

Raven's Herald

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Courage and Honor

April, 597

Sessuar Advance

The Ducal forces of Ravenholt clashed again last week with the Northern Army of the Sessuar Imperium with heavy losses inflicted on both sides. The invading army, led by the general known as 'The Red Hand,' for his distinctive sword hand glove, succeeded in driving back the defending forces of the Duchy, opening the way for the enemy to quickly take the upper lands of the Barony of Eastwyck. The defenders succeeded in delaying the ad-

vance long enough to fully evacuate the remaining citizens from Giant's View and Elveswood.

On the morning of March the 8th, the Northern Army stormed from their positions outside the burning town of Goblin Tooth Gap, attempting to cut off the defending forces stationed near Giant's View that were still reeling from their latest losses there. With little pause, the Red Hand, attempting to position his army

across the frontier, presumably to stretch Sessuar control to the long abandoned Mystic Wood, effectively trapped a full third of Baron Alan Moonwind's forces from supplies and reinforcements. Still outnumbered, Baron Moonwind gave the orders to evacuate the towns of Giant's View and Elveswood by nightfall. The long line of refugees that slowly plodded south towards uncertain safety in the Capital City were sure that they would not see their

homes again.

On the morning of March the 9th, the Imperium and Ducal forces engaged as the last of the citizens of Giant's View were rushed from the conflict area. Those that stayed behind took up sword, rake or club in hopes of bolstering Baron Moonwind's beleaguered forces. The Imperium again assaulted straight for the Permanent Earth Circle of the defenders, as has now become

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Lioncourt Lost

Since the start of the war, I have been prevailed upon from time to time, to correspond for the Raven's Herald, relaying news of the front combat lines from which we fight. The war is not a glorious thing to write about. There are no true winners in a war, someone once told me, only survivors. The war we currently wage with the forces of the Sessuar Imperium is one for our very survival.

Writing about the actual battles we have faced is difficult: To convey the true horror that the men and women of the Duchy go through during an engagement is typically too overwhelming to describe in words. What I can write about are the deeds of those in charge, the overall display of where we fought, and what

gains and losses we have endured. It is a such a loss about which I write.

Typically, I try not to show you, the readers, the emotions from the battlefields that I as a writer go through upon preparing another report to The Herald's editor. It is difficult enough to fight alongside someone who is defending the very soil he or she had tilled only last fall. You get to know them, depend upon those you fight closest with, as the hated enemy sometimes returns five or six times after you have seen their body dissipate before you during battle. Sometimes the body that dissipates is that of your right hand partner in battle. Another of my sad duties is also to inform the Herald of those who will no longer

be able to help to defend our Duchy. To report the dead. Some are those I have never seen and some are those that I call family...

I am a member of Lioncourt.

Baron Moonwind would not allow us pause to celebrate. We had just crushed the enemy that had tried to create a barrier between our forces and the remaining free Duchy. The Black Robed Mages had again been backlashed before completion of their own resurrection circles and their guarding troops we had killed to a man. The enemy had been purged from this stretch of land we call "Home." Reversing our course, Baron Moonwind urged us forward to relieve those we had left behind in Elveswood to bait the enemy

by Koryon Greymeir
while we had sprung this trap. Borax Battlehammer, my partner, expressed a feeling of deep concern for his kin as we hurried back towards the bulk of the Sessuar Northern Army. Several families appeared on the road before us, fathers clutching their children close, mothers weeping beside them. The last family, flanked by two of our scouts, came stumbling up the small hill towards our position, the man pleading for healing and help. Borax rushed to the infant that the father was carrying and provided the child with the last of his life-giving spells. The family was overjoyed upon reaching the safety of our forces and thanked Borax profusely before pausing to tell the rest of their tale.

Lioncourt (Cont'd on Page 2)

Lioncourt (Cont'd from Page 1)

Ahead of us lay the entire Sessuar Northern Army. They had sacked Elveswood and set it to fire after destroying the Earth Circle within. The enemy had not paused, however, for this family to escape the sword and the flames. Lioncourt had thrown themselves against the onslaught so that this small family and others, before, could escape. As it was reported to me, Tempus Lioncourt, the leader of this commoner's team, who had taken up the mantle of leadership from the surviving members of the commoner's groups Stormwatch and Anvil, calmly dismounted from his great warhorse, called his group together and proclaimed that they had to get this family out. Taking Tempus' horse, the family fled before the approaching army as Lioncourt guarded their retreat. The warhorse had finally given out a mile from our position, almost killing the small child that it had labored to carry to safety.

Baron Moonwind rallied our forces and with a renewed strength of purpose we rushed forward in an attempt to save our valiant friends and defenders. We could see before us the smoke rising from the burning town. The quiet trees of the Mystic wood to our left seemed to urge us on faster. We held our breaths as we came to the last rise before the town and looking down across the fields yet planted, beheld the sight of the encircled defenders, the colors of Black and Red flying in the face of the enemy. They were surrounded it seemed, by the entirety of the Northern Army, bent on the sole destruction of those that had allowed a small family to escape the burning conflagration of their homes. With a roar we engaged the enemy closest to us, yet we could not make them yield. As we strove to drive back the enemy, to stand next to our friends that savagely fought off the invading horde, I saw Bishop pause from his merciless hammering of his enemies and look towards our assault. The blood streamed down his face and I could see a smile upon his face, we were that close, for he knew that those they were

fighting for had been saved. At his side were Drano and Ajax, deflecting blows from the enemy as they tried to crash in upon them. Chastity stood aside my friend Dehlar, both appeared gravely wounded as they struggled to continue the fight. The half-ogre Skirge with his father's sword, cleaved all who rushed against him. Garth and Brendel laboriously supported their flanks. Tempus, Purdue, and Johan of Ribe unleashing celestial terror before them. Another rush of the enemy and the flag of Lioncourt was pulled down from the field. Borax gave a cry, for he could not see his kin Drano amongst the collapsed defenders. Baron Moonwind shouted for a further push towards their last stand. The enemy turned and pushed back. From the hill, our archers let loose several deadly volleys in attempts to clear a path to our downed friends, and Borax unleashed the last of his binding magics, but the wave would not break, and the onslaught began forcing us back. Baron Moonwind pulled our forces back: We had lost our race to save our friends, we dare not lose ourselves in our attempts at vengeance.

For reasons unknown to us, the enemy did not pursue that evening. We marched wearily from the battle, heading south towards the mists of Shandlin's Ferry. We were to camp there and await the return of those lost on the field this day. The closest resurrection point was now at Goblinsbane. Word arrived just before midnight. Lioncourt was lost. Of those that had bravely stood their ground only Brendel had resurrected. He sent word to Borax and I that he was going to remain there to see to our friends. Baron Moonwind came and offered his condolences. The Baron then informed the rest of his troops of the sad news, I barely heard the words he spoke, my tears continuing to fall to the ground. The war would continue, but not for my friends. They had fought and lost their lives as all before and after them will, defending our homes and our children. Good-bye my friends, Ravenholt shall miss your courage...

Killed in the Line of Duty During the Battle of Elveswood

Gilles Alek	Garth	Nacippe Marjery
Lallie Aleshandra	Margalo Gavino	Theodric Melaneigh
Stephon Atanaz	Gelar Gerhard	Sondra Melletta
Mahrayan Athen	Charissa Glenys	Alyson Nickless
Angelah Basel	Dehlar Greymist	Anacleto Oloros
Ajax Battlehammer	Robert Handsbreadth	Sylwan Pilloma
Drano Battlehammer	Calvin Ivansson	Purdue
Bishop	Johann of Ribe	Randall Quiversbow
Nicolai Blanche	Izidore Kalea	Sebastian
Kishan Dimitri	Taliah Kayte	Skirge
Conleth Doireann	Marcelle Lacea	Melie Thadarr
Carter Evenblade	Tempus Lioncourt	Wiktor Theadora
Seamus Felicienne	Svanhildur Lucjan	River Underwood
Adran Farseeker	Mehmed Mai	Chastity Valderguard

Announcing a Fund for the Newly Founded
Ajax and Drano Battlehammer
Memorial Academy

"Teach the Spirit and the Intent. All else shall
follow."

In Memory of My Beloved Brothers
Who Lived and Died by My Side

Seeking New Teachers and Students

Donations of Coin and Supplies Welcome

Send contributions care of Borax Battlehammer, Ravenholt

Gurn Advances Blocked

The Southern Army of the Sessuar Imperium was held in check early this month by Ducal forces scrambling to contain the growing invasion. With hastily prepared defenses outside the town of Gurn in the Barony of Westmarch, defending forces comprised of remaining troops of the shattered Skyguard Regiment and withdrawn Capulan militia forces, augmented by the bulk of the Baronial forces of Westmarch, succeeded in bloodying the juggernaut of the Southern Sessuar army. The engagement lasted for over 48 hours before the opposing Imperium General disengaged his troops, possibly to evaluate the defensive

(Cont'd on p4)

Advance (Cont'd from Page 1)

their standard method of attack. The Ducal army gave little ground as several waves of soldiers crashed against the fortified line only to be sent back to their point of resurrection. As the Red Hand prepared his second assault, Baron Moonwind unleashed a savage counter-assault against their unprepared positions as the dreaded Black Robes attempted to raise new Earth Circles for a closer resurrection base. The Commoner's group known as Lioncourt, spearheading the attack, successfully disrupted two formal magic rituals being performed. The backlash sent all of the mages involved, hopefully, to their permanent deaths. The explosion of magic was followed by an even louder cheer from the Ravenholt defenders from their positions as the counter-assault was soon blunted and pushed back.

Seemingly angered by the sudden loss of his magic support, the Red Hand led the next assault upon the ducal lines, the rage and determination clear upon his face. Baron Moonwind and his court threw themselves against the general's phalanx that had suddenly breached the defending positions. Too late did the defenders realize that a second assault had also been launched to the south of their positions in an attempt to encircle the protectors. Baron Moonwind ordered a general retreat to protect his troops from being surrounded. Night fell as the invaders pressed their gains, forcing the defenders from another key point of defense. The Permanent Earth Circle of Giant's View was destroyed shortly before midnight. The war cries from the enemy echoed across to Baron Moonwind's forces as they fell back to their last defensive point of the north.

The following morning, the Imperium army set out again to repeat their feats of the previous day. Baron Moonwind's scouts noted a larger than previously seen detachment from the enemy proceed south again and the Baron correctly assumed that this force was meant to strike at the same time as the main assault. Not wishing to be cut off from the rest of the Duchy, Baron Moonwind ordered a flanking maneuver from his forces, leaving the screening force composed of a light unit and members of Lioncourt to ensure that the enemy's scouts continued to

believe that the Ravenholt forces had proceeded back to the town of Elveswood. The Ducal army succeeded in overtaking the southern routing forces, surprising them once again as they attempted to erect resurrection circles. The Black Mages were dealt a second defeat within as many days. The remaining enemy troops were quickly annihilated, having been caught in the open plains outside the Mystic Wood.

With little time to celebrate, Baron Moonwind reversed the ducal army, attempting to relieve the defenders in Elveswood. It was a race against time to see which forces would engage or support the woefully outnumbered troops stationed there. Unfortunately luck was not on the Baron's side this time. The Red Hand's scouts must have seen the maneuvers of the main forces or word was sent from the enemy's resurrection circles of the defeat to the south. With little to stand against him, the Red Hand ordered his forces to take Elveswood and level the town. With several families still attempting to flee the sudden combat zone, the members of Lioncourt bravely stood their ground against overwhelming odds attempting to buy time for the fleeing noncombatants and hoping against hope that help would arrive. Fighting a running battle, leaving the burning town behind and effectively closing a northern pincer about the Duchy, Lioncourt succeeded in getting the refugees out of harm's way as the Sessuar Army closed around them. Baron Moonwind's army arrived too late on the scene to prevent their deaths as they savagely defended their position. The ground about them was littered with many shattered swords, shields and armor as it appeared they gave far more deaths than they took.

Word arrived to Baron Moonwind that evening as the Ducal forces marched to renew their defenses just North of Shandlin's Ferry, that many of the members of Lioncourt did not successfully resurrect. Saddened by the loss of such spirited warriors, Baron Moonwind gave a small speech about their spirit of sacrifice in the defense of the Duchy. The Baron then retired his army for the evening and sent word to His Grace of the battles.

While news of the losses of the Northern Frontier in Eastwyck and of Lioncourt are saddening and tragic, the Ducal army succeeded in evacuating the last remaining citizens in the area and bloodying the nose of the Northern Army of the Sessuar Imperium. Ducal scouts reported seeing fewer of the Black Robed Mages within their ranks in the days following those battles. Baron Moonwind cautiously reported that this may change their aggressive assault tactics if the enemy is soon unable to erect resurrection points close to the areas of battle. It was also reported that the invaders seem satisfied with their advances and have once again set up full camp to reorganize before continuing the war. As both sides lick their wounds in the Northern campaign, it is hoped that a turning point soon presents itself for our side.

Undead Numbers Decreased

The defenders of Ravenholt have exhaled a collective sigh of relief this winter as Undead movement, usually heavy over the winter, has slowed considerably. Garren Sillanian, a member of the Ravenholt Town Guard, was overheard to say that, "It's like they all just packed up and left. You'd think with the war and all, there'd be more of 'em. Every so often you'll see a little zombie or somethin' skitter across the field, but they'll walk right past you like you weren't even there -- like they're on a mission or something."

Attempts to locate the destination of such undead have as of yet been unsuccessful, and the reason for the lack of Undead numbers has been much speculated about, but as of yet remains undiscovered.

On Harmonic Magic by Amadeus Baljar

I think maybe there is much confusion on how the Harmony works, so I try to tell people what to expect, eh? Some of the gaje, they been calling the spellsingers someting like a harmonicasts. That's pretty clumsy, eh? Spellsinger is good.

The Harmony magic works two ways, for the hearth and traveling. For the hearth is harder to cast, but more powerful. For the hearth magic you gotta be in a room and the spellsinger gotta pace the bounds of that room and do that again if they goes out an comes back, unless they uses a spell to make the pacing stick. For the extra trouble of the room, the Harmony is stronger and can make more than one casting at a time, so makes many healings or protectives, or whatever.

Whatever else, the spellsinger gotta have a tuner, sorta like a spellbook, and before casting the spellsinger gotta say something to call the magic and what way is casting. Each spellsinger must say something different and personal and must sing their own songs. There's no way for spellsingers to help each other. To start, I say, "May Harmony dwell in this room" for the hearth magic and "May Harmony dwell in me" for the traveling magic.

All people what gets a spell effect gotta be close when is cast, because Harmony is just like touch casting of the other magics. The spellsinger says who gonna get what, then gotta sing the song. The song gotta be pretty good poetry and music, or the Harmony don't work. If the spellsinger play the tune of the song on an instrument before the song, or play pretty along with the song, gets one more casting. The song gotta be about one second per level, plus the name of the spell, and it takes effect when sing the spell name at the end.

That's about it. Oh, and there's a way to put the magic in a crystal, sorta like putting the star magic in a scroll. That's how you can cast somebody else's song.

Skyguard Concludes Clockwork Investigation

Several months ago, a clockwork repair station guarded by Skyguard Regiment III had exploded without warning. The clockwork Lucien was thought to have been inside, undergoing repairs. Skyguard has been investigating the incident. Sergeant Krue reports, "We have excavated a good portion of the building. Most of it was turned to rubble. Some may have been aware that there was an access tunnel beneath the building. We uncovered two charred skeletons in the wreckage, which I can only assume were Blood Alliance assassins who tripped a powerful door trap trying to get into the building through that access tunnel. Lucien was nowhere to be found; however, we have found no wreckage that seems to be from his body. Further investigation of the access tunnel has resulting in cave-ins a mile or so down the corridor. These cave-ins seem to have been done with heavy tools. I assume that the clockworks themselves with to prevent the Blood Alliance from using their tunnels."

Skyguard Regiment III is scheduled for heavy border patrolling now that their investigation is concluded.

Gurn (Cont'd from Page 3)

positions.

Captain Maximillian Greystone, recently promoted for his valor in rescuing over two hundred trapped citizens of Capulus and destroying Sessuar supply caravans, led small counter-assaults against Sessuar lines, keeping the invaders off balance. Greystone repeatedly rallied his troops as the battle threatened to overwhelm and break the defenders.

The battle was not without cost though, as several brave warriors fell throughout the engagement and failed to successfully resurrect. Among these honored heroes were Bedlam and Feral of Westmarch, Vallinger Stormcrow of Capulus, and Major Janus Gevinor of the former Third Skyguard. His Grace has requested they be buried with honors when time permits. Scouts estimate enemy casualties at above three hundred. Scouts also brought news of additional enemy reinforcements, now thought to be above one thousand strong. Several large caravans were reported to be moving towards the front lines, one possibly containing a battalion of the dreaded Black Robed Mages. Goodwin and Keswick Crossing are being evacuated to Eastwyck or towards the Capitol City in anticipation of further Sessuar breakthrough attempts. His Grace has further ordered the closing and sealing of all remaining mines throughout the Duchy to prevent their use by the enemy in the event of capture. All unused steel is to be gathered by local officials and forwarded to weapons-making points throughout the Duchy to assist in the war efforts. Those farms closest to conflict areas are urged to gather any usable foods before evacuating.