



Gold & Glory

by Tim Beach



For all levels of play



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Introduction

When the call to war goes out, many people answer. Some are patriots fighting for a cause; others are professional soldiers lured by the sound of gold pieces. Whether they are motivated by avarice or altruism, all these people have a price of some kind.

Sword for hire. Sellsword. Man at arms. Myrmidon. Legionnaire. Soldier of fortune. Hiresword. Mercenary. All these terms—and several unprintable terms as well—identify those men and women who hire themselves out to fight other peoples' battles. *Gold & Glory* describes these professionals and the groups in which they operate.

The information provided applies chiefly to the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Setting, primarily the continent of Faerun, but the basic information could be used with most campaigns for the AD&D® game.

Chapter 1 of *Gold & Glory* describes mercenary companies in general terms: their history, how they are formed, methods of operation, and so forth.

Later chapters detail many of the better-known standing mercenary companies in the Realms.

Chapter 7 offers descriptions of several Non Player Characters (NPCs) who recruit mercenaries for specific tasks. A number of special groups are mentioned in Chapters 8 and 9, which tell how adventuring companies and other groups sometimes interact with mercenary companies.

The final few pages of the book offer an index of mercenary companies and where in the Realms they might be found, as well as statistics that can be used in BATTLESYSTEM™ scenarios.

How to Use This Information

There are several ways for a Dungeon Master (DM) to use mercenary companies in the campaign. DMs should feel free to use any of the ones presented here, to make up new ones, or to allow player characters (PCs) to start a company.

The DM could use the provided mercenary companies as enemies or allies for the player characters. The PCs might join a company for a time—many of the companies herein recruit “local talent” when they have a job in a given area. Some recruit through advertisement, others by coercion.

If the PCs choose to join a mercenary company, they must follow the orders of their superiors; this gives a DM a great mechanism for setting up adventures. A wise DM will be careful not to force too much on the player characters, however.

PCs should probably be treated as a squad of elite troubleshooters. The DM can offer two or three missions for them to choose from, but might sometimes insist that the PCs are the only ones who can handle a specific task.

The PCs may at some time wish to form their own band as well. They could recruit soldiers and lead them into large conflicts. If their fame grows, kingdoms might try to hire the PCs to lead armies of invasion or defense.

Mercenary companies might also be used to inspire small adventures or epic quests. Perhaps a friend to the PCs has been forced to join a mercenary group; maybe a group has been infiltrated by a spy whom the PCs must capture; the possibilities are almost endless.

There are also a few ideas “hidden” in the following text, such as hooks to space adventures, the growth of lizard man power in the south, and so forth.

Chapter 1: Mercenaries in the Realms

Some professional soldiers are loners, choosing when and where they fight, adhering to individual codes of honor, and following whatever clarion draws them to battle. They might be motivated by bloodlust, desire for adventure, or a cause. Many of these lone mercenaries can be found throughout the Realms.

Some mercenaries band together, forming regular companies and operating along military or paramilitary lines. It is these mercenary companies that are the subject of *Gold & Glory*.

There are two basic types of mercenary corps: standing and recruited. Members of standing companies are always together, often have no other occupations, will do things that won't keep them from leaving on short notice, and are professional adventurers on the side.

In the case of recruited companies, an employer will hire an individual or group to go and quickly build an army.

Some companies are part standing and part recruited, such as standing companies that recruit locals wherever they go. Other companies are recruited, but always from the same group of veterans, sometimes with a few new faces. These latter groups are essentially standing companies without permanent headquarters.

Within the two basic types of companies, there are a number of variations. Some specialize by race, social class, type of weapon, or type of job; others try to have members with a variety of abilities. Some of the more versatile mercenary companies have wizards, thieves, rangers, and priests, in addition to fighters.

General History

Mercenaries have existed for a very long time, from the first time someone asked "What do I get if I fight this war for you?" Military leaders have always had to offer some kind of pay, with land, gold, glory, prestige, or power. True mercenaries travel to any place where there is armed conflict, often caring little on whose side they fight. Others have principles or standards, and will fight only on the "correct" side.

Mercenary forces have changed the outcome of many battles. Over the course of the last century or so, mercenary groups have become more formal, choosing colorful names and advertising their locations. Like many other institutions, they have become a normal aspect of life in the Realms.

Mercenary Companies

Chapters later on in this book offer specific details on several mercenary companies. It may be useful, however, to cover some general principles that apply to all or most mercenary groups.

Formation

Most mercenary groups are formed by the actions of a single, charismatic leader, though a group of leaders is also likely. These people gather veterans of battles, train likely prospects, and organize the company. Some corps are formed by or from adventuring groups.

Recruited companies operate a little differently, as they are formed anew each time one is needed. The employers contact a recruiter or recruiting group, offering a fee for an army. Word is spread for interested parties to meet at a certain place, at which time the recruiter reviews



the applicants and decides who may join the corps.

Leadership and Organization

Most mercenary corps operate along military lines, with leaders and their assistants taking military titles. Other companies work more informally, with the leader being essentially a dictator, perhaps with a few counselors or assistants. Some companies are democracies in which members elect their officers, and still others are run like a business.

Strategies and Operations

All companies choose which jobs they will accept based on individual codes and desires. Most are hired for a specific task and left to their own devices to fulfill their assignment. Most companies are responsible for their own transportation to and from the job.

Retiring a Company

A mercenary company stops being a mercenary company when certain events occur. Obviously, the death of all members would eliminate a group. Other corps might break up because of age, while some might achieve the legitimacy of a permanent job. Several examples of "retired" companies are offered in Chapter 6.

Other Sources

Several other products in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign line offer information on mercenary companies. An index of sources appears on the last page of this book.

The Entries

Most of the following descriptions of mercenary companies are done in a standard format, using these headers.

Type: A *standing company* is one that is together at all times. A recruited company is built by recruiters when the call goes out for an army. *Standing/recruits* indicates a standing company that recruits locals as well. A company with recruited veterans is one with consistent and loyal members, but without a permanent headquarters, so the company must be called together whenever there is a job. A *fixed* company has a permanent headquarters.

A company that is *roaming* has either no particular headquarters, or has several.

Base: This indicates the place (or region) that the company calls home.

Current Sphere(s) of Operation: This lists where the group is currently active.

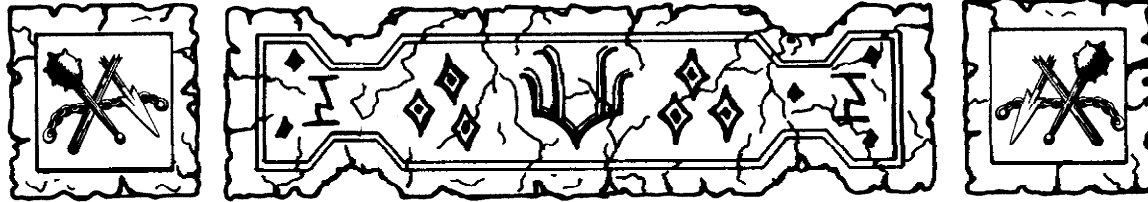
Leader: This lists the group's leader.

Government: This indicates how the corps operates internally.

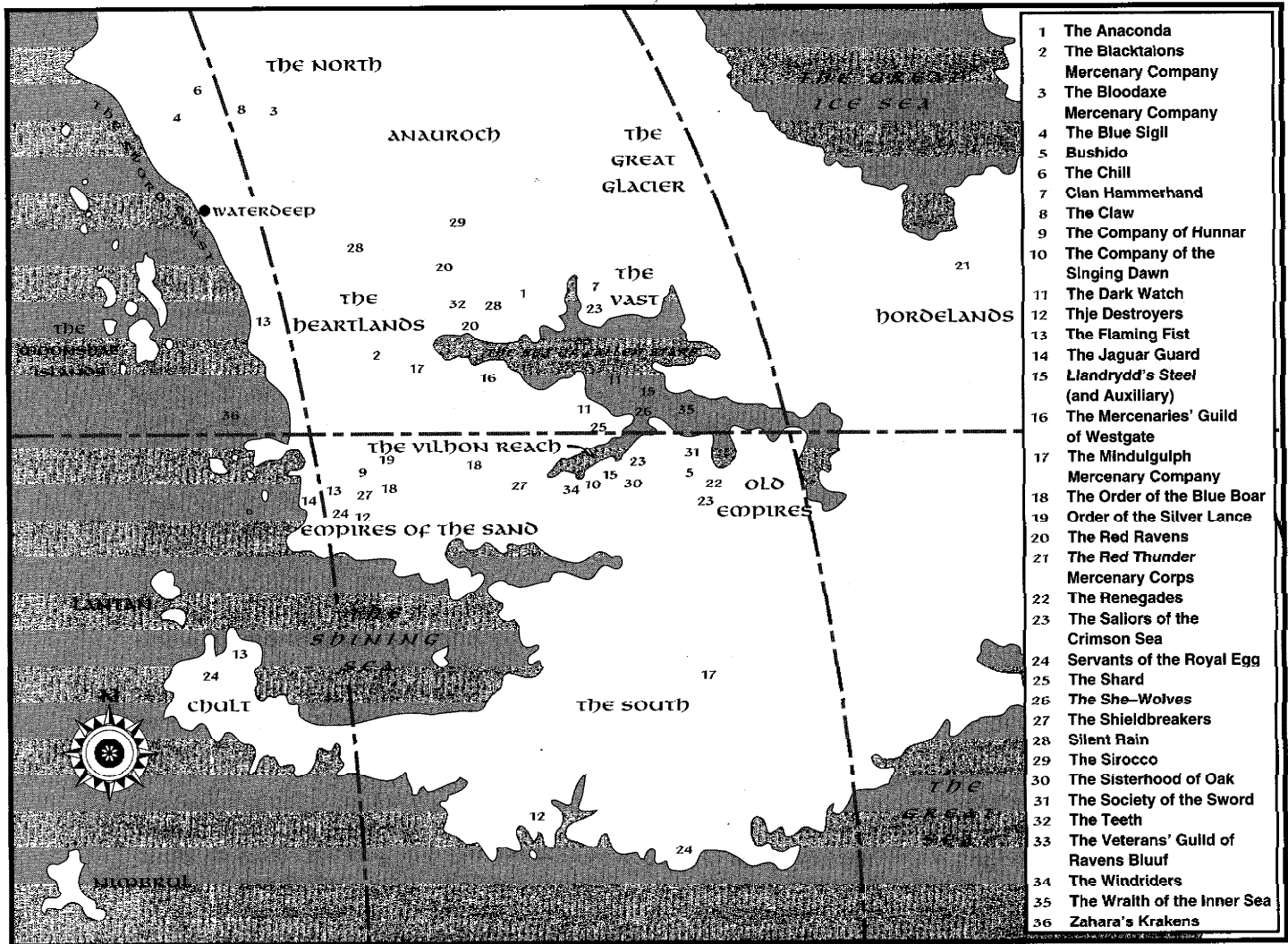
Number of Members: If a range is given, the lowest number is the number of people who always serve; the highest number is the core, plus semi-regulars who might be called in for specific jobs. This number does not include any people who might be recruited locally.

General Alignment: This indicates the basic morals and ethics of the group; individuals may vary.

Larger entries have these headings as well: *History* describes the group's formation, composition, and past activities; *Strategy and Tactics* tells how the company chooses and completes jobs; *Personality* details the group's motivations, code of honor, and friends and enemies; and *Logistics* describes the group's equipment, requirements, and price.



MERCENARY ACTIVITIES IN THE REALMS



Chapter 2: Standing Companies

This chapter offers details about several of the better-known standing mercenary corps in the Realms. Standing companies are the “standard,” but in the Realms, “standard” can mean many things.

In most cases, standing companies have a single leader; this way, there is no question about who is in charge.

Standing companies generally have a headquarters of some kind, whether it be a castle they have built themselves, or a town where all the members live. Standing companies without permanent headquarters will almost always have a means of transportation, and when they arrive at the location of their job, they usually find lodgings together or set up a large camp.

Standing companies can be worked into an adventuring campaign in several ways. These groups might be recruiting, testing people who want to join by sending them on a mission. Alternately, enemies of a mercenary corps might mislead a group of PCs into raiding the mercenary company’s headquarters.

The Companies

Information about many of the companies can be found in other sources. These entries provide updates on status and activities of these mercenary groups.

The map on page 5 shows where many of the groups operate, while the index on page 64 lists the groups by region and also lists the other sources where information might be found.

The Blacktalons Mercenary Company

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Blacktalon Citadel in Iriaebor

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Traderoutes near Iriaebor

Leader: Taurgosz “Tenhammer” Khosann

Government: Councilled dictatorship

Number of Members: 120

General Alignment: Neutral

History: This group formed less than a decade ago, when Taurgosz Khosann earned his “Tenhammer” nickname by slaying 10 people with a single swing of his huge warhammer, thus wresting leadership of his bandit gang from the former leader. Tenhammer has led the Blacktalons to a more legal occupation.

Tenhammer, an 11th-level fighter, stands over 7’ tall and weighs about 350 pounds. His size and great strength (18/94) allow him to wield some two-handed weapons with just one hand; his favorite weapon is his great hammer, which causes damage as a battle axe. Tenhammer is an absolute dictator, but has a small council of trusted aides to whom he listens.

The Blacktalons consist of 80 3rd-level fighters, both male and female. In addition, there are 20 1st-level fighters and 20 thieves of levels 3-6. If *The Complete Thief’s Handbook* is used, give the thieves the scout and bandit kits (in approximately equal numbers).

The Blacktalon sigil is a black, three-taloned claw on a blood red field. It is worn on the breast or helmet, but is never flown from a banner.

Strategies and Tactics: This group prefers jobs guarding caravans, but will also raid caravans for a price. True to their bandit heritage, they sometimes raid unguarded caravans to encourage them to seek protection.

They have on occasion hired themselves out as irregular cavalry, and they act as city defenders in times of trouble—which helps maintain good relations with the local government.

Personality: The Blacktalons are relatively unscrupulous, but have never been known to renege on a contract. They are very vengeful when cheated.



The Blacktalons seldom come into conflict with other mercenary corps, though they have earned the enmity of the Sirocco, the Mindulgulph Company, and several adventuring companies.

Logistics: The Blacktalons have their own mounts, mostly medium warhorses. They prefer to use these mounts, but will ride animals appropriate to the caravan they are guarding. Since Iriaebor is known for fine mounts, the Blacktalons always have fine horses.

They wear a variety of armors and carry a variety of weapons. They often darken their armor with mud or paint, so they do not stand out.

The Blacktalons charge 1 gp per person per day for guard duty. A raid costs an employer 300 gp, in advance.

The Bloodaxe Mercenary Company

Type: Recruited veterans, fixed

Base: Sundabar, in the North

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The North

Leader: Velkor "of the Valiant Arm"
Minairr

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 60-80

General Alignment: Chaotic good

History: The Bloodaxe Mercenary Company was founded by a dwarven adventurer, Deldagg Huldgrym, more than 40 years ago. Most of its original members were dwarven outcasts.

Under Deldagg's leadership, the group fought several bandit bands, an army of orcs, and raiders from Luskan. Many of the original members were slain, and new warriors (mostly humans from the Sword Coast, the North, and the Vilhon Reach) were added to the ranks.

Deldagg died of black lung fever in 1331 DR (1306 by Cormyrian reckoning), and

the group's leadership fell to his second in command, Velkor Minairr, a human fighter (11th level). Only four of the original dwarven Bloodaxes remain with the company.

The group—mounted spearmen (30), slingers (10), and axe-men (20)—is largely inactive at present, but occasionally hire themselves out to fight orcish hordes in the North.

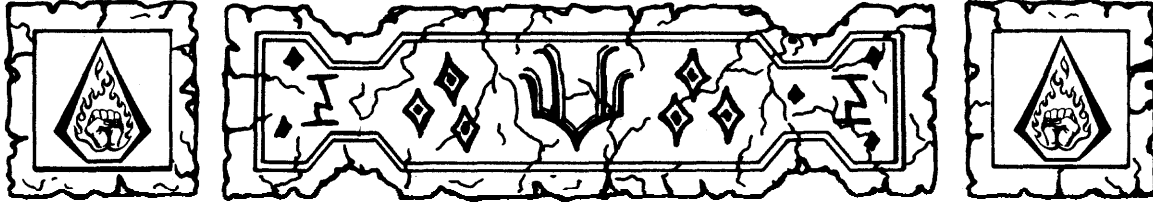
To avoid recognition, the Bloodaxes often elect not to display their sigil, a gray axe on a dark red background.

Strategies and Tactics: The Bloodaxes are skilled and versatile, willing to take almost any job, from gladiators to bodyguards. Not overly prideful or crude, their strategies and tactics vary as widely as the types of jobs they take.

Personality: The Bloodaxes are motivated largely by hatred of humanoids, though they do enjoy being paid for killing the creatures. They have few enemies other than humanoids, the Blue Sigil ogres, and the Chill.

Logistics: Their equipment varies widely, though the battle axe is the weapon of choice for most. The group maintains several small bases in the North, where they can replace equipment as needed.

The Bloodaxes may be hired at a cost of but 10 gp per day, since they are currently "down on their luck."



The Company of the Singing Dawn

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Arrabar in Chondath

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The Vilhon Reach

Leader: Solara

Government: Council

Number of Members: 250

General Alignment: Neutral good

Note: The Company of the Singing Dawn and its components are described in I14, *Swords of the Iron Legion*.

History: This group was formed in Chondath about 15 years ago, and was first known as Solara's Elite. Solara trained her people well, and eventually added more units to the company.

The company consists of five 50-member units: Solara's Elite, handpicked 4th-level fighters from the Fields of Nun; the Spears of Dawn, 1st-level fighters; the Forester Guards of Nun, charismatic and chivalrous 3rd-level warriors from the Chondalwood; the Lightblades, 4th-level paladins mounted on pegasi; and the Sunshafts, 7th-level Pegasus-riding elven archers.

The Elite are led by Taran, 6th-level female human fighter; Randwulf Doorbane, a grizzled 8th-level fighter, leads the Spears; the Foresters are led by a 7th-level elven ranger, Miebhailar; Justin Ironedge, a 9th-level human paladin, leads the Lightblades; and the Sunshafts are led by Lotharius Goldentree, a 9th-level elven fighter. These leaders advise Solara, 10th-level ranger and undisputed leader of the Company of the Singing Dawn.

The company's most famous battle was against the forces of Yrkhetep, an arcana-loth who tried to conquer Chondath and Turmish.

The company's symbol is a rose-colored phoenix, with a green key below, to the

right, and to the left, all on a field of silver. All members of the company wear some red, pink, or yellow, and many wear sunburst emblems.

Strategies and Tactics: The Singing Dawn prefers to fight evil and is known to do charity work, especially when it involves fighting undead or otherwise promotes worship of the group's patron deity, Lathander. They will not take any job that is antithetical to the worship of the Morninglord.

Solara and her councilors are great tacticians, and they work well together coordinating aerial and ground assaults.

Personality: The Company of the Singing Dawn has a very strict code of honor and chivalry. They are motivated by a wish to do good, though they realize that they need gold to maintain their effectiveness. Their only enemies are the evil and unscrupulous.

Logistics: Each unit has distinctive arms and armor. The Elite uses scale mail, shields with the company's symbol, and long swords with dusky pink stones in the hilt. The Spears wear chain mail and carry silver-tipped spears. The Foresters wear studded leather and carry wooden shields and long swords. The Lightblades wear scale mail and attack with medium lances or long swords +1. The Sunshafts wear scale mail and attack with long bows or long swords. Solara and the unit leaders carry a number of magical items.

The Company of the Singing Dawn is somewhat expensive, requiring 1,000 gp per day, though they will cut that price by 50-75% when asked to fight undead or creatures from the nether planes. They also do some work for free, with council members using personal funds to pay the regular members.



The Flaming Fist

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Baldur's Gate

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Anchorome, Tethyr Chult, Sword Coast

Leader: Duke Eltan

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 1,600

General Alignment: Lawful neutral

Note: The Flaming Fist Mercenary Company is fully described in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Set. What follows is a summary of statistics and recent history.

History: Despite recent setbacks, the Flaming Fist is the largest and most powerful mercenary corps in Faerun. Eltan, a Duke of Baldur's Gate, founded the group almost 30 years ago, building it into one of the most effective fighting forces in the Realms.

The Flaming Fist has been very active during the last few years. Recently, 300 members were hired with Sembian funds to participate in the Horde Wars. They acquitted themselves well and reported back with some casualties.

At the same time as the Horde Wars, the Flaming Fist took action against the pirates of the Sword Coast (the same "war" in which the Golden Legion destroyed Akbet-Khrul's forces in Amn). The Fist was able to provide the pirates with a setback they will not soon forget.

Also, Duke Eltan noticed an opportunity in leaderless Tethyr. He has been cautiously scouting the region, hiring out small bands for reduced fees in Tethyr. Wise observers speculate that Eltan wishes to be invited into Tethyr, so he may set up a puppet government.

Because of the Horde Wars and the discovery of Maztica, Duke Eltan has been taken by an urge to explore. He has not yet sent an expedition to the Hordelands and Kara-Tur, though he has recently funded

expeditions to Chult and the New World.

The founder of Baldur's Gate (home to the Fist) was a sea captain called Balduran. Long ago, he sailed west past Evermeet, to the fabled islands of Anchorome, returning with great wealth that was used to build the wall around what became Baldur's Gate.

Eltan had always been taken by the tale of Balduran, and wondered about the man's final fate. When word reached Eltan that the Golden Legion had discovered and conquered Maztica, Eltan's curiosity was piqued, and he decided to find Anchorome.

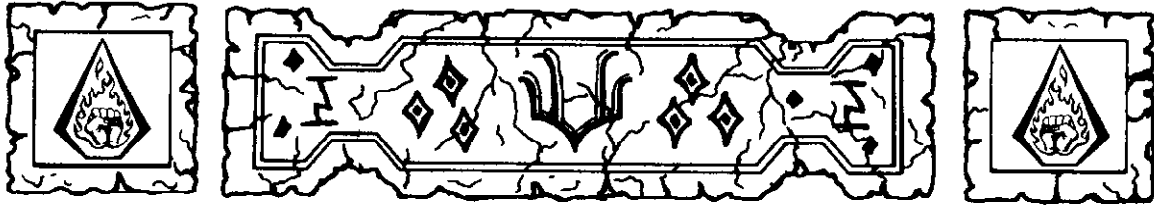
Eltan bought a fleet of ships and sent several hundred men and women across the seas. The ships stopped in Lantan, where the company split, three ships heading to Chult.

The Chult expedition (150 people led by Beluarion and Nenon) recruited an experienced group of six elven mercenaries to act as guides in Chult. The expedition lost roughly half of its number (including Beluarion) in Chult, but was somewhat successful.

The Anchorome expedition was not as successful, however. This group consisted of four leaders (Scar, Bellan, Desedrak, and Yulimtul) and more than 500 mercenaries. The ships also carried 200 horses and a great deal of equipment.

After the 20-ship fleet left Lantan, it was beset by problems ranging from disease to storms. The company clerics were able to keep disease from taking more than a handful of lives, but three ships were completely lost to storms with no survivors. Unfortunately, one of those ships had been designated a hospital ship and was carrying most of the priests when it went down.

When the ships finally reached the Maztican port of Helmsport/Ulatos, they recruited to replace some of their losses,



hiring 60 Eagle Knights who wished to fight for glory and land.

Again, the expedition split, with 225 heading northwest overland into the desert, hoping to find the fabled City of Gold. This group, led by Desedrak and Yulimtul, has not been heard from since, and all attempts at magical and psionic contact have failed.

The rest of the group (roughly 340 people and 150 horses) took 15 ships up the coast from Maztica to explore the coast of Anchorome. Again, the group met with disaster.

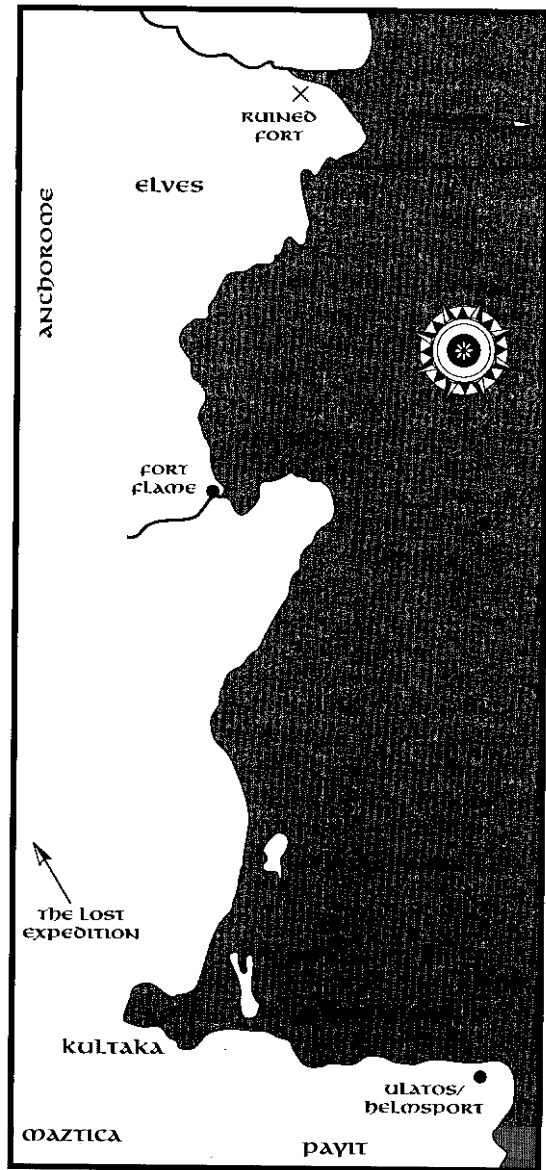
The Flaming Fist discovered Itzcali, Realm of the Sea People, when sahuagin from that undersea nation attacked and wrecked a third of their ships, which lay anchored several yards off shore. Some people were rescued, and a number of horses were seen swimming to shore. Scar led the Fist in a brilliant counterattack, driving the sahuagin forces away so the ships could escape the area.

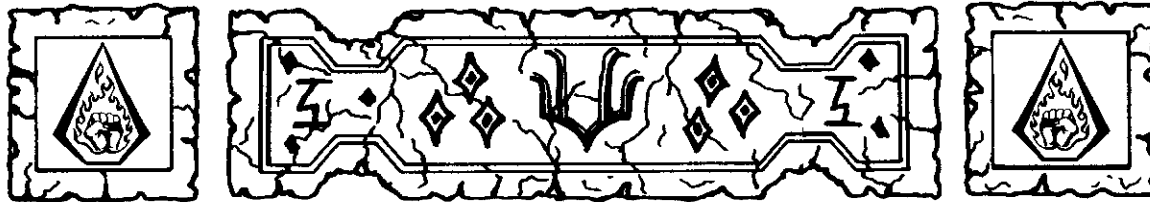
When the expedition moved farther north, they discovered a lush and fertile land devoid of civilization. Moving along the coast, they eventually came to the ruined remains of a small fort with a wooden palisade. Broken weapons, rusted armor, and an old ship's log indicated that this was the probable final resting place of Balduran and his crew.

The members of the Flaming Fist soon discovered the likely cause of Balduran's death when they were attacked by a tribe of savage elves sporting odd haircuts and wearing feathers and paints. At the same time—possibly a coincidence—large whale-like beasts attacked the company's ships and sank them. The members of the company performed a fighting retreat until they escaped the territory of the savages.

Less than 100 members of the expedition survived the retreat; these set up Fort

The Expedition of The Flaming Fist





Flame at the mouth of a river that opens into a large bay, which they have named Balduran's Bay.

Scar and a small group of men and women left the encampment, and miraculously made it back to Helmsport, and thence to Baldur's Gate. Eltan may see fit to send reinforcements to the colony, now under Bellan's leadership, and communications have been established through arcane means.

The Flaming Fist's main base is Baldur's Gate, but the company has established secondary bases in Chult and Anchorome, and has an unspecified number of operatives in Tethyr.

Fort Flame holds its leader Bellan (a 10th-level fighter), two rangers, a wizard, five clerics, three thieves (one an assassin), four 6th-level fighters, 17 5th-level fighters, 53 4th-level fighters, and 13 5th-level Eagle Knights (who can change into eagles at will).

Fort Beluarian, on the northern coast of Chult, is supervised by Nenon; she oversees a garrison of three rangers, three wizards (one an assassin), seven priests, two thieves, and 80 fighters (10 6th-level, 20 5th-level, and 50 4th-level).

The main forces in Baldur's Gate are led by Duke Eltan (a 22nd-level fighter), and his assistants Moruene (a 20th-level wizard) and Scar (a 16th-level fighter). All their lieutenants except Koruelve (a 10th-level fighter) are dead or on semi-permanent assignment, so they have recruited the following new unit leaders, all 9th-level fighters: Lendali Firehair, Hercules the Hammer, Delandria, Morgan Redwing, Skot-sar of Berdusk, and Kalvis-talk the Hunter.

The forces in Baldur's Gate include 10 rangers, 10 wizards, 150 priests, 10 assassins (the best of which are a pair of elven wizard-thieves), 15 thieves, and 1,200 fighters (550 3rd-level, 400 4th-level, 150

5th-level, and 50 6th-level).

The Flaming Fist seldom recruits locals for a battle (they hardly need to!), but sometimes hires advisers or guides.

The company is organized along strict military lines. Their symbol is a flaming red fist; it is worn on a white tabard.

Strategies and Tactics: The Flaming Fist always leaves part of its number to defend Baldur's Gate, but will accept almost any job that pays enough. They seldom disappoint their clients.

The Flaming Fist is almost unstoppable on a battlefield, and they should make any would-be conquerors pause and consider.

Personality: The Flaming Fist is motivated by both gold and glory, though Duke Eltan does prefer to stem chaos rather than promote it.

The Fist negotiates contracts wisely and adheres to them stringently; woe to the employer who tries to cheat them.

The Flaming Fist has a number of powerful enemies, including other mercenary companies, the Zhentarim, and the Cult of the Dragon. Assassination attempts on Eltan and the other leaders are fairly common.

Logistics: The Flaming Fist has spent years collecting items both magical and mundane. Each member has two heavy warhorses, and the company owns several wagons, thousands of mules, and a plethora of magical items.

Hiring the entire Flaming Fist costs 10,000 gp per day, with smaller divisions costing a proportionate amount. The mobilization of the company can bankrupt an area.

The Golden Legion

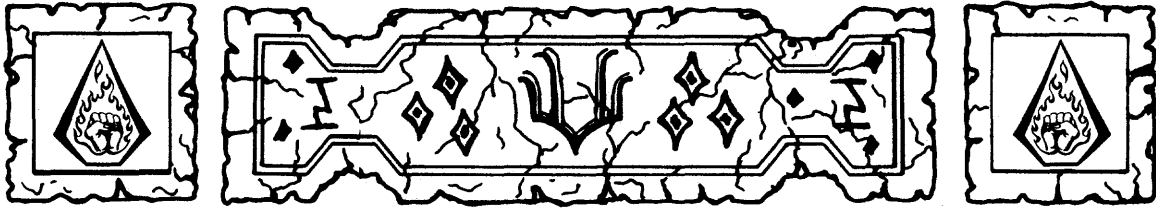
Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Helmsport in Maztica

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Maztica

Leader: Alanza DaNosta



Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 600

General Alignment: Neutral

Note: The Golden Legion and its exploits are covered in the Maztica Campaign Set; FMA1, *Fires of Zatal*; and the novels *Ironhelm*, *Viperhand*, and *Feathered Dragon*. What follows is a summary of the company's history.

History: The Golden Legion was formed almost two decades ago by a man named Cordell after the destruction of his previous mercenary corps. Learning from past mistakes, Cordell built slowly, devoting much attention to training.

The Golden Legion, consisting of units of crossbowmen, swordsmen, cavalry, spearmen, and longbowmen, won fame along the Sword Coast. Cordell's legion broke the power of one of the most vicious buccaneers of the Pirate Isles, Akbet-Khrul, who was killed by legion crossbowmen in a great battle in Amn. This earned the gratitude of the Council of Amn, who sponsored the Golden Legion's expedition to Maztica.

Cordell used diplomacy, military strength, and magic to conquer the Nexala, the most powerful political entity in Maztica. Many battles took their toll on the Legion, which was almost destroyed in this campaign.

Cordell became Governor-General of the area, which Amn has claimed as a colony. Alanza DaNosta, a greedy and unsavory sort, has been given command of the Golden Legion, which is now the military garrison in Helmsport, the center of commerce with Faerun.

The group now consists of 100 cavalry, 250 swordsmen, 100 spearmen, 100 bowmen, and 50 crossbowmen.

The Legion's symbol, which is used on its banners, is a golden eagle outlined in black on a field of gold. Some units, particularly cavalry, also have their own symbols.

Strategies and Tactics: The Golden Legion is rapidly losing the elements that make it a mercenary company, instead becoming the legitimate military force of the government of New Amn. Thus, they have little choice in jobs, as they are required to perform guard duty, keep the natives quiet, and so forth.

Though most of the old veterans are now gone, the company still uses good tactics. They will generally soften the enemy with bows and crossbows, then attack with swordsmen and cavalry. Some magic is used as well.

Personality: Though motivated largely by greed, the old Golden Legion had a sense of family to it. As it stands now, the Legion is motivated primarily by a sense of duty toward New Amn. In general, the leadership of the group is corrupt, but many individuals tend to be honest, serious, and honorable. Most still revere Cordell as a great hero.

Most natives in Helmsport/Ulatos dislike the Legion, though many elsewhere remember the Legion's activities in defending both themselves and the Maztican refugees against the beast hordes of Nexala.

Logistics: The Golden Legion is armed with typical, non-magical weapons and armor. Because the region is warm, most have abandoned any steel armor other than breastplates.

The Legion is on retainer to the colonial government of New Amn and is paid by them. They are usually allowed to plunder when used in the field.

Llandrydd's Steel

Type: Standing/recruits, roaming

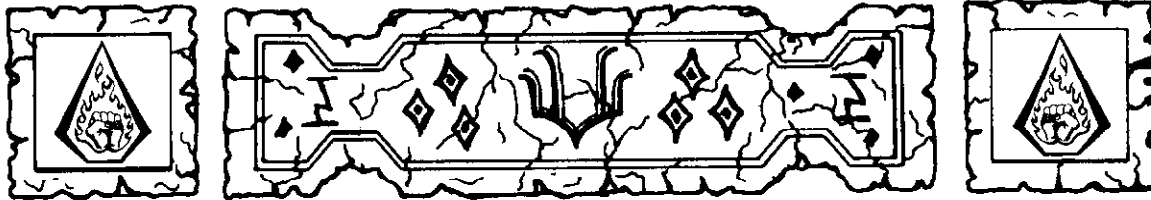
Base: The Vilhon Reach

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The Vilhon Reach, Sea of Fallen Stars

Leader: Llandrydd Wyvernheart

Government: Business



Number of Members: 233-300

General Alignment: Neutral

Note: Additional information on Llandrydd's group can be found in I14, *Swords of the Iron Legion*.

History: Llandrydd began as a recruiter, but formed a standing company after an extended period of action.

Llandrydd's band has two units, the Steel (150 men led by the charismatic Llandrydd, a 6th-level fighter), and the Auxiliary (80 pike wielders led by Lonth, a 4th-level fighter). Llandrydd almost always recruits locals to expand his company's ranks before a battle.

Each squad of 10 elects a sergeant; these form a board that is chaired by Llandrydd (Lonth is vice-chairman). The board discusses prospective jobs.

Like the Singing Dawn, Llandrydd's group fought against Yrketep.

The corps' sigil is a sword between draped sleeves on a green field.

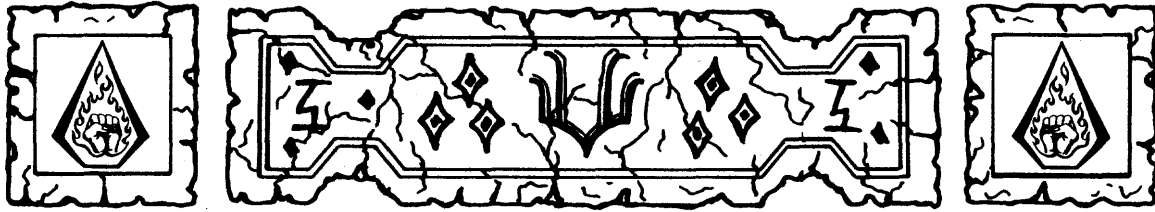
Strategies and Tactics: In battle, the Steel often wraps around the Auxiliary, whose pikes can attack from the second or third rank. The group is skilled, but does not adapt well to odd situations.

Personality: This corps chooses jobs by profit and contracts for specific time periods. If the job runs long, they will renegotiate and may refuse to renew.

Llandrydd's band is on good terms with the Company of the Singing Dawn and will not fight against them.

Logistics: The men of the Steel wear green chain mail and use both short sword and dagger. The people of the Aux-





iliary wear leather and carry pikes.

Llandrydd's band charges 500 gp per week, half in advance.

The Mindulgulph Mercenary Company

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Mindulgulph Castle near Priapurl

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The Eastern Shaar and the Great Rift

Leader: Gayrlana "Lady Bloodsword"

Government: COUNCELED dictatorship

Number of Members: About 200

General Alignment: Neutral

History: The Mindulgulph Company was formed almost 20 years ago by Gayrlana, "Lady Bloodsword," a 12th-level fighter with psionic talents, including contact and mindlink. She has dusky skin and white hair, and rumors persist that she is part drow.

Gayrlana and her adventuring band raided Mindulgulph Castle in their youth and discovered intelligent monsters inside; rather than wiping them out, they recruited most of the creatures and started a mercenary corps.

Most of the company's non-monstrous members are former adventurers who are specialists of some type. There are currently 80 "normal" members, human and near-human warriors of levels 2-5.

The Mindulgulph Company also has around 120 "monster" members. All have at least low intelligence and are non-evil. None are enslaved in any way, but some unintelligent monsters (notably burbur, golems, and rust monsters) are kept as guards and pets.

The company prefers members who can function in human society with a minimum of disruption, though they also have a number of specialists.

Some notable non-humanoid units include squads of blink dogs, centaurs, giff,

grippli, kenku, thri-kreen, and wemics. The Company is known to have members from the following races: beholder, belabra, cave fisher, cildabrin, cloaker, githzerai, hengeyokai, loxo, mimic, plasmoid, q'nidar, shambling mound, shocker, sull, tabaxi, treant, and triton. Many others are possible as well.

Human and near-human members are organized into squads of 10, each with a sergeant; the more monstrous members answer directly to Gayrlana.

The Mindulgulph Company is currently employed by the dwarves of the Great Rift to study the likelihood of a war in the Underdark.

Though most of the company is currently several hundred miles from home, its castle is well-guarded by several of the more monstrous members.

Strategies and Tactics: Gayrlana's company prefers unusual, difficult jobs. They are capable in any environment.

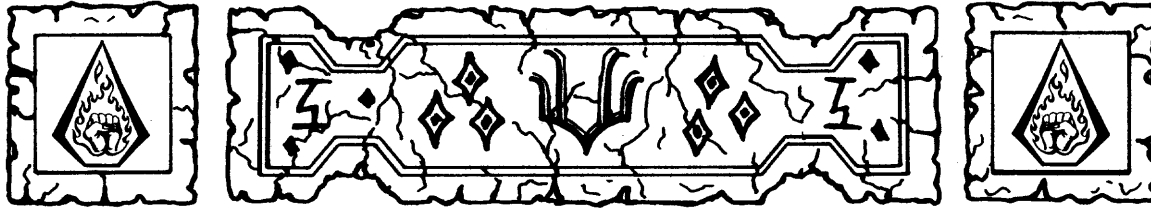
Company tactics vary widely, depending on which members are present, but almost always involve subterfuge and ambush if possible. Gayrlana is a tactical genius as well as a telepath, so is very adept at exploiting the strengths of her troops.

Personality: The corps is trustworthy as a whole. On occasions, individual members have caused problems, but Gayrlana takes pains to set things right when such events transpire.

The Company is friendly with most other mercenary corps, though they consider the Blacktalons enemies.

Logistics: The company possesses and uses a wide array of equipment. They have no standard armor or weapons.

Gayrlana uses a special whipsting sword, which does 1d6 damage and may be used as a whip as well. She has a suit of dress plate, but usually wears lighter armor under a gown or cloak.



A mission performed by the company costs a minimum of 500 gp per day, more if large numbers are required.

The Red Raven Mercenary Company

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Arabel in Cormyr

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Cormyr, the Stonelands, Anauroch

Leader: Rayanna the Rose

Government: Democratic council

Number of Members: 110

General Alignment: Lawful neutral

History: The Red Ravens were formed by several people who fought in the Horde Wars. After the wars, a few of those who would eventually lead the group pooled their funds to get a royal charter in Cormyr, then asked several friends to join.

The company operates on a system of "one person, one vote." They meet annually to elect an overall leader, and then to choose sergeants for each group of 10. Rayanna the Rose has been leader for over two years now, and her policies are generally well-received.

The group works mostly for the Cormyrian government or for Cormyrian merchants. They have recently worked to "clean up" the Stonelands, and have seen some action in Anauroch and against the Zhentarim.

The company's symbol is an amulet showing a red raven.

Strategies and Tactics: The Red Ravens prefer government jobs, such as fighting bandits or goblinoids.

Their battlefield tactics are fairly simple and straightforward, though they will engage in an occasional ambush.

Personality: As one of the few groups in Cormyr with a "license to pillage," the Red Ravens are very careful to not do anything to lose their charter. They never cheat clients.

Logistics: Most Red Ravens carry swords and wear studded leather. They charge 200 gp per week.

The Renegades

Type: Standing, roaming

Base: Chessenta

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Chessenta

Leader: Helyos

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 200

General Alignment: Neutral (evil)

History: The Renegades are human males from Akanax, city of soldiers. They chose exile from their home so they could earn gold as well as glory.

The Renegades' leader, Helyos, a 14th-level fighter, is considered one of the toughest and meanest fighters in Chessenta. In a recent tournament, he nearly won the throne of Mourktar. The company comprises 70 cavalry (3rd-level fighters led by the 10th-level Pyrimestes), 20 infantry (2nd-level fighters led by the 7th-level Themis), and 90 archers (1st-level fighters led by the 9th-level Hamilcar). There are also six scouts and 10 low-level mages in the company.

Strategies and Tactics: The corps will take any job if the price is right.

On the battlefield, the Renegades will do whatever it takes to win. The mages and archers generally soften the enemy before the infantry engages, which allows the cavalry to sweep in for the kill.

Personality: The Renegades are known for ruthlessness and excessive pillaging. They are unscrupulous and will twist the spirit of agreements with employers. They have many enemies, but are on good terms with several pirate bands.

Logistics: The infantry uses chain mail, shield, and long sword, while the archers use leather armor, long bow, and broadsword. Cavalry uses heavy warhorses,



plate mail, lance, and shield.

The corps charges 200 gp per week.

The Sailors of the Crimson Sea

Type: Standing, roaming

Base: Chessenta

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Chessenta, Chondath

Leader: Lhrek Jarsyn

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 185

General Alignment: Lawful neutral

History: This group's name is a metaphor: "the crimson sea" is a bloody battlefield, and "sailors" are soldiers.

Formed only a few years ago by a man named Bendix, the Sailors of the Crimson Sea have seen many hardships. In the recent battle of Thurgabanteth in Chondath, the company lost many of its fighters, including Bendix.

After a political fight for leadership between Lhrek Jarsyn (7th-level fighter) and Iurnan Chall (7th-level wizard), Lhrek became leader, Chall his top adviser. They have three lieutenants.

Chard leads the cavalry (60 2nd-level warriors); Masoth leads the infantry (20 2nd-level fighters and 60 4th-level fighters); and Vidad leads the archers (40 1st-level warriors).

Strategies and Tactics: The Sailors prefer to be on the right side of a conflict, but never work for free.

Once in combat, the company employs good tactics, though morale has a tendency to be low because of the politics among the leaders.

Personality: The Sailors always hold up their end of a bargain. They have a few enemies, mostly evil groups. They are careful in forests because of a past encounter with treants in the Chondalwood.

Logistics: Cavalry uses plate mail, shield, and lance; infantry, plate or chain mail,

shield, and long sword; and archers, leather armor and long bows.

The sailors ask 250 gp per week.

The Society of the Sword

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Cimbar in Chessenta

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Chessenta, the Vilhon Reach

Leader: Stilmus

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 1,020

General Alignment: Lawful neutral

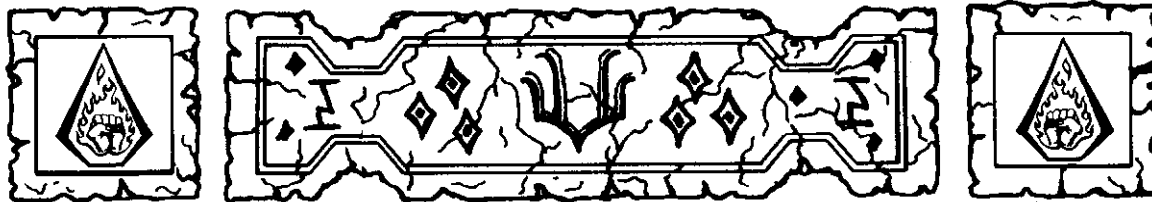
History: The Society of the Sword is the largest and oldest mercenary group in Chessenta. Formed nearly a century ago, the company's leadership has passed through many hands.

The current leader is Stilmus, 15th-level fighter and scarred veteran of many conflicts. His lieutenants are Belvorides, a 12th-level mage, who leads five 5th-level and 10 3rd-level mages; Aronidas, an 8th-level elven fighter/mage, who leads the archer unit (200 2nd-level warriors); Artema, female 9th-level half-elven fighter, who leads the infantry corps (100 4th-level fighters and 500 2nd-level fighters); and Marcellus, 8th-level fighter, who leads the cavalry unit (200 4th-level warriors).

Within each unit, each squad of 10 has a sergeant, and each platoon of five squads has a captain. These leaders are chosen by Stilmus and his lieutenants from the best leaders in each unit. The Society of the Sword has gained fame for its activities in Chessenta and its neighboring areas. They have often been called upon to break the strength of one pirate clan or another.

Strategies and Tactics: The Society prefers high-prestige jobs. They will not fight against weak opponents.

Stilmus and his lieutenants are great tacticians, and the company is deadly on the battlefield. Stilmus is also a fine strategist, and tries to engage the enemy in ad-



vantageous situations.

The Society of the Sword never indulges in looting; any individual caught doing so is permanently expelled from the company.

Personality: The Society of the Sword believes that good mercenaries should be worth twice the price they charge. The members of this group are proud warriors, but are less interested in glory than in doing a good job. They practice constantly to hone their skills, and all members specialize in the use of the long sword.

Stilmus is obsessed with honor. Once an agreement is made, he will uphold it, both in letter and in spirit. If another party tries to cheat him or his company, he considers this a challenge to his honor, something he takes very seriously. Stilmus has fought many duels to defend his honor, and on occasion has dragged his company along on a quest for vengeance.

Stilmus hates Helyos, leader of the Renegades, because Helyos tried to kill him to gain control of a mercenary company in which they both served. Stilmus looks forward to a time when the Society of the Sword can eliminate the Renegades and Helyos.

Logistics: All members of the Society carry long swords. Members of the cavalry and infantry units wear plate mail and carry shields. The archers wear studded leather and carry long bows in addition to their long swords. The cavalry unit uses heavy warhorses.

The company charges 1,500 gp per week, or 300 gp per day for shorter jobs. Employers are also expected to pay any expenses for transportation, food, and additional equipment.

The Society keeps wills for its members, paying shares to the beneficiaries of slain members.

The Veterans' Guild of Ravens Bluff

Type: Standing/recruits, fixed

Base: Ravens Bluff

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Sea of Fallen Stars, the Vast

Leader: Giovanni the Drake

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 300-500

General Alignment: Neutral

History: Giovanni the Drake is a human 5th-level fighter/8th-level bard who started a guild in Ravens Bluff for the veterans of the Horde wars.

Giovanni is assisted by a four-person staff: Borg Doon, his second-in-command; Dag Silverbrow, tactician; Nyssa, strategist; and Mario the Axe, logistics officer. There are also five unit commanders who were chosen by their units.

Standard fighting units are infantry (100 1st-level warriors); archers (100 3rd-level fighters); cavalry (50 2nd-level fighters); wizards (20 mages, levels 2-5). The fifth unit consists of 15 priests (mainly healers) and 10 bards who form a musical corps to inspire the troops before they enter battle.

The Veterans are employed mostly to keep the free cities safe from pirates.

Strategies and Tactics: The Veterans prefer to work for local governments and merchants. While the Drake himself is not an expert in military matters, he has gathered a staff which is.

Personality: This company is motivated primarily by a desire for enough gold to live on. They never betray clients and have not been in existence long enough to make enemies.

Logistics: The Veterans have a variety of arms and equipment, though their standard is scale mail and long sword.

The company charges 1 gp per person per day when on a job.

Chapter 3: Nonhuman Companies

Though not yet “standard” in the Realms, nonhuman companies in general are becoming more common as more races become curious about the world around them.

In contrast, elven and dwarven mercenaries have existed for centuries, but are becoming less common as the population of those races dwindles. Most elves and dwarves would rather not be paid for ending their lives early.

Most nonhuman companies are made up of ogres or goblinoids. Some groups form spontaneously when an entire tribe decides to hire itself out as a mercenary corps; these groups are usually led by their chieftains or shamans. They might be motivated by greed, or lack of food and other necessities may drive them to seek employment.

Other nonhuman mercenary corps are founded by powerful human wizards or monstrous leaders, inspired by greed, a need for revenge, or some similar motivation. These leaders usually dominate the company completely, holding its members almost as slaves.

Nonhuman mercenary companies can serve as wonderful antagonists in campaign situations.

The Companies

Most of the entries in this section appear in a somewhat abbreviated format.

The map on page 5 shows where many of the groups operate, while the index on page 64 lists the groups by region and also lists the other sources where information might be found.

The Blue Sigil

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Mog’s Keep near Longsaddle

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The North

Leader: Mog the Fist

Government: Dictatorship

Number of Members: 450

General Alignment: Neutral evil

History: The Blue Sigil ogres became a mercenary company about 15 years ago, when imminent starvation drove their leader, Thorog, to find a way to support his tribe. Thorog’s tribe had been raided several times by adventurers, some with unique symbols, some paid by nearby towns to kill ogres.

Thorog, a rather smart ogre, reasoned that if other people could get paid to kill ogres, ogres could get paid to kill other people. He created the company’s sigil and required all members to wear it for unity. The symbol, a blue circle crossed by a crescent moon and a lightning strike, is also displayed on armor and the back of helmets (so the ogres know not to stab other members in the back).

The savage Blue Sigil had problems getting hired at first, but they have gained a reputation for living up to their agreements. They charge 500 gp per week and enjoy looting.

Thorog and the leaders who followed him (Mog is the eighth) have used some of the company’s funds to purchase special arms and armor for the ogres and ogresses of the Blue Sigil. The group keeps these in good condition.

Thorog and his successors have accepted lone ogres into their group if they undergo an initiation, and the corps maintains a fairly large population.

The Blue Sigil is enemy to the Bloodaxes and the Chill.



The Chill

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Chill Tower in the Lurkwood

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The North

Leader: Ardenor Crush

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 650

General Alignment: Lawful evil

History: Though he appears to be a normal hobgoblin, Ardenor Crush is a reincarnated evil warrior and should be treated as a 10th-level fighter. After he found himself in a hobgoblin body, Ardenor formed a band to exact revenge on those who had slain him.

He found his friend Grangor (the 13th-level wizard who reincarnated him) and gathered most of the goblinoid troops who survived the Second Battle of Urml (see I14, *Swords of the Iron Legion*). With these allies, he hunted and killed the group of adventurers who thought they had ended his evil ways.

Ardenor led his band into the North, gathering a large, well-trained force with five units: the Frost Riders, 100 hobgoblins armed with battle axes and mounted on heavy warhorses; the Winter Wolves, 100 goblins armed with spears and mounted on winter wolves; the Cold Steel, 150 orcish swordsmen; the Frigid Fists, 50 ogrish shock troops; and the Icicles, 200 kobold archers specializing in ambushes. The group is well-equipped and very dangerous. They charge 500 gp per week.

Ardenor has several magical items, including *gauntlets of ogre power* and an amulet that allows him to summon a nightmare for up to eight hours each day. Grangor does not accompany the corps on missions, but instead usually remains in Chill Tower to defend it. Each unit is headed by a lieutenant of the same type, but with maximum hit points.

The company's symbol, worn on the upper arm, is the brand of a fist around which is the tattoo of a white nimbus.

The Chill has a number of enemies, including the Bloodaxes and the Blue Sigil ogres. Though on poor terms with most of the orcish tribes in the region, they are sometimes hired by them.

Clan Hammerhand

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Ravens Bluff

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The Bloodstone Lands, the Vast

Leader: Garren Hammerhand

Government: Clan

Number of Members: 200

General Alignment: Lawful good

History: Clan Hammerhand is a long-lived dwarven clan that was established in Earthfast and in Ravens Bluff when it was still Sarbreen.

After the Horde Wars—in which several Hammerhands participated—the entire clan determined to resettle in Earthfast, which would involve removing a number of the goblinoids there. To support the clan and gain battle experience, several Hammerhands hire themselves out as mercenaries.

The mercenaries maintain offices in Ravens Bluff, Tantras, and Telflamm. To distinguish themselves, they wear beads (ranging from simple stone to jeweled gold) in their beards and hair.

All of Clan Hammerhand's mercenaries are infantry, wielding a variety of weapons; hammers are the most popular by far, but there are a number of battle axes and footman's picks as well. They are excellent at underground maneuvers and quite good at sieges. They charge 5 gp per member per week or portion thereof.



The Claw

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: The Trollmoors in the North

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The North, the Underdark

Leader: Killithor the Alhoon

Government: Dictatorship

Number of Members: 100

General Alignment: Lawful evil

History: The Claw is a company of trolls. The members of the Claw wear no symbols, and are directed in battlefield action by hidden masters, presumed by most to be the wizards who are contacted when somebody wishes to hire the mercenary company.

The real leader of the Claw is Killithor the Alhoon, an "illithilich" as described in the *Menzoberranzan* boxed set. Alhoon are undead, psionic mind flayers who can cast spells as 9th-level wizards. Killithor has a council of four normal mind flayers under his control. These in turn communicate with the four human wizards who direct commerce for the Claw, demanding a flat fee of 1,000 gp for any job lasting up to one month.

The Alhoon and his officers are very secretive and seldom seen. They participate in Claw battles, but never risk their secrecy. Killithor has never been known to participate in a battle directly, and has been seen only by his illithid council.

The Claw was formed to spread destruction and may eventually act as a body of shock troops for some nefarious plan of Killithor's.

The trolls of the Claw have no choice on the jobs they take. Their tactics are very basic, though mental commands from the leaders direct them. With their regenerative ability and attacks, the trolls are very effective troops.

The Red Thunder Mercenary Corps

Type: Standing, roaming

Base: The Hordelands

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The Hordelands

Leader: Glory Black-hoof

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 150

General Alignment: Neutral

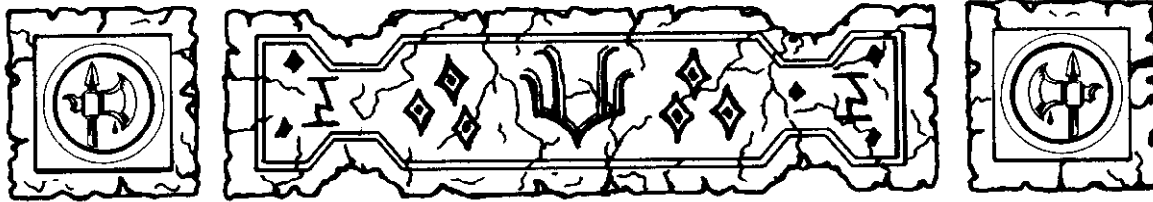
History: The Red Thunder was formed primarily by centaurs from the Chondalwood after they participated in the Battle of Five Crowns in the war against the arcanaloth Yrkhete (see I14, *Swords of the Iron Legion*).

Glory Black-hoof was a minor officer in the centaur forces; meeting and fighting aside members of other races piqued her curiosity, as well as that of other centaurs. After the wars, she and about 30 other centaurs formed a small mercenary company.

The Red Thunder saw action in the Shaar, along the Vilhon Reach, and in the Bloodstone Lands. More centaurs were recruited into the band, which moved its operation into the Hordelands after the Horde Wars. There, they came in contact with the nomadic centaurs of the steppes (see the *Horde* boxed set), a tribe of which joined the Red Thunder. Though the nomads were not used to female leadership, they have learned that Glory is a masterful tactician.

The company consists of three units of 50 archers each; one unit also carries nets and long swords, another sabres, and the third lances. The company prefers to attack with bows, and will retreat to lead opponents into ambush.

The Red Thunder Corps works primarily as caravan guards, for which they charge a reasonable fee of 150 gp per week.



Servants of the Royal Egg

Type: Standing/recruits, roaming

Base: Rethild

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Chult, Tethyr

Leader: Sladdis (Ghassis)

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 200-500

General Alignment: Neutral

History: These spear-wielding lizardmen are unusual among mercenary corps because they are slaves. This group is “rented out” to whomever offers the lizard king Ghassis sufficient gold. The group’s normal cost is 10 sp per member per week, to which Ghassis adds up to 1 gp per slave per week for hazardous jobs (those in which he expects 25% or greater casualties). As long as the gold is right, Ghassis has no qualms about sending the company on even the most dangerous missions, but expects payment in advance.

Ghassis is a shrewd, well-traveled individual. It is rumored he has connections to spelljamming lizard men who supply him with large numbers of strong and intelligent slaves.

Wise employers provide strong leadership and explicit instructions for the corps because the Servants show little initiative. Their field leader Sladdis is intelligent, but is trained to follow orders rather than give them.

The Servants will follow simple, direct tactical orders with single-minded determination. These mercenaries are known for their intense sense of group identity, and few of these implacable reptiles have the imagination to truly fear much of anything. If an employer is interested in hiring a mercenary company for a dangerous, thankless, yet straightforward task, the Servants of the Royal Egg should be considered.

The Shard

Type: Standing, roaming

Base: The Orsraun Mountains

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Unknown

Leader: Londa Ironhead

Government: Clan

Number of Members: ? (less than 50)

General Alignment: Neutral evil

History: The Shards may exist only in memory now. Two seasons ago, a party of adventurers stumbled upon a scene of carnage, noting three red dragon corpses and a large number of charred ogre bodies with the distinctive obsidian-edged weapons that marked members of the Shard. Eagerly searching for treasure, the adventurers found only scorched ground and a few stray coins, leading them to believe that at least some of the ogres had escaped.

The Shieldbreakers

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Shieldbreaker Citadel south of the Deepwash

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Tethyr (?)

Leader: Koranan Splitoak

Government: Military hierarchy

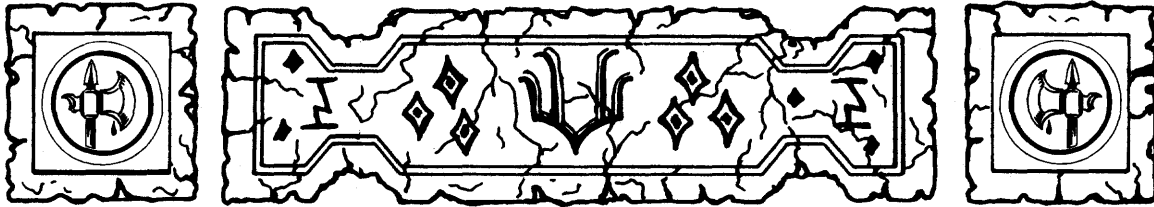
Number of Members: 320

General Alignment: Lawful evil

History: The Shieldbreakers are ogres named for their action upon refusing to support their chief’s slaughter of a human village. They still refuse to use shields in battle, but instead wield two-handed weapons, especially bardiches.

Led by the veteran mercenary Koranan Splitoak, the Shieldbreakers accept any job save one calling for the murder of unarmed foes (which they consider dishonorable). This corps is one of the most respected in the Realms.

They ask 50 gp per day of action.



Silent Rain

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Evereska

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The North, the Stonelands

Leader: Nightshade

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 100 (?)

General Alignment: Chaotic good

History: Little is known of this mysterious group of elven archers, for few have survived their “deadly rain” of arrows. Of those few, none have seen even one of the infamous mercenaries. The company is recognized by their arrows, which use red-striped black fletching and uniquely shaped heads.

Consisting solely of elves, the Silent Rain is one of the most exclusive of mercenary



corps. Caring little for gold and fame (they ask only 100 gp per week), Silent Rain will agree only to jobs that either promote elven causes or involve destroying humanoids.

Prospective employers must leave written word (in elvish) near Evereska, and the Silent Rain will send a representative if interested. Little is known of their leader, but she is supposedly as deadly and as beautiful as her namesake.

The Teeth

Type: Standing

Base: The Stonelands

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The Stonelands, the Goblin Marches

Leader: Jadron the Fang

Government: Dictatorship

Number of Members: 100-200

General Alignment: Chaotic evil

History: These ogres are led by one of the cruelest mercenary captains known, Jadron the Fang. Jadron is utterly ruthless and is as much feared and respected by his own warriors as by his enemies. Over the course of his short and bloody career, Jadron has made many enemies and no friends. Nightshade, leader of the Silent Rain, is particularly vehement in her hatred of Jadron and the Teeth.

To join the Teeth, an ogre must go through a rigorous initiation, including filing all teeth to sharp points. The only way to leave the Teeth is by dying.

The Teeth are loosely organized into units of 19 warriors and a sergeant who reports directly to Jadron. These units can be employed separately or combined to form a larger force. The Teeth favor quick, decisive combat and favor striking from several directions at once to confuse and frighten their foes. The Teeth are especially fond of biting their opponents, leaving distinctive marks on their victims.

This company hires itself out for any job for 2 gp per warrior per week.

Chapter 4: Regional Companies

This chapter covers mercenary companies that originated in areas other than Faerun, or in little-known and culturally unique areas of the continent. None of the corps presented in the next few pages are medieval and western European in feel.

The corps in this chapter offer DMs an opportunity to introduce other cultures to players, but be warned: these entries are very brief. To give the players a real feel for an encounter with members of another culture, DMs will need to do some independent research.

One difference is especially notable in the companies of this chapter: the motivations for formation. Some companies formed for a specific task, while others began as an exploratory mission, and still others became mercenary groups and traveled to Faerun because of the promise of better conditions than they faced at home.

Whatever the reason, these companies are generally less concerned with the primary motivations of gold and glory. This is not to say that companies from other regions are never inspired by such things; these samples are simply presented as a contrast to the standard companies of the Realms.

The Companies

Several of the entries in this chapter appear in abbreviated format.

The map on page 5 shows where many of the groups operate, while the index on page 64 lists the groups by region and also lists the other sources where information might be found.

The Anaconda

Type: Standing, roaming

Base: the Elven Wood near Elmwood

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The Dalelands and the Stonelands

Leaders: Nkonzi and Kwanza

Government: Brotherhood

Number of Members: 90

General Alignment: Neutral

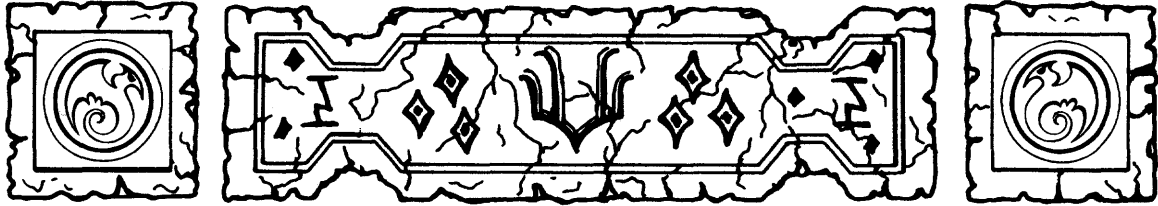
History: This company of black men and women is a brotherhood of warriors sworn to defend one another to the death. Membership is open only to fighting couples; man and wife join at the same time and fight in pairs. Two small rows of diamond-shaped ritual scars on the scalp signify initiation.

The current leaders are Nkonzi Maru, an 11th-level ranger specialized in the spear, and her husband Kwanza Maru, a 9th-level priest of the snake god that is the Anaconda's patron deity. The troops are mostly 3rd-level warriors with concealment and tracking skills.

The origins of the Anaconda warrior society are lost, even to Nkonzi. Their culture is sophisticated but insular, and their language and rituals are never shared with outsiders. Their homeland is an island far to the southwest. Persistent rumors of weretigers among the Anaconda ranks have never been confirmed or denied.

They use poison when outnumbered, but only under a strict code. Only missile weapons may be poisoned, and only one member of a pair may use them.

Strategies and Tactics: The Anaconda take any paying job, but their pay scale always reflects the amount of trouble they expect. Rumors place them as taking jobs both protecting and looting caravans in the Dalelands as well as fighting both with and against the goblinoids of the Stonelands. Their enemies claim they occasion-



ally work for the Zhentarim; as on many subjects, they have no comment.

The Anaconda excel as irregular troops and advance scouts, harassing and withdrawing or setting ambushes. Their ambushes frequently take place by night and involve poisoned blowgun darts. Kwanza can mix a potion that mimics infravision, allowing the Anaconda to operate at night.

In large battles or when on caravan duty they employ Blanka, their elephant mascot, as a rallying point. Nkonzi sometimes has other animal companions as well, including a brace of hawks and a white tiger. The Anaconda's ability to speak an obscure language makes the use of codes unnecessary in battle.

Personality: The Anaconda is a closed group, unwilling to admit outsiders into their confidence. They have a calculating approach to their work; they resent every loss they take, and employers who seek to place them in unnecessary jeopardy often find themselves facing a blood feud carried on by the entire company. However, they never back out of a contract; even if it costs them a dozen pairs of fighters, they finish the job. As soon as their contract expires, however, their employer had better have hired some new help—the Anaconda will destroy everything they just finished defending if their services were underappreciated.

Logistics: The Anaconda travels light; members use scimitars, spears, hand axes, and javelins, and a third of them carry blowguns. They wear hides or leather armor and carry shields.

The basic cost to retain the Anaconda is 120 gp per week but can go to as much as 400 gp for night raids and long-range reconnaissance.

Bushido

Type: Standing, roaming

Base: Chessenta

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Chessenta

Leader: Noro Amoto

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 181

General Alignment: Lawful neutral

History: Inspired by western contact during the Horde Wars, this corps is learning about Realms cultures and hopes to report back to Kara-Tur. It contains 60 heavy infantry, 60 medium cavalry, and 60 mounted archers.

The samurai Noro Amoto, a 10th-level fighter, raised the Bushido to defend the lands of Kara-Tur against the Horde. After fighting well, his men kept marching west.

Noro is choosy about commissions and accepts only honorable work. In battle, Noro prefers to deploy his footmen in strong set positions for foes to break themselves against while the archers harry them. The cavalry are saved for the final blow or to cover a withdrawal. Hard-riding messengers convey orders from Noro to his three lieutenants.

Noro rules with a firm hand; all decisions are his. The company always abides by the code of bushido. They never loot the dead. Transient, they make few attachments, and are curious about both customs and military skill. They have had two inconclusive run-ins with the Renegades.

Bushido is well armed. The archers carry short composite bows and short swords, and wear leather armor. The footmen bear spears and wear brigandine armor. The cavalry has katanas, lances, and banded mail.

The cost of the corps is 700 gp a week.



The Jaguar Guard

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Myratma in Tethyr

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:
Tethyr

Leader: Miquiztl Manik

Government: Brotherhood

Number of Members: 72

General Alignment: Neutral

History: The Jaguar Guards are from Maztica (see the Golden Legion entry).

Each member of the company is a Jaguar Knight from the city-state of Kultaka. Jaguar Knights are part of an elite order, a brotherhood that served as leaders for Maztican armies. They are recognizable by their distinctive jaguar skin armor.

Kultakan warriors helped the Golden Legion conquer the great nation of Nexal. Many of them did not realize their entire continent had been opened to the people of Faerun. Later, when things quieted a bit, the leaders of Kultaka decided to learn about the newcomers by sending a group across the seas to Faerun.

The decision was aided by the presence of a merchant from Myratma, a port city in Tethyr. This fellow, Gar Hollan, offered transportation to Faerun and glorious battle when they arrived.

The Jaguar Guard has been active in skirmishes in Tethyr, where they have lost a few men. They will probably become more active in the future, either as elite skirmishers or as leaders of other military units.

Each Jaguar Guard is a 5th-level warrior, except their leader, who is a 10th-level fighter. Miquiztl Manik has hopes that he and his company can claim some land in Faerun, to which they can bring family and friends.

The Jaguar Knight kit is fully described in the Maztica boxed set. If that reference is unavailable, use the following abilities

for these characters: they can transform into jaguars at will and may cast one spell per day, *talonblade*, which allows them to give a stone weapon a +3 enchantment for a period of one hour.

Strategies and Tactics: The Jaguar Guard currently has an exclusive contract with the council of Myratma, and accepts almost any combat duty. They will not engage in needless slaughter, and they understand honor.

In battle, the Jaguar Guards often act as skirmishers, their ability to change into jaguars giving them some advantages in surprise and stealth. When not using guerrilla tactics, the Jaguar Guard will offer opposing units the chance to become prisoners (a compromise between their style of battle, in which taking prisoners was important, and the style of Faerun).

Miquiztl Manik (roughly translatable as "hand of death") is a master tactician, as are most of his warriors. They follow orders explicitly.

Personality: The Jaguar Guards were raised as warriors. As Jaguar Knights, they were nobles in their homeland. In Faerun, they have not received treatment befitting nobles because most people regard them as ignorant savages. Savages they may be, but they are intelligent ones with a sense of honor.

The Jaguar Guards have few enemies in Faerun, though it is only a matter of time before they earn the enmity of other forces in Tethyr.

Logistics: The Jaguar Guards are armed with knife, spear, and maca (treat the latter as a battle axe). They charge 50 gp per week, plus food, lodging, and any steel weapons used by their defeated enemies.



The Realmspace Companies

If the SPELLJAMMER® boxed set is used (or even acknowledged), the DM should consider the companies detailed in SJR2, *Realmspace*. Though these companies act primarily in wildspace and on the other planets of the Toril system, they occasionally interact with the peoples of Toril.

This chapter briefly discusses the four major Realmspace companies and their operations on Toril. If the DM wishes, these companies could be used as adventure hooks to move the player characters into a wildspace adventure.

In particular, if the players happened to stumble upon a neogi or illithid slaving operation, they may come in contact with one or more of the following groups. Alternatively, if someone were able to contact one of the groups, their services might be purchased—provided they were hired to do something basically good.

Code Helm

This large group (more than 300 people) resides near the sixth planet of the Toril system, Glyth. They conduct raids against mind flayer “ranches” to free the humanoids held as slaves and cattle by the illithids.

Most members of Code Helm are paladins (including their leader, 21st-level Easel Gifford of Amn), though many are specialty priests of Helm. The company is ruled in a military fashion.

If illithid activities increased on Toril, or if word reached Code Helm of a mind flayer “ranch” in the Realms, they would very likely arrange a large raid.

If contacted and offered both money and a chance to kill mind flayers, Code Helm would probably operate much like a mercenary company.

Emerald Brotherhood

This group started out as adventurers in the Realms, operating in Amn, Tethyr, the Thornwood, and the Snowflake Mountains. They were taken into wildspace by illithid slavers.

The Emerald Brotherhood has pledged itself to fight neogi and mind flayers. They may follow individuals of these type to Toril—or may be followed to Toril by neogi, who have offered a high bounty for their deaths. Though the Brotherhood has only four members, it is possible they would recruit an army if a neogi or illithid slaving operation were discovered on Toril.

The Enforcers

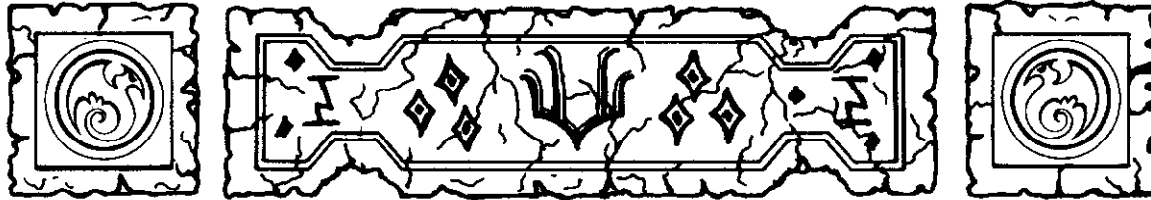
The Enforcers consist of 11 people who are active against pirates and mind flayers in the Toril system. The group is led by a lizard man ranger (8th level Frollth) and a good frost giant (Murray Coldstare). There are also mages, priests, and fighters in the crew.

Members of the Enforcers are vigilantes who have a tendency to ignore established laws when pursuing justice. Like the Emerald Brotherhood, they are potential mercenary recruiters.

The Gauntlet

This is another group devoted to ending neogi and illithid slaving operations. They consider themselves the police force of the Tears of Selune, the small group of asteroids that orbit Toril in the wake of the moon Selune.

The 14 members of the Gauntlet include high-level mages, priests, and paladins. As with the Emerald Brotherhood and the Enforcers, if a neogi or illithid operation were discovered on Toril, the Gauntlet could become mercenary recruiters.



The She-Wolves

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Ixinos, Vilhon Reach

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The Vilhon Reach, the Sea of Fallen Stars

Leader: Theia Heithalata

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 240

General Alignment: Lawful neutral

History: The She-Wolves are female warriors from a small island in the mouth of the Vilhon Reach. Their society is an amazon-style culture, and the women of Ixinos are trained for battle almost from their birth.

The She-Wolves mercenary company was formed nearly a century ago to allow amazons with wanderlust the opportunity to travel while helping to support their homeland.

Though the membership of the She-Wolves rotates, the company always has two units of infantry (each with 50 3rd-level warriors), one of cavalry (50 4th-level warriors), and one of archers (50 5th-level warriors). There are also 10 scouts (rangers, levels 4-7), 10 sorceresses (levels 2-5), and 20 priestesses (levels 3-8). Each unit has a leader of like abilities, chosen from members of the unit. The group's current overall leader, Theia, is a 9th-level paladin.

If possible, the DM should use the amazon kits from *The Complete Fighter's Handbook*, *The Complete Priest's Handbook*, and *The Complete Wizard's Handbook*.

Strategies and Tactics: The amazons will take almost any military job, though they greatly prefer to be on the "good" side of a conflict. They will not accept employment from men who look down on women. In times of need, the She-Wolves also defend the shores of Ixinos and neighboring islands from pirate incursions.

The She-Wolves' tactics vary with the

terrain. Since the She-Wolves have trained all their lives to be warriors, they can work together without the usual confusion inherent in battle. They have developed a rapid code that allows them to change tactics for the entire company with only a few sharp commands. Their shifting lines and contrasting tactics often throw enough confusion into their enemies that these foes do not last long on the battlefield.

Personality: By nature, the She-Wolves are a reclusive and strongly matriarchal society, and feel no debt to men whatsoever. However, they will help any woman in trouble.

They also have a well-defined code of honor, and will not betray their contracts. Wise employers should be wary, however, of cheating the She-Wolves. If they suspect that they are being taken advantage of in some way, their vengeance is deadly and quick.

The She-Wolves have few enemies, except for the pirates of the Fallen Stars, who cannot remember a time without the amazons. The She-Wolves have disrupted piracy near their isles for their entire history and have earned the wrath of the pirates.

Logistics: The She-Wolves are generally well-equipped: one infantry unit carries short swords, the other spears, and both wear bronze plate mail; the cavalry wears scale mail and carries lances and shortswords; archers, scouts, wizards, and priests carry long bows and daggers, with all but the wizards wearing leather armor.

The basic cost to retain the She-Wolves is 500 gp per week.



The Sirocco

Type: Standing, roaming

Base: Anauroch

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Anauroch

Leader: Hajima sitt-Nasir

Government: Clan

Number of Members: 80

General Alignment: Neutral good

History: There are rumors of a land in the far, far south, where there exist civilizations of great glory and might, and where the people live and have always lived in peace and prosperity.

The Sirocco claim to be from the far southern lands, beyond even the Great Sea south of Halruaa. Little is known of their past, except that they entered the north a dozen years ago.

After accepting mercenary jobs in the Shaar and in the Old Empires, they eventually arrived in Anauroch, where they quickly carved a life from the hostile sands.

The Sirocco have none of the strange prejudices that mark many of the tribes of Anauroch; all races are welcome as long as they pay due homage to the true gods. None are turned away on their appearance alone. Their commander is a fiery 10th-level female elven fighter, and she leads a mixed band of human, elven, and dwarven fighters. If the *Arabian Adventures* book is available, use the Desert Rider kit to define every member of the Sirocco.

Strategies and Tactics: The Sirocco see their job as protecting caravans crossing the dangerous desert, as well as patrolling the sands to defend against hostile creatures. Although they have, on occasion, been known to take jobs outside the desert, they do so only when absolutely necessary. The desert may be inhospitable, but it is their home.

Their tactics are simple: waving their scimitars over their heads and shrieking out a ululant war cry, they trample their enemies into the dusty desert.

Many of their enemies have come to expect the charge of the desert riders, and prepare themselves accordingly. However, they often find themselves surprised by a different maneuver, for the Sirocco's scouts are legendary among the peoples of the great desert.

Personality: The members of the Sirocco live by their word. They take their oaths very seriously, and members of their group who knowingly break their word to a client are ejected, without water, into the searing sands.

Employers, even those who break their word with the Sirocco, can expect the desert riders to keep their end of the bargain. However, betrayers of oaths will earn themselves a tireless enemy, one that will not hesitate to offer complete and passionate destruction.

The Sirocco maintain good relations with most of the tribes of Anauroch, and have made an enemy of the Zhentarim. However, their knowledge of desert ways has thus far kept them from the terrible wrath of the evil ones, and with any luck this will continue.

Logistics: Members of the Sirocco are light cavalry armed with scimitars and light lances. Approximately 30 use short bows to harry their opponents from a distance, to fell lone scouts, or to send warnings to their comrades.

The cost of hiring the Sirocco is 120 gp per week. In addition, Hajima sitt-Nasir expects news of the outside world, and appreciates a few luxury items to make life easier for her people. When one considers the dangers in crossing the treacherous wastes of Anauroch, this is a small price to pay for security.

Chapter 5: Specialists

This chapter details several mercenary bands that specialize in some way, either by task or by weapon. These companies sometimes form when units split off from armies or larger corps. Others are created by charismatic individuals who are expert at some task. Whatever the case, there are several specialist companies in the Realms.

Certain corps can be found on maneuvers with larger bands that require their services; specialists are sometimes hired by other mercenary corps for a given task. Some operate only independently.

Like other groups, the specialist companies can be used in adventures. The PCs will run across a group or one of its members, or a group might try to recruit one of the PCs.

The Companies

Some of the entries in this section appear in abbreviated format.

The map on page 5 shows where many of the groups operate, while the index on page 64 lists the groups by region and also lists the other sources where information might be found.

The Company of Hunnar

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Riatavin in Amn

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Tethyr

Leader: Hunnar

Government: Business

Number of Members: 200

General Alignment: Neutral

History: At the market in Riatavin, where almost anything can be bought and sold, there is a small booth where the wealthy can purchase a way past the walls of cities and castles.

The Company of Hunnar specializes in sieges and almost always works in concert

with an army or other mercenary group. Its members are split into three units: 100 0-level men-at-arms to operate siege weaponry, such as catapults, ballistae, rams, and bores; 50 1st-level fighters and thieves adept at getting over castle walls, with ladders, siege towers, and other means; and 50 0-level sappers who dig underneath.

The company charges by the type of job: 200 gp for a keep, 500 gp for a castle, and 1,000-2,000 gp for a city. For a consulting fee of 500 gp, one or two company experts will advise castle owners and city councils on ways to protect themselves from siege warfare.

The Dark Watch

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: The Orsraun Mountains

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The Sea of Fallen Stars

Leader: Lothar Pelamar

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 20

General Alignment: Neutral evil

History: The Dark Watch is a group of human archers mounted on hippogriffs. They participated on the losing side in the wars of Yrkhetepe detailed in I14, *Swords of the Iron Legion*. The original leader of the group, Lothar's brother Thurindar, was slain in the Battle of Five Crowns by a member of the Sunshafts (see the Company of the Singing Dawn).

The Dark Watch is an unscrupulous corps that earns 100 gp per day attacking pirate bands at the behest of rival pirates.



The Destroyers

Type: Standing, roaming

Base: Halabar in Halruaa

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

Tethyr

Leader: Daltim Flamefist

Government: Oligarchic council

Number of Members: 50

General Alignment: Lawful neutral

History: The Destroyers are an artillery company that uses magic as well as normal weaponry.

There are 30 wizards and psionicists (levels 2-9) in the corps, each specialized in destructive disciplines. The company's leader, Daltim Flamefist, is a 14th level fire mage with wild psionic talents.

The remaining 20 members of the Destroyers are 1st-level fighters who man catapults and other large weapons.

Strategies and Tactics: This corps usually acts as artillery support for other armies. They take some jobs as besiegers, but prefer to be in the field.

The mages and psionicists of the Destroyers use their extranatural abilities to eliminate their foes from a distance, or to soften them for the attacks of the main body.

Personality: The Destroyers will honor any contract they have made. However, once the contract has expired, they have been known to accept contracts calling for them to attack former employers. The Destroyers have a special hatred for the Red Wizards of Thay, though the reasons are not known to the public. The Destroyers will accept any contract against Thay for as low as half-price.

Logistics: The Destroyers are armed with a variety of weapons, including catapults and ballistae. Most of their elite carry magical or psionically endowed items as well.

The company charges 750 gp per day.

The Masquerade

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Waterdeep

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

All of Faerun

Leader: Aquila Gerallin

Government: Cell structure (each member knows only two others and the immediate superior)

Number of Members: ? (100 +)

General Alignment: Neutral

History: The Masquerade is a company of professional spies and infiltrators. It employs a large number of informants who remain isolated from the rest of the company; the true members of the Masquerade work undercover. All are prevented from accidental exposure by mental blocks implanted by a high-level psionist.

Their leader is a doppelganger who seldom wears the same face twice.

Little is known about this shady group. Their workings were first uncovered about 25 years ago. The company's true numbers are unknown, but they have a hand in many major events in Faerun.

Most company members are human thieves and wizards, but there is a fair mix of every character class and race.

The members of the Masquerade have a universal set of five (or more?) signs by which they may recognize one another while on jobs.

Strategies and Tactics: This corps takes only missions that require infiltration and spying. Many poisonings are attributed to the Masquerade.

The only time they are involved in battle is to break sieges; they are expert at opening castles.

The members of the Masquerade go to great lengths to protect their identities, using poison or stun gas when cornered.

Personality: The Masquerade are primar-



ily information gatherers, and will record any knowledge gained. They are perhaps the best spy ring on Toril, and will not betray any contract, unless they themselves are betrayed.

The Masquerade are reasonably honorable and seem to have no dark, hidden motives. They have few enemies, only those who have started hostilities with them.

The Masquerade has apparently infiltrated many governments and several other mercenary companies in preparation for potential future jobs.

Logistics: The services of the Masquerade cost 100 gp per day, adjusted for the difficulty of the mission, and are well worth the price.

The Order of the Silver Lance

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Ormath in the Shining Plains

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The Shining Plains, Amn, Tethyr

Leader: Thorivald the Grey

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 100

General Alignment: Lawful neutral

History: The Order of the Silver Lance is a corps of medium cavalry. They carry distinctive, silver-tipped lance and fly a silver banner with a black charger on it.

The company acts independently or with other mercenary companies, generally guarding trade routes in and around Amn.

The Order's leader, Thorivald, is a 10th-level paladin, and most of his riders are 5th-level fighters, rangers, and paladins. They are very trustworthy and will not work for evil employers. They prefer jobs with honor and glory.

The Order charges 100 gp per day.

The Sisterhood of the Oaks

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: The Chondalwood

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The Chondalwood, the Vilhon Reach

Leader: Adriennedar Valgarien

Government: Sisterhood

Number of Members: 60

General Alignment: Neutral good

History: The Sisterhood is a group of 5th-level female rangers that participated in the Yrkhetep wars detailed in I14, *Swords of the Iron Legion*. These humans, elves, and half-elves are all expert trackers, scouts, and archers. They use long bows and long swords, and all carry amethyst dragon scales, or teyastones, for luck and to symbolize their love for one another.

The Sisters are vegetarians who refuse to harm fish, birds, and other "children of nature."

Adriennedar is a 7th-level ranger, as are her closest assistants, Rebecca, Jacinda, Aleesa, and Anwyn. The group lives in tents in the Chondalwood. For 1 gp per person per week, the Sisters will hire themselves out as escorts, scouts, or a special attack force.

The Windriders

Type: Standing, fixed

Base: Arrabar in Chondath

Current Sphere(s) of Operation: None

Leader: Bren Wingblade

Government: Military hierarchy

Number of Members: 20

General Alignment: Lawful good

History: This group of griffon-mounted cavalry has all but retired after traveling to Hades to fight the forces of the arcanaloth Yrkhetep. They are a distinguished group, proud and honorable. They now fight only for glory.



The Wraith of the Inner Sea

Type: Standing, roaming

Base: The Sea of Fallen Stars

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The Sea of Fallen Stars

Leader: Kreodo the "Sea Queen"

Government: Naval hierarchy

Number of Members: 751

General Alignment: Neutral

Note: The Wraith and its leader are described in FR10, Old Empires. What follows is an update of statistics and recent history.

History: The Wraith of the Inner Sea is a long-standing fleet of privateers. They ply the Sea of Fallen Stars in their huge dromonds, fighting pirates or raiding shipping for the highest bidder.

The Wraith fleet consists of three ships: the Sea Queen, the Sea Horse, and the SeaQuest. A fourth ship, the Sea Jewel, was scuttled with the loss of all hands by the former mercenary unit now known as the Agency. Each ship holds 200 crew members, 50 marines, and seven wizards (levels 3-9). The Sea Queen is Kreodo's flagship.

Kreodo is a half-orc 9th-level fighter, 6th-level thief. Her officers include several mid- to high-level fighters and thieves. If kits are used, the pirate and swashbuckler kits are most appropriate.

Kreodo is a vicious opponent, but if foes surrender, she treats them with courtesy until they can be returned home (hopefully in exchange for a good ransom). Her officers are generally unscrupulous, but are devoted to Kreodo and follow her orders to the letter.

The Wraith charges 250 gp per ship per week of activity and expects her employers to repair any damage. She is still waiting for Turmish to replace her lost ship.

Zahara's Krakens

Type: Standing, roaming

Base: The Sword Coast

Current Sphere(s) of Operation:

The Sword Coast

Leader: Zahara the Shark

Government: Naval hierarchy

Number of Members: 250

General Alignment: Chaotic good

History: Zahara's Krakens have a lucrative business protecting shipping along the Sword Coast, attacking pirate bands, and occasionally raiding a port in Tethyr. They ask 500 gp per week or any portion thereof, half in advance, and they demand land-based assistance when attacking a port.

When raiding a port, the Krakens keep destruction and killing to a minimum, and they will not even loot unless they are convinced they are somehow serving a good purpose, such as ending the reign of an evil lord.

The Krakens have a fleet of five small, fast ships. Each has a crew of 15 and carries 30 marines (3rd-level fighters or fighter-thieves) and five spellcasters (wizards or priests of level 3-8). If kits are used in the game, all Zahara's crew use the swashbuckler kit.

One of Zahara's ships is equipped with a spelljamming helm, a fact not known to the general public. If the Krakens get into trouble, the ship will launch into the air, allowing an aerial assault or a quick escape, at least for a few of the mercenaries.

The Krakens are mercenaries for glory, travel, and the thrill of adventure. They enjoy high-risk missions because of the stories they can tell later.

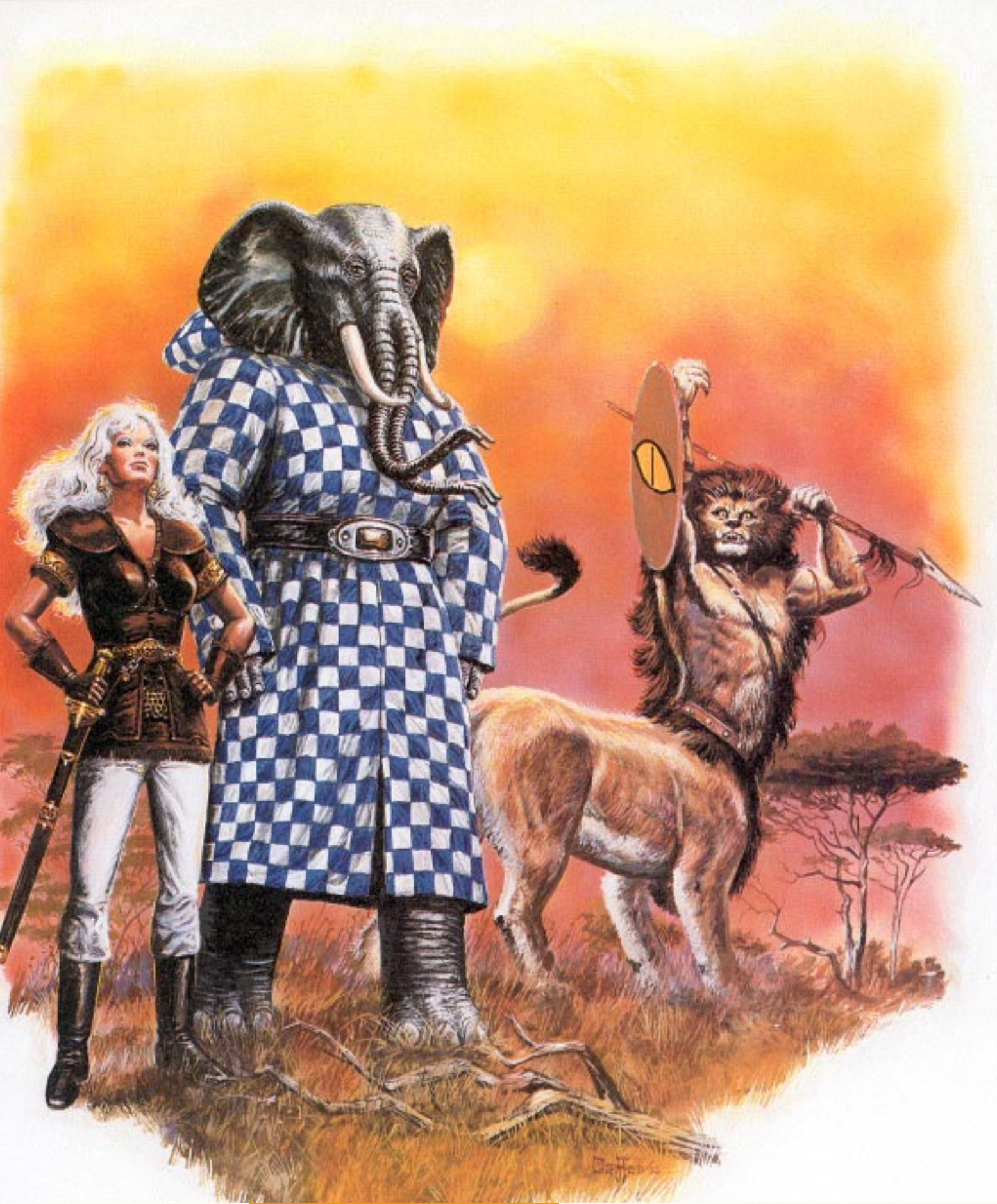
Many members of Zahara's crew are considered folk heroes by the people in the port cities of the Sword Coast, a reputation the crew goes to great lengths to protect.

Justin Ironedge guides his pegasus to a meeting of the leaders of the Company of the Singing Dawn: (left to right) Taran, Lotharius Goldentree, Miebhailar, Solara, and Randwulf Doorbane.





Targosz "Tenhammer" Khosann (far right), leader of the Blacktalons, halts a caravan to confer with his scouts.



Members of the Mindulgulph Mercenary Company, scouting in the Shaar: (left to right) Gayrlana, leader of the company; Floshta, loxo wizardess; and Karrlon, wemic scout.

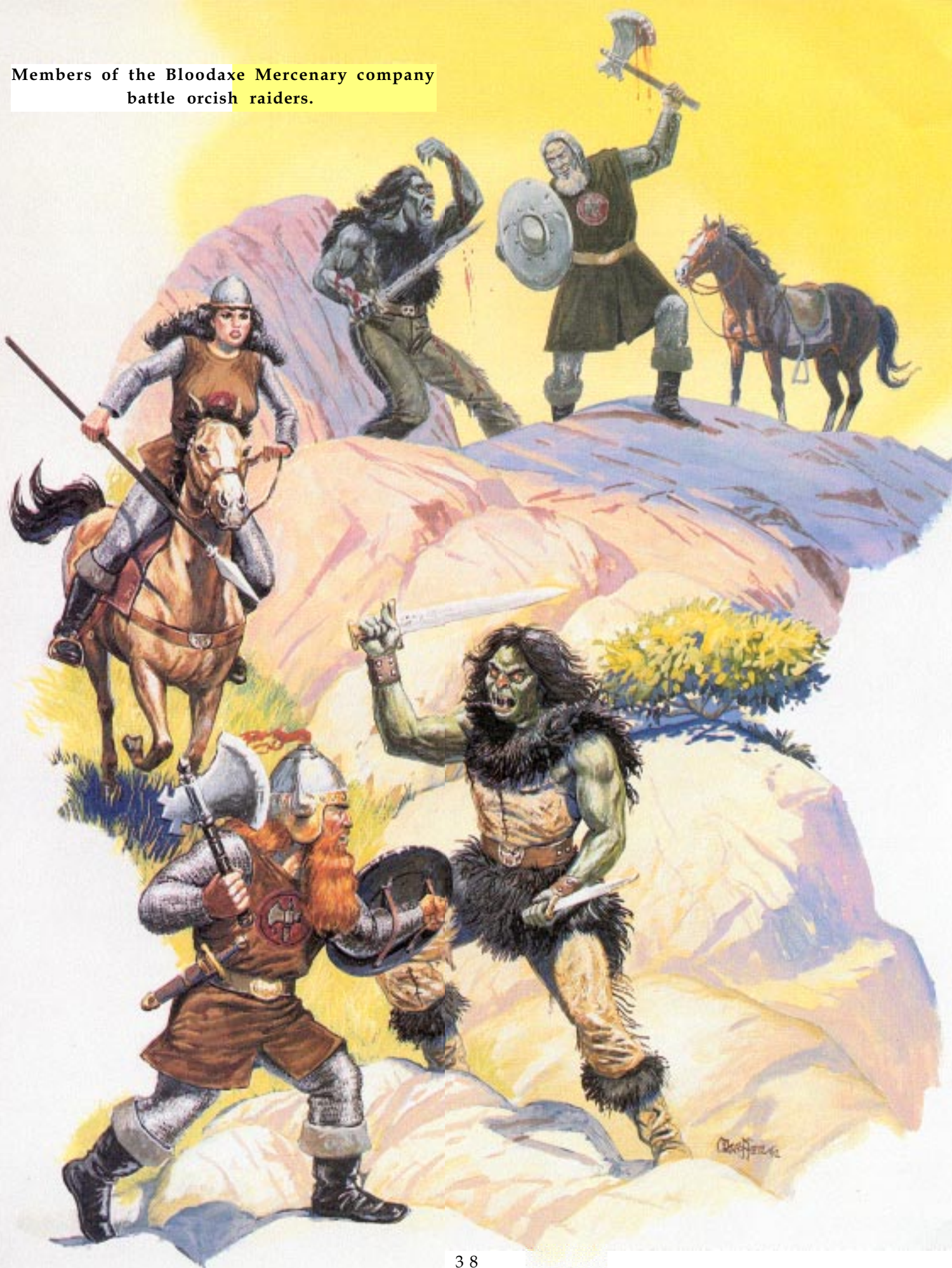


Duke Eltan (center front) prepares to lead the Flaming Fist into battle.



A member of the Flaming Fist fights a member of the Golden Legion for gold and glory.

Members of the Bloodaxe Mercenary company battle orcish raiders.





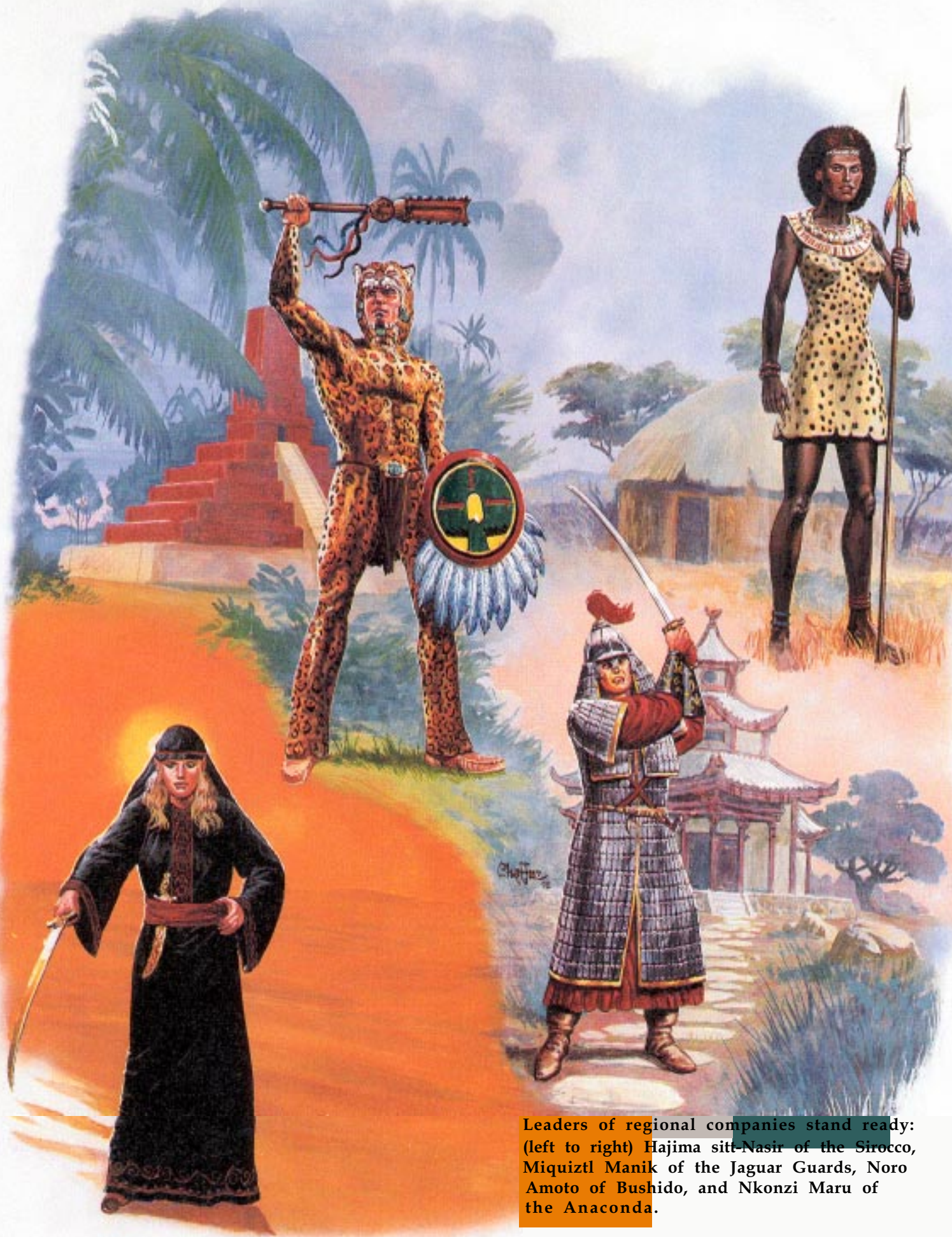
A pair of Red Ravens prepare to ambush bandits.

A Blue Sigil ogre fights a troll of the Claw,
as an illithid waits for the outcome.





Goblinoids of the Chill attack unlucky travelers in the North.



Leaders of regional companies stand ready: (left to right) Hajima sitt-Nasir of the Sirocco, Miquiztl Manik of the Jaguar Guards, Noro Amoto of Bushido, and Nkonzi Maru of the Anaconda.

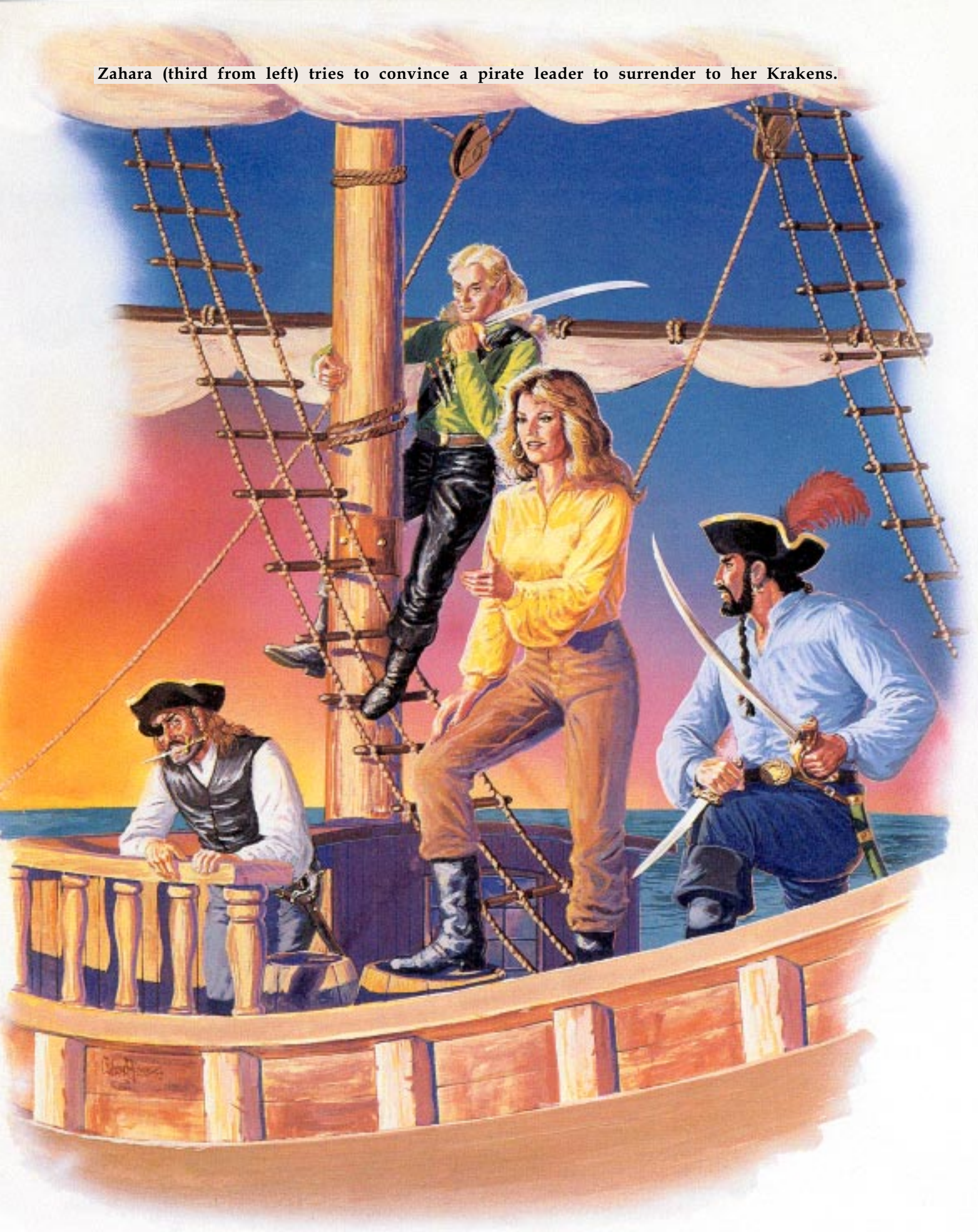


Members of the She-Wolves scout the beaches in preparation for an expected landing of invaders.



A member of the Windriders (left) faces one of the Dark Watch (right).

Zahara (third from left) tries to convince a pirate leader to surrender to her Krakens.





Three recruiters for the Mercenaries' Guild of Westgate try to work out a deal: (left to right) Losifan Urdo, Mannin the Stout, and Varen Malavhan.



Some of the Boar's Heads, leaders of the Order of the Blue Boar, pose for a group portrait: (left to right) Ristamar Rhaal, Samoth Dier, Sinnom Thul, and Cullen Salgoud. A portrait of the other three Boar's Heads hangs on the wall in the background: (left to right) Thantan Rhyrdyl, Bromdurr Tathen, and Ghont Tavvas.



The shades of a pair of Midnight Men look upon the abominations they have become.

Chapter 6: Retired Companies

There are three basic reasons for retiring a mercenary company: death, legitimacy, and age. The first is common enough, and many mercenary corps have had short lifespans.

Legitimacy is attained by relatively few groups. For it, the company must have a desire to settle down, and someone must be willing to give them a permanent position of some kind.

Retirement because of age is very rare among mercenary groups. Most prefer to go out with a blaze of glory.

The Companies

Details of retired companies are offered in a very abbreviated format. References for one, the Midnight Men, appears on the map and in the index.

The Company of the Wolf

The last two decades saw the rise and fall of the Company of the Wolf, which bears no relation to the later adventuring band of the same name.

Led by Baron Wulfgar the Gray, the Company operated from the Inner Sea to the Sword Coast, guarding merchants, fighting humanoids, and occasionally choosing a side in one political conflict or another.

The Company's last action was what most would call a fool's quest—an assault on Zhentil Keep. The company's wizards and thieves managed to place someone inside the keep, but they were uncovered before capitalizing on that advantage. Orcs and other humanoids employed by the Zhentarim swarmed the Company of the Wolf, eradicating them completely.

The Gray Doom

In its early career, the Gray Doom operated in several skirmishes along the Sword Coast. They gained a reputation for speed and skill.

Later, the Gray Doom was one of the companies that fought on the side of good in the battles against Yrkhetep detailed in I14, *Swords of the Iron Legion*. Under the leadership of Olway Lezard, they distinguished themselves in the Battle of Thurgabanteth in Chondath. In that fateful battle, they earned the eternal enmity of several of the evil groups in the area.

Two years after the battle, they were set upon by members of the Chill, some of whom were survivors of the Battle of Thurgabanteth. The skirmish quickly escalated into a large engagement, and the 50 infantry and 20 archers of the Gray Doom found themselves badly outnumbered. Though they fought valiantly (delaying the growth of the Chill for more than a year), the Gray Doom was wiped out to a man.

Clan Obarskyr

Clan Obarskyr acted as mercenaries nearly 12 centuries ago. Operating in the Heartlands, they eventually decided to settle in what would become Cormyr.

They formed the dynasty that has ruled Cormyr since then, but have been largely sublimated into the other noble houses they displaced.

Remembering its mercenary background has caused the Cormyrian royal family to be wary of mercenary activity. This is partly responsible for the Cormyrian policies regarding mercenaries: companies must buy an expensive charter or prove legitimate employment if they expect to be able to gather together and carry weapons.



The Iron Legion

The Iron Legion was the name chosen by those who joined together to invade Hades, the climactic battle of the war against the forces of Yrkhetep.

Despite the inexperience of its many raw recruits, the Iron Legion did quite well. Most of the troops were killed; those who survived still tell the tales of when they went to the lower planes.

Of the groups who traveled to Hades, only two, the Windriders and the Sisterhood of the Oaks, still operate as mercenaries. The Windriders are on the verge of retirement (due to age, unless they can find one last, glorious battle). The Sisterhood maintains its membership, constantly initiating new members whom they deem worthy.

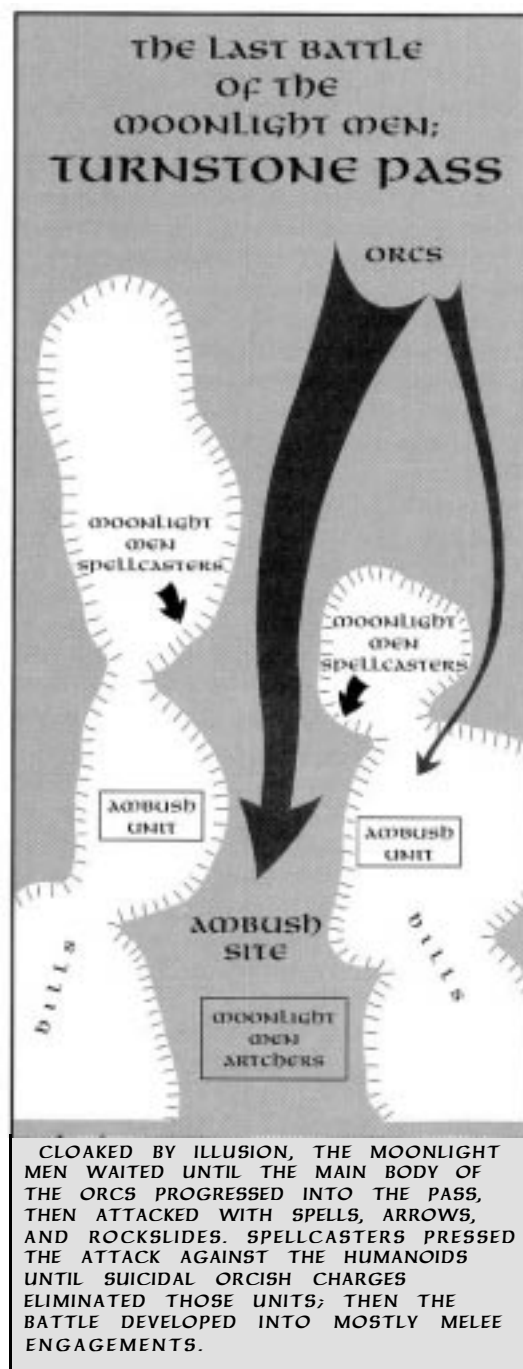
The Iron Legion is an example of a corps that retired because they outlived their purpose.

The Midnight Men

The Midnight Men gained fame in operations from Waterdeep to Thay. They were thought to have disbanded for other pursuits as long as 20 years ago. Supposedly, they were still in existence as a shadowy brotherhood, rather than a battle force.

Recently, however, the symbols of the Midnight Men have been seen on undead creatures in the Stonelands. It seems that someone or something has been hunting down former members of the Midnight Men, making them (as well as other unlucky victims) into undead abominations, and marking them as Midnight Men. Whether this is intended as a pun, or as an insidious plot for revenge, is unknown.

The group now consists of more than 100 undead, ranging from skeletons and zombies to wights and vampires.





The Moonlight Men

The Moonlight Men were one of the most famous mercenary groups, though they were active for less than 10 years.

Though they operated throughout the Realms, the Moonlight Men spent much of their time guarding caravan travel in the North, especially around Sundabar, Silvermoon, and Everlund. Detractors intimate they were smugglers as well.

Their leader was Mintiper Moonsilver (called Mintiper Silverhand by some), a bard of some renown. Mintiper had been a member of several other bands before he formed the Moonlight Men and led them to fame.

The final and most famous battle of the Moonlight Men was their defense of Turnstone Pass against orcish hordes headed toward Everlund and Silvermoon. The 200-person company slew more than 4,000 orcs in the hours-long battle. However, only six Moonlight Men survived the battle.

The whereabouts of those six survivors are unknown. Mintiper wandered in the southern lands for a while, and others are thought to now serve with Silvermoon's militia.

Red Plumes of Hillsfar

The Red Plumes were a somewhat unscrupulous band that operated in the area around the Moonsea. They were put on permanent retainer a few years ago by Maalthiir, First Lord of Hillsfar. They now lead a force of more than 10,000 fighters, levels 1-8.

Hillsfar sent a unit of 600 Red Plumes, mostly cavalry, with the Army of the Alliance during the Horde Wars.

Since the coming of the Horde, the Red Plumes have gone back to their normal activities, protecting Hillsfar and extorting passersby.

The Shining Steel Mercenary Company

The Shining Steel Mercenary Company formed when a band of adventurers (also called the Shining Steel) was asked to recruit a corps large enough to defend Spandeliyon from the pirates of the Fallen Stars.

After the pirates were turned away, much of the company stayed together under the leadership of the adventurers, a mixed group of wizards, warriors, and bards. The group operated under democratic principles, accepting several jobs around the Sea of Fallen Stars.

They paid little attention to real problems, seeing most jobs as a lark, or a romantic and glorious adventure—at least until the coming of the Horde.

The leaders of the mercenary corps held a council to discuss politics, and decided the Horde presented too great a threat to ignore. They were hired with Sembian funds (one of many companies to serve in such a way).

Though they distinguished themselves in battle, the Shining Steel was almost completely wiped out. A few of the survivors have reformed the old Shining Steel adventuring company, which now operates on the Sword Coast.

The Skykillers

The Skykillers were a short-lived mercenary group, cavalry mounted on hippogriffs. Their leader, Sir Lehakin, was a mortal enemy of Bren Wingblade, company leader of the Windriders.

Lehakin's band joined the forces of Yrkhetep when the arcanaloth moved to take over Chondath (detailed in *Swords of the Iron Legion*). The Skykillers met the Windriders at the Battle of Five Crowns, and Lehakin's forces were destroyed.

Chapter 7: Recruiters

As mentioned earlier, only some companies stay together at all times; others are formed only when the need arises. This chapter offers information on several of the better-known mercenary recruiters in the Realms.

Some recruiters are simply agents, who put mercenaries into contact with prospective employers, either in small numbers or in large groups. Other recruiters build a mercenary band which they lead into battle.

Recruiters are likely to interact with adventurers. When building a company, they often have a certain composition in mind for the corps; if a PC in the campaign meets the requirements, a mercenary recruiter may try to hire the PC. Other recruiters may simply need as many people as they can get, quick.

Not all recruiters are scrupulous. Though most of the individuals covered in this chapter try to hire mercenaries by honest and legal means, there are others who recruit by kidnaping.

The Famous and the Infamous

Though the famed recruiters of the Realms have preferred operating areas, those who actually lead companies into battle will usually travel to almost any location. For this reason, recruiters are not mentioned in the index or placed on the reference map. They and their bands can show up almost anywhere.

Since these are not companies in the sense used elsewhere in this book, the format for presentation differs, focusing on the personalities of the individual recruiters and leaders.

Blazidon One-Eye

The secret owner of the Bowels of the Earth Tavern in Waterdeep, Blazidon One-Eye acts as an agent for sellswords in Waterdeep. For a small fee, he will help individual mercenaries (or small groups) contact prospective employers.

It has been a number of years since Blazidon went into the field, and he does not recruit large groups. However, he keeps an eye on the happenings in Waterdeep, and he knows where to find mercenaries. Blazidon may be able to put employers in touch with many individuals, or find employment for a group of adventurers.

Further description of Blazidon can be found in FR1, *Waterdeep and the North*.

Daria the Hammer

A half-elven 10th-level mage/9th-level fighter, Daria is also a moderately wealthy merchant in Waterdeep. Suspected by some to be one of the mysterious Lords of Waterdeep, she is the best-known mercenary recruiter in the City of Splendors.

Once hired for a job, Daria contacts her regulars and puts out word that she is building a company. She often works with Blazidon One-Eye and Filiare (see individual entries) to find mercenaries of a certain type, when special units are desired by her employer.

Daria prefers to lead her company in the field, and she is quite good at strategies and tactics. She is capable of supervising almost any type of unit, from underwater cavalry to normal pikemen to magical artillery.

Daria is known for gaining lucrative deals for her recruits, who receive shares according to experience. Unless the employer wishes otherwise, recruits must bring their own equipment.



Enhanen

This cunning and charismatic fighter (8th-level) recruits from his home in Arrabar, Chondath. He employs a number of messengers who spread the word when he is hired for a job.

Most of the people he recruits come from a body of faithful veterans, but he is always willing to look at new recruits as well. He forms recruits into a company he calls the Will of Enhanen.

Enhanen can raise a body of 100-200 warriors (all infantry) within a day or two of being contacted. Though recruits are asked to bring their own equipment, Enhanen does keep a rather large arsenal that holds several of the more commonly used weapons.

Enhanen used to be more interested in glory and fame than anything else, and he traveled for a time with a semi-permanent company. After too many battles, the thrill has mostly worn off, and Enhanen sees warfare as simply a job at which he happens to be good.

Filiare

Another Waterdhavian tavern owner, Filiare is Blazidon's major competitor in the recruitment of individual hireswords or small groups.

This jovial former mercenary welcomes mercenaries in his tavern. If an employer needs a few mercenaries in a hurry, Filiare can usually recruit 20-30 within a few minutes.

Like Blazidon, Filiare never leads a force into the field. However, Filiare happily takes part in strategy sessions for a small fee (10 gp per session).

Most of Filiare's recruits have their own weapons, but Filiare does keep a large stockpile of used weapons at his tavern, the Dripping Dagger.

Filiare is quite friendly with Blazidon.

Goran of Tethyr

One of the best-known recruiters in Tethyr, Goran is a 12th-level fighter. He has a small permanent staff of six fighters and thieves who help him build mercenary units.

When an employer contracts Goran to build a mercenary company (for a fee of 1 gp per recruit), the warrior starts by advertising (posting bills, hiring criers, and so forth). If the response is not quick enough, Goran has been known to send his assistants out on a special mission in the waterfront taverns of Zazesspur and other ports along the coast of Tethyr, Calimshan, and Amn. Though he treats conscripts well and even pays them, Goran is very adamant about keeping them with the company. Those who escape earn Goran's anger, and if he has his way, his revenge.

Goran is mostly apolitical, caring little about who eventually runs Tethyr. He does, however, bear ill-will toward some of the cities of Tethyr (notably Ithmong) for failing to pay him promptly.

Goran will form three types of units for his employers: infantry, cavalry, and archers. Goran's infantry is generally irregular and somewhat disorganized, though if time permits, he will train them—a little. The cavalry tends to be more disciplined, not because of Goran's efforts, but because of some qualified officers who work as mercenaries in Tethyr. Archer units vary widely in quality; Goran knows nothing about them other than where they should go and whom they should shoot, so the quality of the unit is totally dependent on the quality of the recruits.

There are very few veterans who feel loyalty to Goran, so his companies tend to be fairly inexperienced.



Marius the Valiant

Marius, a 15th-level fighter, was a gladiator in arenas in the Old Empires and around the Vilhon Reach. He eventually led a slave revolt on an obscure island in the southern Sea of Fallen Stars. He and many of the slaves who revolted with him formed a mercenary band, the Free.

The Free operated along the coasts of the Sea of Fallen Stars for many years until they found a small city-state that offered them a home as well as a job.

All but Marius settled down at that time. He felt he should remain fighting, doing what he could to free other slaves in the region. Now, Marius maintains a headquarters in Alaghon, Turmish.

For a fee of 100 gp, Marius will recruit a corps of infantry for an employer with whom he agrees about politics. He gathers the recruits at a prearranged meeting spot of the employer's choice, reviews them, and selects the best among them.

Marius is an expert tactician, a master of many weapons, and a magnificent trainer. Within a month of being contacted (he refuses to work quicker), Marius will build a crack unit for his employer.

Though Marius is best with light infantry units (particularly swords), he is also quite adept at building, training, and supervising units of scouts, ambushers, pikes, and archers. He will gather a cavalry unit if the employer will provide good, trained horses.

Marius has never lost a battle, either in the arena or on the battlefield. Though he has a stringent code of honor and expects his employers to follow it as well, and despite his fighting to free any slaves he happens to see, he is well worth any inconvenience.

The Mercenaries' Guild of Westgate

The Guild is a group of recruiters led by three men and two women, all of whom sometimes take the field. For troops, the Guild recruits mostly warriors, levels 2-4. The Guild also locates duelists for private quarrels.

In a city full of mercenaries, the Mercenaries' Guild thrives by recruiting primarily from the proud merchant families. Locally famous as a group of ne'er-dowells and wastrels, the Guild is also known for its brave and skillful recruits. Though the company has a core of veteran recruits, new members are added with every job.

The Guild operates exclusively in the Heartlands of the Realms. It began by rooting out pirates along the coast of the Sea of Fallen Stars. Later, it fought orcish bandits in the Hullack Forest between Highmoon and Arabel. Later, they fought with the Dalefolk when Lashan made his bid for hegemony.

The guild leader and founder, Palla the Light, is a 14th-level enchantress who began the operation as a way to cajole bored and disaffected members of the Guldar merchant family out of the city so they could make a name for themselves. Detractors claim she uses magic to recruit her troops so quickly, but, in fact, the Guild's lieutenants and their skillful propaganda deserve the credit (or blame) for filling the ranks.

Varen Malavhan, a 9th-level bard, is the guild's chief recruiting and propaganda officer and its treasurer; he makes offers and distributes shares from the payroll. His flair for selling the glory of the company (and his shameless compositions extolling its triumphs) are largely responsible for the company's reputation. He is a slender, blond fellow who carries a long ra-



pier, and he sports a very neat small beard. His family has long since given up apologizing for his unmerchantlike behavior.

Varen always joins the recruits in the field; his songs and exhortations have helped the Guild carry the day more than once. His saga of “The Battle of the Yellow Eye Orcs” was a triumph of propaganda in the taverns and made the company’s name, but it also annoyed the Urdo family, whose symbol is a yellow eye; they took his song as a personal slight. Varen rarely sings publicly in Westgate anymore; he uses a network of bards, fighters, and priests to help him recruit, in exchange for a bounty on each person they enlist.

Sehlmari “the Lucky” Ssemm, a 5th level priestess of Tymora, is the morale officer and quartermaster. She generally travels a day ahead of the troops with a platoon to buy, gather, or commandeer food, drink, and other necessities. Her ability to haggle—and her knack for scrounging up enough to get by—are legendary among the troops, as is her sense of humor and her talent with loaded dice. She is always with the recruits, but rarely leads them.

Mannin the Stout and Losifan Urdo are the field commanders, both 7th-level fighters specialized in their weapons and scarred from their days as duelists. They started as Guild recruits, but impressed Palla enough to be taken on permanently. Mannin has craggy, clean-shaven features and carries a huge double-bitted axe. He is very muscular, with short black hair. Mannin is a pragmatic and harsh commander.

Losifan is a bit of a dandy, with his small goatee, long blond hair, loose, flowing clothes, and his tastefully decorated longsword, a family heirloom. He is a member of the Urdo trading family. Mannin and Losifan are responsible for discipline and training.

Duelling among the troops is discouraged and punished, but is linked to the rivalries between the merchant families that many of the Guild’s recruits come from.

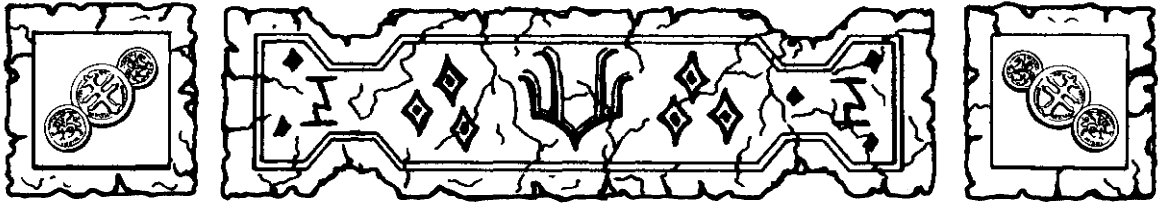
The Mercenaries Guild of Westgate is very proud of its independence from any particular merchant’s interests. They are active against bandits who loot caravans, but, for reasons of professional pride and propaganda, they refuse to raise troops for caravan guard contracts. This drives their families to distraction.

The Guild prefers to lead cavalry attacks, riding to the fore where danger and glory abound. Their charges are generally carried by their elan and prowess. When a charge collapses, it is usually due to poor discipline, high spirits, and insufficient coordination; many Guild charges have been premature. Given enough time to train their recruits, the Guild curbs this tendency to charge first and think later.

The Guild recruiters provide light warhorses, swords, and light lances for the recruits. Armor varies from plate mail to studded leather; the Guild requires volunteers to bring their own.

The Guild uniform is a dark gray cloak, generally worn off the shoulder, a violet shirt with open collar, and dark blue trousers. Fashion counts, since recruits are often younger sons and daughters of the merchant nobility. Veteran recruits, male and female alike, soon affect a long braid of hair hanging from their left temples.

A troop of 100 2nd level dragoons costs 250 gp a week; costs go up from there, and if Palla’s help is needed, the cost doubles.



The Order of the Blue Boar

It is said that anything can be purchased in Amn, and that includes mercenaries. The best and most famous mercenary recruiters in Amn belong to the Order of the Blue Boar.

The Blue Boars were once headquartered at Castle Spulzeer, but moved out several years ago when the Spulzeer family began to fall apart (see FR3, *Empires of the Sands* for more information). The leaders of the Order—the seven “Boar’s Heads”—now operate from the sprawling Castle Blue just outside of Riatavin.

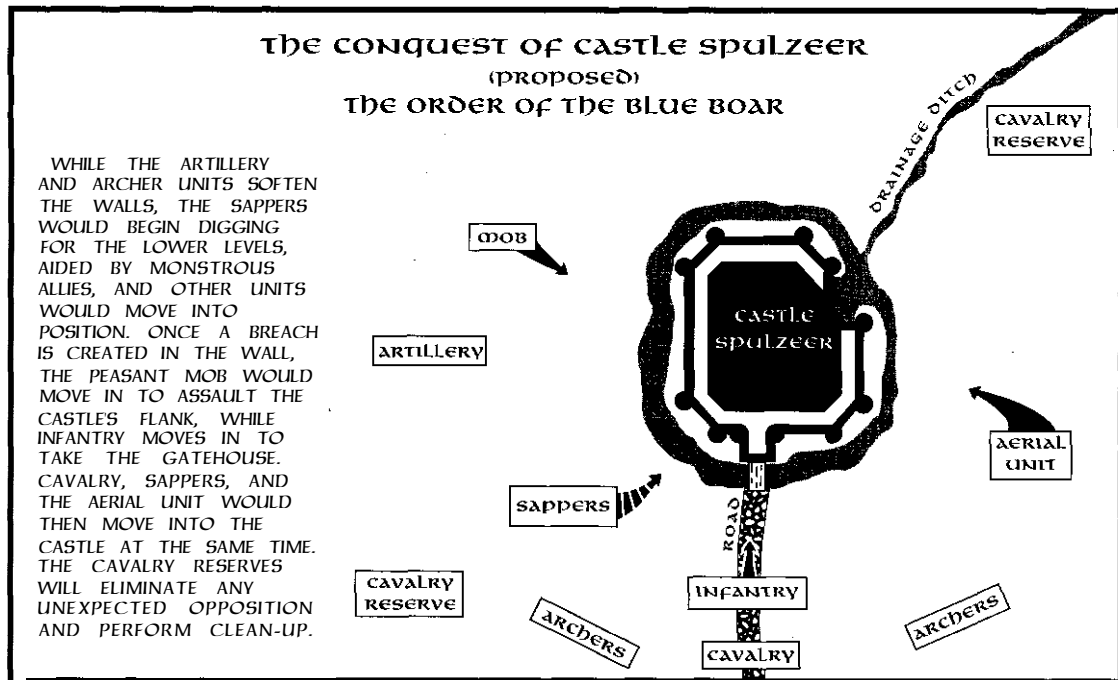
The Boar’s Heads approve the membership of “Swords” in the Order; they can also expel them at will for unprofessional conduct. About 400 Swords—all wealthy,

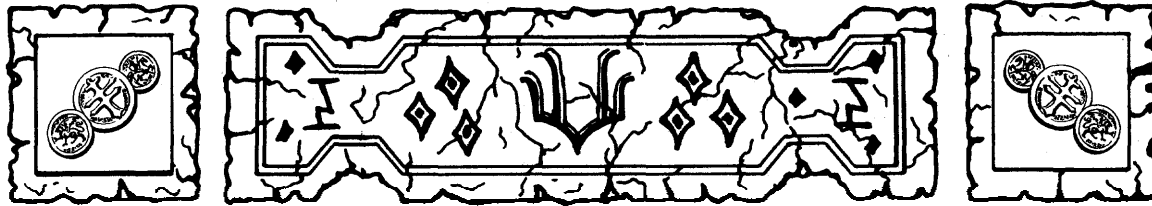
experienced veterans—belong to the Order, spread throughout the cities of Amn, Calimshan, Tethyr, and the Sword Coast. Though all the Boar’s Heads are male, a few of the Swords are women.

Employers seeking the aid of the Blue Boars must apply in person at their Amnish headquarters. The council of Boar’s Heads decides whether or not to accept the job. If they do accept, they inform the Swords, who may then apply to take part in the operation.

Based on the employer’s offer, the Boar’s Heads determine how many soldiers and leaders are needed for a job, then review the applicants from the Swords. If there are too many applicants for a given job, membership seniority determines who gets the job.

Each participating member receives a





share of the bounty. They can take part in the mission alone, or involve as many assistants or substitutes as they want, including non-member wizards, warriors, and even monsters, though they are responsible for the actions of their hirelings. Some members always use hirelings, being disabled or too old to participate in battle themselves.

The Order will take almost any job that they do not find morally repugnant. They ask for relatively high fees (5 gp per Sword per day, plus a finder's fee of 700 gp initially, payable to the council of Boar's Heads).

The Order of the Blue Boar has considered retaking Castle Spulzeer, and they have complete plans ready for implementation the moment someone offers to pay them for doing it.

The badge of the Order, worn only by the Boar's Heads and the Swords, is a grizzled, razorback boar, rampant on a red, russet, or silver field. The standard uniform of the Order of the Blue Boar is a dark blue shirt with gold buttons and a stiff collar, dark blue trousers, and black, calf-high boots.

What follows are descriptions of the Boar's Heads and their functions in order of seniority. All these men are lawful neutral human fighters. Kits are given for those DMs who use *The Complete Fighter's Handbook*.

Ristamar Rhaal is a 10th-level noble warrior, a distinguished-looking man in his 40s. He is the chairman of the council of Boar's Heads and the owner of Castle Blue. Ristamar is very dignified, but is not without a sense of humor.

Besides leading the council, Ristamar negotiates contracts with major governments, because his noble heritage gives him an advantage in dealing with other leaders. He is a charismatic warrior known for the tournaments and parties he regularly sponsors.

Lord Rhaal occasionally dons a suit of

full plate armor and leads a company of cavalry into battle.

Ghont Tavvas, a 10th-level noble warrior, is the oldest Boar's Head, almost 90 years old. Once a great warrior, he led infantry companies into major engagements. Now, he sits on the council and offers strategic advice, but always hires substitutes to lead his recruits in the field.

Ghont is very dignified and is rarely seen out of uniform. Though he is now frail and well past his prime, his mind is sharp and he is quite proud.

Lord Tavvas is distantly related to the former ruling family of Tethyr, a secret known only to a few. He was exiled from that country, and mostly forgotten, nearly 70 years ago after participating in one of the brief wars of succession.

Sinmom Thul, a 10th-level myrmidon, is a large man with brown hair and a bushy mustache. The third son of a wealthy Amnish merchant, Sinmon had to make his own fortune.

Sinmon became a mercenary, leading a company of cavalry that gained fame along the Sword Coast. Since making his fortune and joining the Order, Sinmon has put on some weight. A tactical genius, he sometimes supervises field operations, but he rarely leads a cavalry charge any more.

Sinmon is uncomfortable with the trappings of nobility and rarely wears a uniform. He sees the bureaucracy of the council as an unnecessary waste of time.

Bromdurr Tathen is a 13th-level peasant hero. Now in his early 40s, Bromdurr gained fame in his youth by helping defend his home of Memnon (in Calimshan) from pirates. He later helped start Calimshan's navy.

Bromdurr is an expert at both naval operations and anti-naval defenses. He still owns a ship and will happily take to the sea in any naval assault.

As a "hero of the common man," Bromdurr is also very adept at turning peas-

Chapter 8: Adventuring Companies

ants, farmers, and urban mobs into effective fighting forces.

Thantan Rhyrdyl, a 13th-level cavalier, is the consummate battlefield leader. This charismatic fellow is an experienced cavalry officer, but is able to get the best effort from any unit.

Off the field, Thantan comes across as somewhat stiff and arrogant. From another wealthy Amnish merchant family, Thantan formed a well-armed and armored cavalry company in his youth and left to seek thrills and fame. Though disappointed in him, his family still acknowledges him as a member.

Samoth Dier, an 11th-level myrmidon, is tall, muscular, and dark-complected. A recent addition to the Boar's Heads, he replaced Gaurundur Thasz after that fighter died fighting in Tethyr.

This Waterdhavian is a master artilleryist and an expert at leading missile units. He prefers to take part in field actions, and usually dresses in his field gear. First and foremost a soldier, Samoth is very confident in his abilities.

Samoth serves as chief logistics officer for the Order. He constantly keeps track of supplies and soldiers, and establishes caches and supply lines for most of the Order's operations.

Cullen Salgoud, the swashbuckler of the group, is an 11th-level fighter. He joined the Boar's Heads to replace for Dstar Klathor, slain in the Horde Wars.

Cullen is charismatic and sarcastic, the most flamboyant of the Boar's Heads. He wears his hair, goatee, and mustache very neat, and usually refuses to wear the Order's uniform.

Cullen is an authority on scouting and spying missions, and he directs overall intelligence gathering for the Order. He is secretly a member of the Masquerade.

Cullen has an uncanny sense for whether someone is lying or not, as well as their strengths and weaknesses.

As mentioned earlier, adventuring companies often interact with mercenary companies. Many are actually smaller versions of true mercenary groups, the real difference being that mercenary companies tend to be larger and better organized.

Large mercenary forces might sometimes recruit smaller adventuring bands for special missions, perhaps even keeping them on retainer for an extended period of time.

In addition, adventuring groups can serve as "seeds" for mercenary companies, either growing by adding permanent members, or recruiting temporary forces.

In order to provide examples for DMs, a few special cases are covered briefly in this chapter.

Companies in Other Sources

Many other products in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® game line describe adventuring companies. Especially notable are the Campaign Set, the Adventures hardcover, and this book's predecessors in the "FR" line. If DMs wish to use those companies with mercenary groups, or as allies or adversaries for the PCs in a campaign, those sources should be consulted.

Where Are They Now?

The adventuring groups of the Realms are constantly growing, changing, moving, and ceasing to exist. DMs should feel free to use adventuring groups anywhere they fit.



Transitional Companies

There are a few companies in the Realms that are in a transitional state, not quite mercenary corps, and not quite adventuring companies. A few samples are offered here.

The Agency

This adventuring group consists of eight rather unique members: three elves, including a blade bard, a bladesinger fighter/mage, and a wilderness ranger; a tabaxi, an aarakocra, and a hengeyokai cat; a gnomish priest with mechanical parts; and a human militant wizard.

Most of the members worked with mercenary companies, primarily the Mindulgulph corps. Because they understand the operations of mercenary units, they are trusted by several corps and often hired for special missions.

The Knights of Myth Drannor

This famous group is described in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Set and in FR7, *Hall of Heroes*.

Though still known for their adventuring, the Knights of Myth Drannor have produced two very skilled mercenary recruiters in priests Jelde Asturien and Dust Sulwood.

Dust lives in Arabel and has a Cormyrian royal charter for a mercenary corps. He usually recruits individuals for special missions, rather than for full companies. He prefers not to take the field, but would possibly do so in case of a great emergency.

Jelde is a prominent member of the clergy of Lathander in Eveningstar. On occasion, however, he has been known to work with the Company of the Singing Dawn, or to gather a band himself and venture into the Stonelands.

The Knights of the Unicorn

This group, headquartered in Baldur's Gate (see the FORGOTTEN REALMS *Adventures* hardcover) has recently begun leading a mercenary corps.

The Knights recently had the opportunity to ferret out a group of bandits that operated along the Sword Coast. When the time came for the final assault on the bandit stronghold, the Knights gathered a small corps of mercenary infantry, including a number of rangers and rogues. After the successful raid, the Knights kept much of the band together (perhaps 50 people).

Like the adventuring group for which it is named, the Knights of the Unicorn mercenary company is dedicated to helping the needy and rescuing all in need of aid. Most worship, or at least revere, Lurae, queen of talking beasts and intelligent creatures.

Though the group continues to do good deeds, the wanderlust, desire for adventure, and whimsical nature of the original Knights may cause the corps to fragment before too long.

The Purple Flame

This company, described in the FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Set, seems to be growing into a mercenary company.

The Purple Flame, based near Soubar, which is between Scornubel and Waterdeep, has made a living for several seasons by guarding caravans. The group has always been primarily warriors, with some magical support.

They have recruited new members recently, and they now number more than 100 mounted warriors. They are on the verge of creating a mercenary charter, because the group has outgrown its previous form of government.

Chapter 9: Current Events

Throughout the Realms, time marches on and things constantly change. This section offers an update of recent events in the Realms, specifically in reference to mercenaries.

Special Groups

Several special groups in the Realms interact with mercenaries. Some are subtle manipulators, while others will blatantly hire mercenary corps to do their bidding. The Realms Campaign Set and the Adventures hardcover provide details on several of the groups mentioned in the following text.

The Harpers, the Cult of the Dragon, and the Lords of Waterdeep all are careful to not expose themselves. They seldom hire mercenary bands to do their bidding and never do so directly. Mercenary bands hired by members of these groups will seldom be aware of their true masters.

The Zhentarim often acts in subtle ways using individual operatives, but agents have been known to hire large groups of mercenaries for large jobs.

Similarly, the Red Wizards of Thay sometimes hire mercenary corps for specific purposes. More often, however, they dominate humanoids or monsters, or raise an army of undead, to do their bidding in large scale action.

Other, less influential groups, like the Shadowcloaks of Calaunt or Twilight Hall in Berdusk, might hire mercenary groups to perform tasks that would endanger their operation.

Each group has its own interests, which will create unique experiences for mercenaries and adventurers.

Other Events

Many opportunities for the adventure-some have come with the opening of the Hordelands, Kara-Tur, and Maztica to the people of Faerun. There is currently a drain on the fighting forces of Faerun as people succumb to the urge to travel and explore. As other exotic areas are discovered by travelers from Faerun, this trend will continue, with individuals and governments exploring or trying to establish colonies.

There is also an influx of veterans from these areas. These people have explored the strange lands and fought in the wars, and are now ready for adventure in Faerun.

In Faerun itself, there are a number of “hot spots.” There are many minor powers in these areas, and they may have trouble paying mercenaries.

In the North, orcs are building hordes, while barbarians are fighting or leaving their tribes to make their ways in civilization. In Tethyr, the loss of the royal family has thrown things into chaos. In Chessenta and along the Vilhon Reach, political instability causes almost constant warfare.

Because of the Pirate Isles off the Sword Coast and in the Sea of Fallen Stars, coastal powers will always need protection, or wish to “end the pirate menace once and for all.”

Chult is being explored; there are rumors of a coming war in the Underdark gates to the nether planes allow invasions; and there are petty merchant wars throughout the Realms.

All these events, plus the existence of ruined keeps and lost treasures throughout the Realms, should provide enough excitement to keep mercenaries and adventurers quite busy.

BATTLESYSTEM™ Game

Statistics

This chapter provides statistics for several of the mercenary companies and leaders presented in *Gold & Glory*. These are for use with the BATTLESYSTEM™ Miniatures Rules.

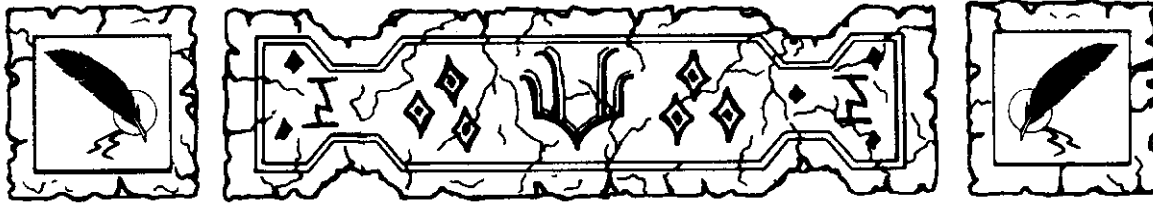
The basic listing for each troop type includes the five principal ratings: attack dice, armor rating, hits, morale rating, and movement allowance. Following those statistics is any additional information that applies, such as range of missile weapons.

The statistics given are typical for the companies listed. Individual units may vary somewhat.

Leader	AD²	AR	Hits	CD³	MV⁴	Range⁵
Anaconda: Kwanza ⁸	6*6	8	3	7	12	1/2/3
Anaconda: Nkonzi ⁸	8*8	8	6	15	12	1/2/3
Blacktalons: Tenhammer	10	6	6	14	12	-
Bloodaxes: Velkor Minairr	10	5	6	15	9	-
Blue Boars: Rhyrdyl	10*10	4	7	19	15	-
Blue Sigil: Mog the Fist	10	6	3	9	9	-
Bushido: Noro Amoto	10*10	5	5	16	6	7/14/21
The Chill: Ardenor Crush	10	5	5	11	6	-
Crimson Sea: Lhrek	8	7	4	10	12	-
Daria the Hammer	8	5	5	13	6	-
Dark Watch: Lothar ⁸	8*8	8	4	9	18/36(D)	7/14/21
Enhanen	8	7	4	14	9	-
Flaming Fist: Eltan ⁸	12+8*12	3	11	28	12	1/2/3
Goran of Tethyr	10	6	6	14	9	-
Hammerhands: Garren	8	5	4	11	6	-
Jaguars: Miquiztl Manik	8*8	7	5	14	12	1/2/3
Llandrydd	8	6	3	14	9	-
Marius the Valiant	10	6	8	21	9	-
Mindulgulph: Gayrlana	10	6	6	20	12	-
Red Ravens: Rayanna	8	7	3	9	12	-
Red Thunder: Glory	8*8	7	3	10	18	4/8/17
Renegades: Helyos	10*10	6	7	15	9	6/12/21
She-Wolves: Theia	8*8	6	5	17	6	1/2/3
Shieldbreakers: Koronan	10	7	3	10	9	-
Singing Dawn: Solara	10*10	6	5	13	12	7/14/21
Silver Lance: Thorivald ⁸	[10]10	5	5	18	15	-
Sirocco: Hajima	[10]10*8	9	5	16	24	5/10/15
Sisterhood: Adriennedar	8*8	8	4	11	12	7/14/21
Society/Sword: Stilmus	10	6	8	19	9	-
Teeth: Jadron the Fang	10	7	3	7	9	-
Veterans: Giovanni	6	7	4	12	12	-
Westgate: Losifan	10	7	4	11	6	-
Westgate: Mannin	10	6	4	15	12	-
Windriders: Bren	[10]10	3	5	13	12/30(D)	-



Company/Unit	AD²	AR	Hits	ML	MV⁴	Range⁵
Anaconda Blowguns ¹	4*6	7	2	17	12	1/2/3
Anaconda Scimitars ¹	7	2	15	12	-	
Anaconda Spears ¹	6*6	7	2	15	12	1/2/3
Blacktalons Cavalry	10	8	2	13	18	-
Blacktalons Infantry	6	8	1	12	12	-
Blacktalons Scouts ¹	6	8	2	12	12	-
Bloodaxe Cavalry/Axes	10	7	3	15	18	-
Bloodaxe Cavalry/Slings ¹	6*8	8	2	13	18	5/10/20
Bloodaxe Cavalry/Spears ¹	6*8	7	2	14	18	1/2/3
Blue Sigil Ogres	10	6	3	15	9	-
Bushido Heavy Infantry	8*8	8	3	15	9	1/2/3
Bushido Medium Cavalry	[12]12	7	3	17	18	-
Bushido Mounted Archers	12*10	9	3	16	18	5/10/18
The Chill: Cold Steel	6	7	1	13	9	-
The Chill: Frigid Fists	10	7	3	13	9	-
The Chill: Frost Riders	12	8	2	16	15	-
The Chill: Icicles	8*6	8	1/2	10	6	-
The Chill: Winter Wolves ¹	12	7	2	14	18	-
The Claw Trolls ¹	12	7	3	15	12	-
Code Helm ⁸	8	4	3	18	6	-
Crimson Sea Archers	8*4	9	1	13	12	4/8/17
Crimson Sea Cavalry	[12]12	7	3	14	15	-
Crimson Sea High Infantry	8	6	3	15	6	-
Crimson Sea Low Infantry	6	7	2	13	9	-
The Dark Watch	12*12+8	8	3	14	18/36(D)	7/14/21
Flaming Fist 3rd-level	10	7	2	15	18	-
Flaming Fist 4th-level	8*10	6	3	16	18	7/14/21
Flaming Fist 5th-level	[12]8*10	6	3	17	18	7/14/21
Flaming Fist 6th-level	[12]8*12	5	3	18	18	7/14/21
Flaming Fist Eagle Knights	10*8	7	3	17	12	5/10/20
Flaming Fist Eagles ¹	10	7	3	15	6/36(B)	-
Flaming Fist Priests	10	5	3	20	18	-
Flaming Fist Rangers	10*8	9	3	16	12	7/14/21
Golden Legion Bowmen	8*8	7	2	12	12	7/14/21
Golden Legion Cavalry	[12]10	8	2	15	18	-
Golden Legion Crossbows	6*8	7	2	14	12	6/12/18
Golden Legion Spearmen	6*6	7	2	12	12	1/2/3
Golden Legion Swordsmen	6	7	2	13	12	-
Hammerhand Axes	8	6	2	16	6	-
Hammerhand Hammers	6	6	2	17	6	-
Hammerhand Picks	8	7	2	16	6	-
Jaguar Guard Jaguars ¹	12	7	3	16	15	-
Jaguar Guard Knights ⁸	8*8	7	3	17	12	1/2/3
Llandrydd's Auxiliary	6	9	1	12	12	-
Llandrydd's Steel	8	7	2	15	9	-
Mindulgulph Giff ⁷	10*10	6	3	18	6	5/15/21
Mindulgulph Kenku ⁸	10*10	7	2	16	6/18(D)	7/14/21
Mindulgulph Thri-Kreen ¹	12*12	7	3	16	18	3/6/9



Company/Unit	AD²	AR	Hits	ML	MV⁴	Range⁵
Mindulgulph Wemics ¹	8*10	8	3	13	12	1/2/3
Order of the Silver Lance ⁸	[12]12	6	3	18	15	-
Red Raven Archers	8*6	8	2	13	12	5/10/17
Red Raven Swords	6	8	2	13	12	-
Red Thunder Archer/Lance ¹	[12]10*12	7	3	14	24	5/10/15
Red Thunder Archer/Net ⁸	10*10	7	3	15	18	4/8/17
Red Thunder Archer/Saber ¹	10*10	7	3	14	24	5/10/15
Renegades Archers	8*6	9	1	13	12	6/12/21
Renegades Cavalry	[12]12	7	3	17	15	-
Renegades Infantry	6	7	2	14	9	-
Servants of the Royal Egg	6*6	7	2	12	6//12	1/2/3
She-Wolves Archers	10*6	9	3	16	12	7/14/21
She-Wolves Cavalry	[12]10	8	3	17	18	-
She-Wolves Spears	6*6	7	2	17	6	1/2/3
She-Wolves Swords	6	7	2	17	6	-
Shieldbreaker Ogres	10	7	3	14	9	-
Silent Rain ¹	12*8	8	3	16	12	7/14/21
Singing Dawn: Foresters ¹	8	8	2	13	12	-
Singing Dawn: Lightblades	[12+8]12+8	8	3	18	24/48(D)	-
Singing Dawn: Solara's	8	7	3	15	12	-
Singing Dawn: Spears	6	7	1	13	12	-
Singing Dawn: Sunshafts	12*12+8	8	4	19	24/48(D)	7/14/21
The Sirocco ¹	[12]10*10	9	3	15	24	5/10/15
The Sisterhood of the Oak	10*8	9	3	15	12	7/14/21
Society/Sword Archers	8*6	8	2	14	12	7/14/21
Society/Sword Cavalry	[12]12	8	3	15	15	-
Society/Sword High Inf.	8	6	3	15	6	-
Society/Sword Low Inf.	6	6	2	14	6	-
The Teeth Ogres ¹	10	7	3	12	9	-
Veterans' Guild Archers	10*8	8	2	13	9	5/10/18
Veterans' Guild Cavalry	10	8	2	13	18	-
Veterans' Guild Infantry	6	8	1	12	9	-
The Windriders	[12+8]12+8	6	4	19	12/30(D)	-

¹ This unit cannot assume regular formation.

² Numbers in square brackets are AD for charging attacks. If two numbers are listed, separated by an asterisk; the first number is the AD for a missile attack, the second for a melee attack.

³ CD ratings are listed in inches.

⁴ MV ratings are listed in inches. If two numbers are listed separated by a slash, the second number is the flying movement rate; such entries are followed by a letter in parentheses, the maneuverability class. If numbers are separated by a double slash, the second number is the swimming movement rate.

⁵ Ranges are listed in inches, in the order short/medium/long range.

⁶ These are Eagle and Jaguar Knights in their respective animal forms.

⁷ The Mindulgulph Giff carry arquebuses, which can be fired once every three rounds; they generally rotate fire so 1/3 of the units fire each round.

⁸ This unit has spellcasting or special abilities, such as breath weapons, regeneration, or unusual weapons. See individual descriptions for details.

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FMA1: *Fires of Zatal*
 FROC: Campaign Set, *Cyclopedia of the Realms*
 FROD: Campaign Set, *DM's Sourcebook of the Realms*
 FR3: *Empires of the Sands*
 FR5: *The Savage Frontier*
 FR10: *Old Empires*
 FRA: FORGOTTEN REALMS® *Adventures*
 I14: *Swords of the Iron Legion*
 MazG: Maztica Campaign Set, *Gods and Battles*
 MazJ: Maztica Campaign Set, *A Journey to the True World*



Gold & Glory

by Tim Beach

The jingle of gold and the chance to earn glory in the battlefield motivate many people to answer a call to arms. These men and women are mercenaries, willing to fight someone else's battle for the chance to earn a few coins or lasting fame. *Gold & Glory* describes the mercenary companies of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Setting. The famous and the infamous are detailed within: the Flaming Fist, possibly the most powerful private army on Toril; The Mindulgulph Mercenary Company, certainly the most bizarre; the honorable Bushido, the sly Masquerade, the snobbish Order of the Blue Boar, the hard-fighting She-Wolves, and many more. Many of the companies are brought to life in the 16 full-page full color portraits in this sourcebook. Gaming information, including statistics for BATTLESYSTEM™ Game scenarios, is offered as well. Player characters can adventure with these mercenary corps, earning gold and glory for themselves!

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