

Raven's Herald

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Courage Before Adversity

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Sessuar Advance Again in Westmarch

The Southern Army of the Sessuar Imperium, recently resupplied, again placed the defending armies of Ravenholt into retreat as their superior numbers overwhelmed the defenses at Gurn in the Barony of Westmarch. Facing certain encirclement and annihilation, Duke Alaric Malinruin ordered the abandonment of the defenses prepared there after ensuring that all citizens had been safely evacuated from the surrounding areas. His Grace had

traveled from the capital City to personally assess the southern war front and was on hand to personally witness the Imperium Army march forth from Grey Hills to give battle to the Ducal forces dug in there. By all reported accounts, the opposing army was estimated to be again at full strength at over seven thousand, outnumbering the defenders by over five to one.

The engagement was begun on the morning of May the 8th,

a mere two hours after His Grace had arrived at Gurn. The invading Army was sighted by Ducal scouts moving in force towards Gurn after a week of apparent resupply and reinforcement. At the head of their advance was well over two hundred Black Robed Mages, a visible show of strength by the enemy, as they marched towards the defenders. His Grace ordered Major Maximillion Greystone to lead a small detachment in attempts

to outflank the enemy advance when the size of the advancing army became known. Their war banners brazenly included the colors of the held territory of Capulus, enflaming many surviving members of the Barony's militia. After raising His personal colors upon the battle field against the vehement wishes of his advisors, His Grace prepared to weather the oncoming onslaught. He did not have to wait

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Mystic Wood Burns

A time of great sadness has befallen our beloved Duchy. Barely a year ago, many of our friends disappeared following the great magical explosion. There has always been hope that someday, the Mystic Wood Elves would return to our fair lands, now engulfed in war. The war had made us all kind of forget that an entire race of people had suddenly vanished without a trace. Many of us had tried, some in vain, to find our lost brethren. The one symbol, the one hope, the Mystic Wood from which the people's name originates, al-

ways stood silently by, awaiting it's long lost children. Seemingly abandoned, the wood watched silently as the flames of war drew ever closer with each fall back and defeat we suffered.

As the towns of Giant's View and Elveswood were destroyed, it was unspoken amongst us that the enemy would dare to even enter such a mystical and enchanted forest. Yet the one known as 'The Red Hand' continued to drive his army south, trading the lives of his troops for our own. We fought outside the mists sur-

rounding the lost town of Shandlin's Ferry, slaughtering great numbers of the enemy, yet we fell back and lost friends. The Baronial forces of Eastwyck fought savagely in the defense of the towns of North and South Woodseave, felling countless warriors of the enemy, backlashed numerous attempts by their mages to raise resurrection points for their troops and lost many of our own when the towns were each overrun and destroyed. Last week, we stood once again in battle before the Northern Army as they continued to

By Koryon Greymeir
march forward. Our outnumbered troops gave fierce battle to the enemy outside of Goblinsbane. Here too, we were defeated. We gave tenfold more than we received. The enemy bodies piled like cordwood before our swords as we bravely attempted to finally hold the line. Yet, during these battles, the wood silently observed. At times during the nights of no battle, one could almost hear the Wood softly calling out across the plains to us, songs of encouragement upon the nights breeze, to fight

(cont'd on p3)

Revenant King Attacks Town

This April, Ravenholt was attacked by a creature known as the Revenant King. This powerful being and its legions of undead appeared in town on the night of April 18th, and was destroyed two days later.

The creature had existed for some time, possessing three magical items, which gave him power. These items, which were destroyed in the magical wave of last November, were a crown, a sword and a throne. The crown gave the Revenant King the power to control undead; the throne allowed him to reform when his body was cut down and destroyed without the weakening of his undead spirit, and those slain by the sword would rise up as revenants under the bearer's control.

Armed with these powerful tools, years ago, the Revenant King was locked in a vicious struggle with the Owl Barbarian clan who were known for their seers and shamans. After losing many bitter battles against this undead menace, the remnants of the Owl Clan performed a powerful ritual to imprison the Revenant King within his own throne. The spirits of the Owl barbarians were bound into gems on the throne to keep him trapped for all time.

The recent destruction of the magicks broke the enchantment that held the Revenant King, releasing him upon the

world once more. He came to Ravenholt in April, wreaking considerable destruction upon the Duchy with his minions and his blade.

Fortunately there were three barbarian spirits of the Owl clan, which were not bound into the gems when the original ritual was performed; Two seers and an historian. The spirits of the seers were able to help the people of Ravenholt get the writings of the historian which, when decoded and read, released a ritual similar to a spirit farewell which summoned the third spirit. From this third spirit, they learned how to destroy the Revenant King by assaulting his throne and using the gems, which once bound him. Although war efforts have made any other use of our limited resources a hazard, Baron Alaric Malinruin and his advisors determined that leaving such a consequential threat to the land free to roam would be more dangerous in the long run than not. As such, he commanded the newly promoted Major Maximillian Greystone to launch an assault.

A small force of warriors and healers was assembled and taken to where the throne lay hidden. A second group of healers was positioned outside the lair as a support team. Within no more than a half an hour of the party's approach towards the throne, undead of

all sorts began clambering out of the ground "like ants from a burning anthill," as one of the few remaining healers recalls. "At first, it was lesser undead. Skeletons, wraiths. But within minutes we started seeing bigger and bigger creatures. We were there to heal; instead we fell before them as we tried to stop them. It was awful. I've never known anything like it."

As healer after healer fell before the seemingly endless onslaught of necromantic beings, the undead seemed to change, and become more organized. One earth scholar reported, "I...I couldn't DO anything about it. They just kept coming. And then..." he breaks down, "Then it was our friends. Whatever was happening inside, it musta been worse even than what was happening to us. 'Cause after all the regular undead stopped, the next thing we saw was our own friends attacking us. Twisted, they were. Revenants, all. Gone. No helping them."

As the last remaining healers gave battle to kill and save those they knew as friend, brother, or companion, they felt the ground beneath them shake, then shake again, as if massive blows were coming from inside the earth. Kainon Andrews, of the Healers' Guild, was one of the last to remain standing. He described what happened next: "After one big shudder, it looked like

the passage into the lair was beginning to weaken. Clumps of dirt and rock were starting to fall and crumble. Then Major Greystone came staggering out, clutching a handful of the gems from the throne. One of the revenants rose up near him and struck him down, but even as he fell he kept hanging on to those gems. One last shake in the ground and I saw the passage collapse, and it was like the earth just – settled – into place. When that happened, it was like the undead lost their organization. We cleaned up the rest of them pretty easily, by compare."

Major Greystone was healed and brought back to Baron Alaric to report on what had happened, but the majority of the information was deemed classified. The Herald has learned that the ritual casters brought in with Greystone had apparently had at least partial success in destroying the Revenant King's throne, which is how he was able to salvage the gemstones which held the spirits of several more of the Owl clan. Greystone was the only known survivor of the interior battle, with several combatants successfully resurrecting after being returned from Revenant form, and many more presumed permanently dead. A dazed Greystone apparently muttered about "Technicians. Needed more technicians,"

cont'd on p3)

Wood Burns (cont'd from p1)

for our homes. On the evening of May the 26th, the songs ended and our hopes became a bit dimmer.

Baron Moonwind's scouts were the first to notice and sent word back to our ranks. The night's breeze changed and we inhaled the smell of defeat that we had refused to acknowledge throughout these terrible months. A soft glow began in the west night's sky as Baron Moonwind emerged from his tent and approached us, a small paper held in his hand. The glow grew in size and a great pillar of black smoke arose into the sky, blocking the stars from view. "No!" was all that the Baron softly breathed as hard riding scouts of the Eastwyck Rangers approached our position. The sad look on their faces confirmed what we all thought was impossible. The Mystic Wood burns!

By midnight, the flames were visible from our positions atop the Northern Downs. Many of us requested and received permission from Baron Moonwind to advance West as he withdrew to his tent for the evening. We approached silently in the night to see a sight that will long be remember should we survive this war. Before us stood the Sessuar Northern Army, turned out in full formation, their general at the front, as the conflagration that had once been the beautiful home for many of

our missing friends roared in the background. The enemy stood silently while the agonizing sounds of the dying wood carried across the nights air to us. Occasionally a loud, shrill scream would pierce the hissing roar of the burning trees. We shed tears at each brilliant flash that exploded somewhere within the magnificent firestorm. The enemy stood silently in formation, never moving, never wavering, waiting to see if we would attempt to challenge what could not be undone.

Withdrawing, we reached the safety of our defensive lines and informed Baron Moonwind of our observations. The Baron silently cursed the enemy that would soon come to fight us again. The Mystic Wood burned for two more nights and our scouts observed that the Imperium never wavered, waiting to draw us out. Their silent stance apparently meant to show their intent and resolve. Their action saddened our hearts and strengthens our determination to survive. If only to see the Wood someday reborn again.

Revenant (cont'd from p2) while being healed. Andrews speculates some of the earth moving may have been ritual backlashes, but others may have been massive traps rigged to protect the Revenant King. Given the sudden lack of con-

Sessuar (cont'd from p1)

very long.

Loosing a volley of terrible icestorms upon the defenders, the Black Robed Mages turned aside as the battle was joined. Waves of enemy assualted the defenders, each following wave arriving as the former was dispatched, preventing any let up in the battle by the defenders. Ressurrection points were raised by the enemy with ease as there were no spare warriors for His Grace to send against them. Healers were hard pressed to keep up with the fallen as they became the targets of choice by the Sessuar troops. Shortly before dusk, His Grace, himself bloodied and worn, ordered the full evacuation of Gurn. A night battle ensued as the opposing General pressed his advantage, again using his mages to deadly effect to keep the defenders occupied while his troops marched into battle. A surrounded contingent of Capulan militia commanded by Thorge Cyclos of Capulus was slaughtered to the man as help was unable to punch through to save them. By midnight of

that day, Gurn had been fully evacuated and Ducal forces continued to wage a fighting retreat to prevent their encirclement. The battle ended before daybreak, the Southern Army halting a mile north of Gurn. After successfully breaking out from the Grey Hills , Ducal scouts reported half the enemy army preparing to advance east towards Arkam.

Returning to the Capitol City, Duke Alaric ordered more troops from their defensive positions surrounding the city to help with the defense and evacuation of Arkam. With little reserves left at his command, Duke Alaric ordered the call up of women warriors and placed young males under conscription for training. These he placed under the command of Emerald the Gypsy and the Order of the Belladonna. His Grace extended the evacuations to Kur, Stormbridge Story and Darkmoor, all in the Barony of Westmarch. Each passing day sees longer lines of refugees streaming into Ravenholt City , seeking shelter.

control over the undead, it is believed that the Revenant King was crushed by the collapse and, having no throne to return to, died.

At the request of one of the original Owl Clan spirits, a

Destroy Formal Magic ritual was performed on all the gemstones to free the trapped spirits therein. Upon completion of the ritual, the three original spirits were able to find peace and faded from view.

Caravans Go Missing

No less than three complete caravans and numerous travelers have gone missing within the woods of the Duchy of Ravenholt over the last few months. Usually, when caravans are attacked by brigands, the burned-out remains are found and the people resurrect. The Sessuar attacks on caravans have been considerably more bloody than average brigand runs. These recent disappearances are all the more disturbing in that there has yet to be a single resurrection or trace of caravan found. A few people have suggested that perhaps the destruction of magic that rocked Ravenholt this past year may have something to do with these disappearances, but they are in the minority. It seems far more likely to most that there is something more sinister at work.

Anyone with any information leading to the location of any of the missing people or caravans is encouraged to contact the Town Guard or their local Magistrate.

Maximillion Greystone Promoted to Major

During his visit to the Southern front of the war, His Grace, Duke Alaric Malinruin promoted Captain Maximillion Greystone to the rank of Major within the ranks of the Ducal forces. Major Greystone replaces Major Janus Gevinor, deceased, of the former Third Skyeguard Regiment. His Grace has expressed great confidence in Major Greystone's abilities to lead Ravenholt's efforts in the war. Major Greystone leads by example, in the face of continued adversity he has excelled as a leader and is an inspiration to all who serve with him His Grace was quoted as saying to all who attended the small ceremony.

Strange Horned Creatures Sighted

Reports were forwarded to the Raven's Herald of sightings of creatures of unknown origin on the edge of the Falconrest Forest in the Barony of Eastwyck. Farmer Quentin Malinowski, whose lands reside next to the forest reported seeing three large, burly creatures with huge horns atop them."Twas as if my old bull bossie had done started to walk upright. They was a carrying several big swords and looked as if they was a looking for somethin. I done gone and grabbed the misses and left for my neighbors but when old Frank and I returned the next day all we saws was tracks along the woods edge. Quite strange I tell ya."

An Eastwyck ranger was dispatched to confirm the tracks and investigate the sighting.

Lost in the Line of Duty

Admenor Klio of Copper	Keridan
Airamiss	Lind Arad Shurfire
Aodhan	Lorien Brightstar
Asharak	Lucia Dionysia of Gurn
Aurin Demontos	Markus Mythrandir
Cinyras Ruby of Goblintooth Gap	Na'th'rk Mirabad
Cirano Crystin of Gurn	Nevar Toli
Cyrus	Niles Knobkernockerrer
Czedrzyk Hekaline of Gon	Promede Karina of Gurn
Daenar	Psydin Carnox
Dakkon Darkman	Riff
Derek Shadoweaver	Rohan Blacksmith
Desa Prosper of Pike-in-the-Vale	Roland
Dravn	Rylan
Dzordanya	Sianan
Fith	Smucky
Gail Willowshire	Spot the Stone Elf
Gladius Sharp	Sybyly Taressa
Gorn the Decisive	T'charr Draco Nomicon
Grete	Taltos
Grimlok	Tanastalas
Halleigh Melish of Gurn	Tarlyn Hune
Ioseph Hyun-Ok of Keswick Crossing	Team Hoptite
Karas Of Blacktallon	Thadeus Synthea of Gurn
Kashmyre	Thagorn Redhand
Kendi Kendine Yuruyun	Torrith of Bloodheart
	Tristan
	Veronica Thompson

Lady Bailiwick Stormhaven Made Baron Regent

After the untimely death of Baron Victdar of Eastwyck, His Grace, Duke Alaric Malinruin has seen fit to proclaim Lady Bailiwick Stormhaven of Eastwyck as Baron Regent of said Barony. Lady Stormhaven has long faithfully served both Baron Victdar and His Grace as a protector of the lands of Ravenholt.