6	10	-	-	-	Chariot (Armour save 1+)
Engineer Commander	-	3	3	3	-	-	3	1	7	-

**Unit Size:** 1  
**Crew:** 1  
Engineer  
Commander

**Equipment (Engineer Commander):**

- Hand weapon
- Repeater Pistol

**Equipment (Steam Tank):**

- Steam Gun
- Steam Cannon
- Steam Engine

**Special Rules:**

- Animated Construct
- Large Target (4)
- \*Random Movement (variable)
- Steam Points
- Steel Behemoth
- Terror

**Options:**

- The Engineer Commander may take a Hochland Long Rifle.....15 points



## ARCANE BATTLE ALTAR

100 points

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Troop Type
Arcane Battle Altar	7	-	-	5	5	5	-	-	-	Chariot (Armour save 5+)
Acolyte	-	3	3	3	-	-	3	1	7	-
Warhorse	-	3	0	3	-	-	3	1	5	-

**Unit Size:** 1

**Special Rules:**

- Aura of Protection (Luminark only)
- Large Target (5)
- Locus of Power
- Portents of Battle (Hurriganum only)
- Solheim's Bolt of Illumination (Luminark only)
- Storm of Shemtek (Hurriganum only)

**Crew:**  
2 Acolytes

**Drawn by:**  
2 Warhorses

**Note:**

- Must be upgraded to one of the following:
  - Luminark of Hysh.....20 points
  - Celestial Hurriganum.....30 points



# SUMMARY

LORDS	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Type
Aldebrand Ludenhof	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	9	Ca
- Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-
Arch Lector	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	2	9	In
Balthasar Gelt	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	1	8	Ca
- Quicksilver	8	3	0	4	4	2	4	2	6	-
Boris Todbringer	4	6	3	4	4	3	6	4	9	Ca
- Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-
General of the Empire	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	9	In
Grand Master	4	6	6	4	4	3	6	4	9	Ca
- Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-
Karl Franz	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	10	In
- Deathclaw	6	6	0	6	5	5	4	5	8	Mo
Kurt Helborg	4	7	6	4	4	3	6	4	9	Ca
- Krieglust	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-
Magnus the Pious	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	10	Ca
- Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-
Marius Leitdorf	4	7	5	4	4	3	6	4	9	Ca
- Daisy	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-
Thyrus Gormann	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	1	8	Ca
- Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-
Valmir von Raukov	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	4	9	Ca
- Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-
Volkmar the Grim	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	2	9	In
Wizard Lord	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	1	8	In

HEROES	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Type
Battle Wizard	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	7	In
Captain of the Empire	4	5	5	4	4	2	5	3	8	In
Ludwig Schwarzhelm	4	6	5	4	4	2	5	3	8	Ca
- Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-
Luthor Huss	4	5	3	4	4	2	4	2	8	Ca
- Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-
Markus Wulfhart	4	5	6	4	4	2	6	3	8	In
Master Engineer	4	3	4	3	3	2	3	1	7	In
Valten	4	6	5	4	4	2	5	4	9	In
Warrior Priest	4	4	3	4	4	2	4	2	8	In
Witch Hunter	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	8	In

CORE UNITS	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Type
Archer	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	In
- Marksman	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	In
Crossbowman	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	In
- Marksman	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	In
Halberdier	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	In
- Sergeant	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	7	In
Handgunner	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	In
- Marksman	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	In
Knight	4	4	3	3	3	1	3	1	8	Ca
- Preceptor	4	4	3	3	3	1	3	2	8	Ca
- Inner Circle Knight	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	1	8	Ca
- Inner Circle Preceptor	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	2	8	Ca
- Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-
Militia Fighter	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	6	In
- Militia Leader	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	6	In
Pistolier	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	Ca
- Outrider	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	Ca
- Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-
Spearman	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	In
- Sergeant	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	7	In
Swordsman	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	1	7	In
- Duellist	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	2	7	In

SPECIAL UNITS	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Type
Dwarf Warrior	3	4	3	3	4	1	2	1	9	In
- Veteran	3	4	3	3	4	1	2	2	9	In
Flagellant	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	5	In
- Prophet of Doom	4	2	2	3	3	1	3	2	5	In
Great Cannon	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	WM
- Crew	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	-
Greatsword	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	1	8	In
- Count's Champion	4	4	3	3	3	1	4	2	8	In
Halfling	4	2	4	2	2	1	5	1	8	In
- Constable	4	2	4	2	2	1	5	2	8	In
Huntsman	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	In
- Tracker	4	3	5	3	3	1	3	1	7	In
Mortar	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	WM
- Crew	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	-
Ogre	6	3	2	4	4	3	2	3	7	MI
- Brute	6	3	2	4	4	3	2	4	7	MI
Outrider	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	Ca
- Sharpshooter	4	3	5	3	3	1	3	1	7	Ca
- Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-
Reiksguard Foot Knight	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	1	8	In
- Reikscaptain	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	2	8	In
Reiksguard Knight	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	1	8	Ca
- Reikscaptain	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	2	8	Ca
- Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	-
Sister of Sigmar	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	In
- Sister Superior	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	7	In

RARE UNITS	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Type
Arcane Battle Altar	7	-	-	5	5	5	-	-	-	Ch
- Acolyte	-	3	3	3	-	-	3	1	7	-
- Warhorse	-	3	0	3	-	-	3	1	5	-
Demigryph Knight	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	1	8	MC
- Inner Circle Preceptor	4	4	3	4	3	1	4	2	8	MC
- Demigryph	8	4	0	5	4	3	4	3	7	-
Helblaster Volley Gun	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	WM
- Crew	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	-
Helstorm Rocket Battery	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	WM
- Crew	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	-
Steam Tank	-	-	-	6	6	10	-	-	-	Ch
- Engineer Commander	-	3	3	3	-	-	3	1	7	-
War Wagon	7	-	-	5	5	5	-	-	-	Ch
- Crew	-	3	3	3	-	-	3	1	7	-
- Warhorse	-	3	0	3	-	-	3	1	5	-

MOUNTS	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Type
Demigryph	8	4	0	5	4	3	4	3	7	MB
Imperial Griffon	6	5	0	6	5	5	4	4	7	Mo
Imperial Pegasus	8	3	0	4	4	2	4	2	6	WB
Mechanical Steed	7	1	0	4	4	1	1	1	-	WB
War Altar of Sigmar	7	-	-	5	5	5	-	-	-	Ch
Warhorse	8	3	0	3	3	1	3	1	5	WB

**Troop Type Key:** In = *Infantry*, WB = *War Beast*, Ca = *Cavalry*, MI = *Monstrous Infantry*, MB = *Monstrous Beast*, MC = *Monstrous Cavalry*, Mo = *Monster*, Ch = *Chariot*, Sw = *Swarms*, Un = *Unique*, WM = *War Machine*.











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