

Warfighter's Guide

A Supplement to the v4.0 Player's Guide

of the

Free Kingdom

of

Drakenfjord

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Chapter 1 : WAR!!!!!!

"War is the supreme test of man in which he rises to heights never approached in any other activity."
- - General George S. Patton, June 5, 1944

Wars have been fought for land, resources, money, honor, defense, vengeance, religion, and a thousand other reasons. Some were small enough to involve only a single village of a few dozen people. Others have involved millions and encompassed the entire globe. War has been the constant factor of human development since the first cavemen raided their neighbors for food, tools, and women (if they were cannibals, these were all the same reason).

But war is a devastating venture. It leaves much of the population dead or crippled, it drains the nation's wealth, public works are ignored for the needs of the moment, and when it's over it puts a large number of highly trained killers into an economy now flooded with cheap labor.

But strip away all the death, maiming, expense, decay, and crime that comes with war, and what do you have left? Physical and intellectual competition. Football, soccer, paintball, yachting, boxing, and more sports than you can shake a stick at.

And it also gives you boffer combat. Which is where we come in.

Real World vs. Fantasy

The obvious difference between real war and boffer war is that nobody really dies. Not only does that prevent us from going to prison as mass murderers, it allows us to take chances, to push to that higher level of performance that nobody in their right minds would ever try in actual combat.

First there are numbers. In boffer combat, it is not unusual for the losing side to be wiped out and the winning side to take about 50% to 70% casualties. In modern warfare, a 15% loss is considered a disaster that the army might never recover from.

Then there is the speed. Actual armor and weapons weigh a lot. In ancient warfare, light troops were common not because they wanted the maneuverability that being unarmored gives you, but because they were too poor to afford expensive heavy armor that would keep them alive. The richer you were, the more protection and the better weapons you would carry, and the more effective you would be.

We have little need of logistics. We bring food and drinks for a few days, often have our largest meal provided by the event staff, and can easily pop down to the corner store or fast food joint if we want more. Sewing machines can repair clothes in minutes, and we can throw all of our lightweight and very compact camping gear into the trunk for a drive home.

But the ancient soldier had to carry everything he might need on his back while he walked who-knows-how-far. A week's food might be a couple of pounds of raw grain and the occasional meat brought in by lucky hunters. Most of what you live on would come from looting, and it might be weeks between small scattered farms, much less actual towns. And if you broke it, it was gone for good. A shirt could take weeks to make, longer if they had to spin thread by hand, and you'd end up sleeping on cold ground under open sky because a tent weighed almost as much as you do. At best, you might have a blanket tied around your back, both to ward off cold and keep your belongings in.

(Basically, a boffer fighter is a whole lot less smelly and better fed than his ancient counterpart. For which we are all thankful, I'm sure.)

The (Unreal) Reality of Foam Fighting

There are some special realities that a person must accept when involved in a boffer war. These are not pleasant truths, but the player must face up to them.

First, spellcasters will either rule the field or will be nearly useless with very little in-between. Dozens (sometimes hundreds) of people will be shouting all at once, weapons will be banging on shields, and general chaos will ensue. The chance that an enemy will hear your verbal spell is almost zero. The chance of someone standing right next to you hearing it is slightly better than zero. If you grab a Reeve's attention and sit at the back of the crowd chanting your Doomsday or Mass Sleep spell, it has the force of a Reeve as witness and enforcer so it might work, but rarely will you have that kind of time. Mages off by themselves under close escort by Reeves tends to attract unwanted attention.

Spellballs are more effective, but they generally don't weight much or hit very hard, and they are only

good at short range (exactly where a wise wizard DOES NOT want to be), so it is doubtful an armored target will know he was hit if he doesn't see it. That's assuming he doesn't just ignore it, or that his friends see it and will actually tell him what happened. The first one is not as common as you'd think, but the second is so common it's almost an accepted rule. Build some spellballs that are a little heavier than normal. They'll fly farther and be harder to ignore.

Spell strips needs to be very wide or they'll be missed by combatants and Reeves alike, leading to a lot of arguments that will slow the game down.

Bow-users must realize that its very hard to know who shot the arrow that flew through the crowd and caught somebody by surprise. If you hit him, raise your bow over your head, but even then your target may honestly not see you. If he has any brains at all, he'll claim a 2-point hit and get back into the fighting, regardless of the actual damage. Longbows are good for range and accuracy, but you can forget about doing 4-point damage in a war.

If there are lots of bowmen, there will be lots of arrows lying around and it's almost impossible for the target to know which one hit him, so the specialty arrows with the fancy effects are nearly useless. Keep a few around for those rare times you have a clean shot (like the opening moments of battle), but once the battle lines converge your special-effect ribbons will go unnoticed.

For classes with abilities like Improve Weapon, you have a better chance of getting your point across (literally). Being close to your opponent allows him to hear you shout "Two!" or "Poison!", or something like that. But there will be a lot of people shouting a lot of things, and your voice can easily blend into the masses. Expect to have to hit him two or three times for him to get the message.

Now that the common problems have been addressed, its time to talk about the biggest and most widespread problem : Cheating.

When a lot of strangers get together, there's always a few who will claim enchantments and defenses they don't have. Some matters are easy enough to deal with, but some are not.

So the argument often goes :

"I'm tellin' ya, I got four Barkskins!"

"Really? Who gave them to you?"

"I dunno, some wizard I ran into. He's over there somewhere."

"Is that the same guy who gave you the Protection From Magic?"

"Yeah, that's the one. He Stacked them."

"Then how'd he also Stack the four Bladesharps and the Harden on that polearm?"

"Um..."

"Go find him, bring him to me, and let him explain it. And until you do, you're out of the game."

The most basic form is to fake your levels. Players always bring their weapons but they never bring their records so it's nearly impossible to prove they are of a lower level than they claim. Thus, wars usually have an overwhelming majority of 6th-level players. There's no real harm to this. It's more distasteful than critical.

It is also common to fake your spells, but this is easily checked by a Reeve asking for a spell-list (and by "asking", read: "demanding "). Reeving a war is hard work, so you can bet any Reeve you run into will be very irritable. Don't make matters worse.

Zak's Law = For the sake of balance and playability, a player may temporarily play his class at 6th level for the duration of a war event. This applies only to a recognized inter-kingdom war and only for that event.

Ultimately, nobody likes a cheat, and cheating inspires others to cheat to keep just to keep up. Whether you are faking abilities, boosting your levels, sluffing, using illegal weapons, or whatever, you can be sure that somebody has noticed. And even if you escape the Reeves, you cannot escape the other players. And there are a lot of ugly and painful ways to take revenge on cheaters. Although reprisals are highly discouraged (and illegal in all kingdoms), such things do happen and it's best if they don't happen to you.

There's your reality check for the day.

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Chapter 2 : Militia Rules

Militia Rules are designed as a stripped-down basic form of combat for the HFS. There are no spells, monsters, or special abilities. Combat is handled as a straight no-frills fight.

What's the point in that?!?

Sometimes it's nice just to get out there and swing foam without worrying about levels and abilities and the quirky things that can get you killed. It's also one of the easiest ways for different kingdoms (with different rule books) to come together and play without any arguments over the variations and differences.

The differences between a militia game and a standard battlegame are really quite simple.

There are not any -

- classes
- class abilities
- spells
- monsters
- multi-point weapons
- shield breaking

Instead, there is -

- unlimited selection of equipment for all players,
- combat based on personal skill and ability,
- less thinking, more doing.

It's not the sort of thing you want to do all the time, and it gets old quickly for most people. But it's good for the off day when not many people show up, or as a warm up to get the blood pumping. And for very large battlegames, the simplicity can make life a lot easier on everybody.

Common Rules

There are a few rules that are common to militia games, though they are rarely used for major battles because they get in the way.

Lay Where You Die

There is no Nirvana. When you die, you perform the death count wherever you were killed. Death

counts are usually short (between 10 and 30 seconds). This is typically used in small games or games that are spread out over a wide area.

Pinning

When using the Lay Where You Die rule, pinning is sometimes allowed. When you come across a dead opponent, place your weapon on his shoulder or torso. As long as it is there, his death count is frozen wherever it was before he was pinned. When the weapon is removed, the death count continues. This is typically used for special sport-type games, rarely in standard battles.

Militia Games

Ditching

The most common game is ditching. Players divide up on two teams and start fighting. Afterward, the winning side sends one player to the losing side, then line up and do it again. Repeat until everybody is worn out. There is no death count = if you die, you're dead until the game resets. The value of this game is that it adjusts itself for fairness as you go, with the weaker side getting more players until both sides have a natural balance of numbers and ability. It's also a good way to get a lot of practice against everybody in the group.

Capture the Flag

Players divide into two or more teams. Each one has a base with a flag. The point is to fight your way to the enemy flag, grab it, and take it back to your base before the enemy does it to yours. This is a fast-moving game that encourages teamwork and basic strategy in an easily understood format.

Ring The Bell

Players divide up into two teams. Each team has a base (usually a shield laid flat) that they must defend. The point is to fight your way through the enemy and strike the base with a weapon. The base has to be hit with a weapon, not a body part, and no projectile weapons can score. Generally, teams play to five or ten points in a game.

Also, check out Chapter 8 for the Rules of Juggling, medieval-style 5-man football!

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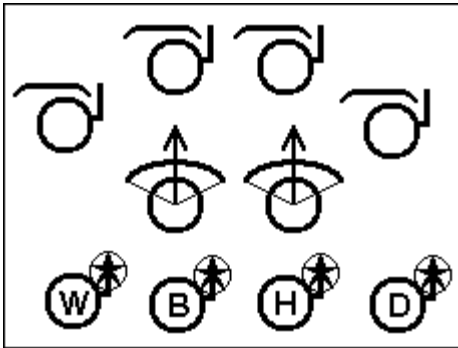
Chapter 3 : Tactics and Training

To function effectively, players should train together as often as possible. This is usually not a problem since they see each other every weekend. But preparing for war is different from the average battlegame.

Teamwork becomes vital. Being able to function as a team, support each other, protect each other, and instantly pick up the slack left by a fallen comrade can mean the difference between glorious victory and sad, pathetic defeat.

Maximum Allowances

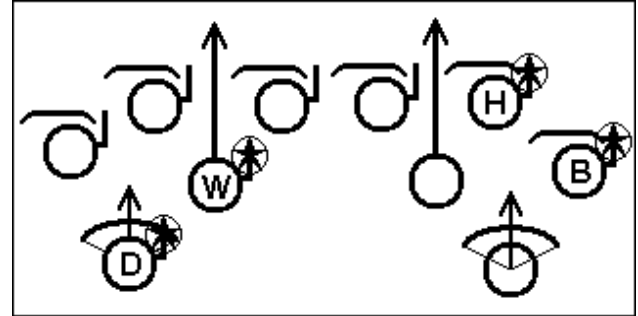
The Player's Guide lays out the limitations on certain classes. There can be one magic-user of each type per ten players and one bow per five players, as shown below;



Anybody with more than a month of fighting experience will tell you this is not a very safe or secure combination, and that when facing an equal number of swordsmen this group will get overrun with ease.

So, what's the solution? **Get your Mages out of the backfield!** A wizard with spear or staff is a natural for the spear-line. A Druid with a shortbow and Entangle spells becomes a serious fire support platform. Healers with medium shield and maximum armor fit well into the front line, and a Bard's medium shield and long weapons backed up with area-effect spells like Legend will play merry havoc with flanking attacks.

This revised formation gives you the same number of bows, 50% more shields, better mid-range striking ability, more protection to the vulnerable flanks, and a 50% wider front forcing your foe to spread out to match you.



The Positions

Shieldman

The shieldman's job is very simple: stay alive. If he dies, he exposes the troops to each side and behind him to enemy attention. Shieldmen must be disciplined and avoid taking chances, attacking only when success is all but guaranteed.

Spearman

The spearman is the primary killing arm of the unit. There should never be less than one spearman for every two shieldmen, and an equal number is a good plan (but don't reduce the shield line too much). A good spearman must be able to judge his range accurately, have excellent situational awareness, and must also be able to communicate with the shieldmen in front of him. They can't see much, so he has to be their eyes and ears. Plus, when he stops chattering they know he's either dead or about to be.

Flanker

Lightly armored and armed with a wide variety of weapons, flankers defend the outer edges of the unit and launch swift strikes behind enemy lines. Flankers are all about aggression. They attack aggressively, they defend aggressively, and they stand still aggressively. They should influence the movements of the enemy just by their presence.

Bowman

The bowman is a vital support role, not just for his ability to make long range strikes against high-value targets, but also in command and control. The bowman has the best view of the battlefield, is not tied into a specific part of the line, and can relay commands and observations quickly and clearly. He also needs to be able to identify and accurately kill enemy commanders, spell-casters, and other troublesome opponents.

Others

Halberdiers are a combination of Spearman and Flanker, using a polearm to keep the enemy at a distance, destroy shields, and be a multi-purpose pest to the enemy.

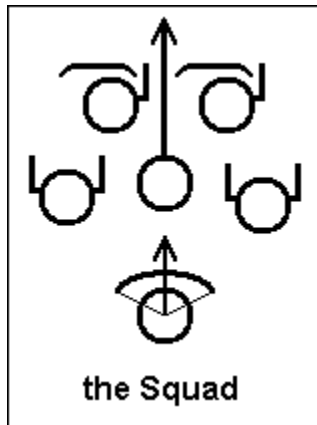
Artillerymen are specialists in siege engines, and so get rare but vital use. Rules for siege engines are in Chapter 4, and a new Artillerist profession is in Chapter 6.

Sapper is a new profession best used in battles around fixed obstacles such as castles, bridges, and natural defenses. The Sapper is described in Chapter 6.

The Squad

The essence of the army is the squad. It is the best way to train any number of troops and to control their movements on the field. Properly trained, they can be grouped into larger units with a minimum of fuss and bother.

The core of the squad is a pair of shieldmen.



These two move and fight as a team, sometimes apart but never far away from each other. Just like a fighter pilot and his wingman, they guard each other's backs.

Added to this is a spearman. It is up to the shieldmen to keep the spearman alive while he concentrates on killing the enemy as quickly and efficiently as he can.

Supporting these will be a bowman and one or two flankers (as available), all dedicated to preventing the enemy from getting behind the squad and to creating or exploiting enemy weaknesses.

Spearmen, flankers, and bowmen should be rotated through the squads so they can get used to working with different people. Casualties may open holes in the unit that need to be plugged by whoever is available, so each troop type should learn the methods of the others.

Ultimately, the best teacher is experience, and squads should face each other as often as possible with different terrains, environments, and objectives. Keep things changing and give them something to fight for, because the same old battle day after day gets really boring.

Chapter 4 : Siege Engines

Siege engines are powerful machines of destruction that were used for battering down castle walls and laying waste to masses of soldiers from a great distance. Because of their powerful effects, they operate under special rules.

General Rules

Each type of siege engine has a per-player limit (see individual entries), but the crews are not counted toward this limit. Projectile-firing siege engines may not be used within 10 feet of a target. This line should be clearly marked on the ground prior to the engine being loaded.

Siege engines are designed to take a lot of abuse. They require ten "structure points" of damage to destroy. Red weapons and Grapeshot do one point per hit. Most flame effects will do two per hit. Fireballs, Splinter, and Pyrotechnics do five points per hit. White weapons will completely destroy the siege engine with one hit (may not be repaired or Mended). Because they are so massive and sturdy,

no normal weapons or other spells will affect them in any way. Siege engines may not carry any enchantments.

Players will often try creative ways to take the engines out of action without actually destroying them. It is up to the Reeve to determine the effects of these attempts on a case-by-case basis.

For purposes of siege weapons and fortifications, Sphere of Annihilation is considered a White Weapon.

A siege engine operates as long as it has at least one "structure point" remaining. A Mend will repair one point, even if it is destroyed.

Siege engines require a minimum crew to operate. Those people may be involved in any operation of the engine but may not be fighting, Enraged, stunned, subdued, or move more than ten feet away. Casting magic and using activated class

abilities is allowed if it is done in the operation of the engine. A siege engine with less than the required crewmen it may not be used. Some monsters are exempt from this rule. Crewmen may leave at any time and continue playing normally.

Siege engines should have a historical or fantasy counterpart that they mimic in form and function. Examples and their classifications are as follows;

Rams represent a variety of engines such as battering rams, bores, screws, and the like. All are white melee weapons. Rams require a minimum of four crewmen to operate and are limited to one for every fortification gate.

Towers represent a series of temporary defensive constructs, such as siege towers, galleries, pavais, and so on. They may be mobile or stationary. They have the defensive value of all siege engines, but have no offensive power of their own; they are designed only for protection. If a tower is destroyed, all siege engines inside (but not their crews or other occupants) are destroyed. Towers cannot be placed inside other towers. They have no crew requirement and no per-player limits.

Heavy Artillery are large and powerful weapons such as catapults, onagers, trebuchets, and

mangonels. They are indirect-fire weapons (the shot travels in an arc). They are white projectile weapons. Monks may not block these projectiles, but the enchantment Protection From Projectiles is effective. Projectiles from heavy artillery must follow the same construction rules as boulders. Heavy artillery requires at least a 3-man crew to operate and are limited to one for every five players.

Light Artillery are small projectile siege engines such as scorpions, ballistae, and so on. They are direct-fire weapons (projectiles travel on a mostly straight line like an arrow). Many of them look like large crossbows and operate on similar principles. Projectiles are considered the same as Penetration Arrows (as per the Archer ability) but with no incantation and no maximum number carried. Monks may block these projectiles and the enchantment Protection From Projectiles is effective. Projectiles must follow the same rules as javelins. Light artillery requires a 2-man crew to operate and are limited to one for every five players.

Grapeshot: Heavy Artillery is capable of firing multiple projectiles all at once. These count as Red projectiles. Monks may block them. Protection from Projectiles will stop them. They will not stop Berserk. Red projectiles must follow the same construction rules as throwing weapons but may not be thrown.

Chapter 5 : Fortifications

The history of fortifications is as old as known warfare. When the Trojan War was current news, fortifications were already well developed and highly effective. Only the innovations of mobile warfare in the last hundred years have made large-scale fortifications obsolete, but small fortifications remain effective even on a modern battlefield.

Game Mechanics

All fortifications follow the same rules. They are nearly indestructible. A Reeve may allow White weapons to destroy small portions, and may declare massive fire attacks to render areas of them unusable. No other effect will harm them.

Many fortifications have openings in them to allow defenders to strike at attackers and vice versa.. Other than these openings (crenellations), a fortification blocks all line-of-sight to the target.

People need at least gate to get in and out of the fortification. Gates are strongly built and take five

hits from a ram or other White weapon to open. Once opened in this manner, the gate is considered destroyed though it may be Mended later.

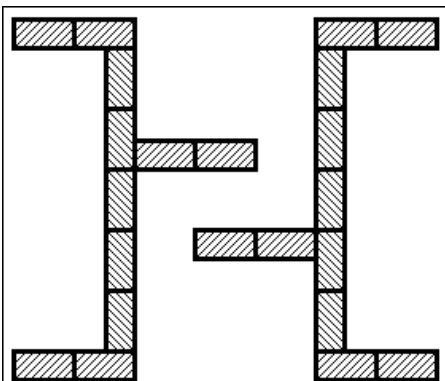
Simulating Fortifications

Trying to simulate these massive structures is difficult but not impossible.

The easiest way is to tie ropes between trees to simulate walls. It is not visible simulating, but it will do in a pinch. Using sheets painted with stonework is far more effective (though vulnerable to high winds). Plastic construction netting painted to conceal its day-glow orange color is a good compromise between function and form.

For building fortifications in an open field (where there are no convenient trees), a similar arrangement can be used by driving tall stakes or posts into the ground (beware: the landowner may not approve). In these cases, square hay bales have often been used to great effect, and they can be

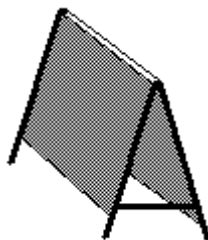
placed in any pattern and can be moved around as needed. They also are more resistant to the damage caused by falling fighters. But these tend to be useful only for a single event because they get broken up and rot easily.



Hay-bale bridge with obstacles, two layers high. Areas between the end sections are considered deep water.

A more durable portable barrier is made of wood sawhorses with plywood or plank facings. These can be laid out in a variety of patterns, last a long time if cared for properly, and are more visibly appealing than hay bales. The tops should be padded to protect fighters and their weapons from impact damage.

With a greater investment, some groups have sought a more permanent solution by using full-sized wall sections. Large, framed plywood sheets can be assembled in different layouts then taken apart for transportation and storage. On a small scale, this is most common for building only gatehouses and passageways. When a complete castle is built in this manner, it is normally a permanent structure. Because few places will allow you to leave a permanent plywood castle on their land, the castle often ends up being burned in a giant bonfire at the end of the event. This level of waste is way beyond of most groups' finances.



Some groups have raised enough funds and secured permission from a property owner to build a permanent castle structure, usually out of heavy timbers or stone. But this takes thousands of dollars, the dedication of land for that purpose, and a huge

ongoing maintenance expense that most groups just can't keep up with.

Using Pipework Castles

On the less realistic, smaller-scale of things, sometimes a group is lucky enough to have access to a park with a pipe-work playground. These have been growing in popularity in recent years, and some are quite elaborate. They are also well suited for boffer combat. And unlike other types of improvised castles, they are permanent structures, generally well maintained, and usually accessible. However, they really aren't built for boffer combat needs, and there are certain things to keep in mind.

Rule #1 = Kids Rule the Playground.

If there are children already on the structure, don't run them off. It was built for them, not you. And if the place gets swarmed while you're in the middle of a battle, call a hold and get your people out of there. Children have no sense of safety, and parents have no understanding or sympathy to weirdoes in funny clothes, so don't take any chances that the rug-rats might get hurt.

Rule #2 = Walls Are Walls

Many pipework playgrounds use wall sections made of small bars or grills for maximum visibility. Don't try stabbing through them. It's simulating a real castle, which isn't made of grills and pipes. Use a little imagination and common sense.

Rule #3 = Getting Out is Easier than Getting In

The whole point of a castle is to provide an easily defended location. That means very few entrances. Reeves must carefully decide which of the many openings will count as doors. Most generally count platforms and stairs as doors, leaving out the ladders, slides, and so on. Other points of access should only be used by Reeves, or by dead players getting out of the way.

Rule #4 = The Dead Don't Rest

While some groups like to use a "Lay Where You Die" rule, this should not be used in castles. Because of the narrow confines and limited passable areas, players will get run over if they stay where they die. If you are dead, get out of the way by the nearest exit possible.

Morgan's Law = A playground passageway only counts as a door if the largest person present can fit through it.

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Chapter 6 : New Professions

The Sapper

Sappers are ancient combat engineers, skilled in building up or tearing down just about anything. They are not so robust in face-to-face combat, but can be extremely potent support to their team, especially when defending or overcoming obstacles or hazardous terrain.

Parent Class: Warrior or Scout

Armor: Up to 3 points

Shields: none

Weapons: Dagger, Short

Immunities: None

Lives: 4

Class Master Bonus: may use crossbow pistol

Abilities & Traits:

Level-1 – Digging (1/life), Mend (1/life), Big Tool

Level-2 – Trap (1/game), Thornwall (2/game)

Level-3 – Harden (1/game), Digging becomes 2/life

Level-4 – Entangle (1/life), Pyrotechnics (1/game)

Level-5 – Release (1/life), Thornwall becomes 1/life

Level-6 – Tunneling (2/game)

Ability Descriptions

Big Tool = If a weapon is specifically crafted to look like a construction tool (hammer, shovel, pick, etc), then it may be up to Medium size.

Digging = Requires a construction tool of some kind. Lay a 10' rope in a circle. State "Digging In" x5 to activate, state "Arriving" x5 to arrive. Once activated, the Sapper says "dig" five times, then takes a step forward. He must move on his knees. He may continue to do this until he chooses to stop or arrives. The Sapper cannot be seen nor attacked once activated (he is underground). If he lays a rope behind him, this means that the tunnel is braced, the entry point is open, and others can follow him through by holding the rope (may walk upright). An enemy can also enter the tunnel (combat proceeds under the "close quarters" and "darkness" rules).

Entangle = As per the Druid spell. This is a non-magical effect.

Harden = As per the Wizard spell. This is a non-magical effect.

Mend = As per the Wizard spell. This is a non-magical effect.

Pyrotechnics = As per the Wizard spell. This is a non-magical ability. If used in conjunction with the Digging or Tunneling abilities, the range is 0 (touch) but can be used while underground.

Thornwall = As per the Druid spell. This is a non-magical effect.

Trap = As per the Assassin ability

Tunneling = As per the Teleport spell, but saying "Tunneling" instead of "Teleporting". Usable only on self. Requires a shovel, pick or other digging tool.

Release = As per the Healer spell. Not usable on self. This is non-magical and the range is 0 (touch).

The Artillerist

Many siege engines are large and complicated machines, and they require a lot of skill to use effectively. Artillerists are those who have learned to get the most out of their machinery and their crews.

Parent Class: Warrior or Archer

Armor: Up to 2 points

Shields: small

Weapons: Dagger, Short

Immunities: None

Lives: 4

Class Master Bonus: may use Long weapons

Abilities & Traits:

Level-1 – Multitasking (T), Repair Engine (1/life)

Level-2 – Spike the Guns (1/game)

Level-3 – Repair Engine (2/life). May use shortbow.

Level-4 – Overhaul (1/game)

Level-5 – Armor Engine

Level-6 – Improvise Artillery, Overhaul becomes 2/game

Ability Descriptions

Armor Engine = Increases a siege engine's structure points to twenty. Cannot be combined with Overhaul.

Improvise Artillery = An Artillerist may fashion a piece of light artillery by using a longbow and two additional crewmen (being a somewhat "finicky" weapon, it needs an extra man to operate). Not affected by Multi-tasking. The artillery has one structure point and is destroyed if the Artillerist is killed. The properly marked ammunition (penetration arrows) must be used.

Multi-Tasking = Counts as two crewmen on any siege engine. At 4th Level, this becomes three crewmen.

Overhaul = The Artillerist may completely restore a siege engine to its full structure points, up to ten. The engine must be functional for this to happen.

Repair Engine = Restores one structure point to siege engines.

Spike the Guns = The Artillerist may destroy any one siege engine with a touch. It cannot be mended or repaired in any way.

Chapter 7 : Warfighting Equipment

When war comes, people drag out fighting equipment they would not normally use. A knight who spends all of his peacetime hours practicing for jousting puts away his heavy, specialized armor and drags out the old set of chainmail and brigandine that allows greater speed and flexibility. The finely balanced and highly-decorated tournament weapons are set aside for the heavy, ugly, battered broadsword and axe that can take a beating and still keep working.

Just like the ancient soldiers, boffer combat has some equipment that is poorly suited for the tournament but exceptional for warfighting. This chapter explores those variations and introduces some new gear for special occasions.

Axes

The finest weapon in a shield line is the short axe. When properly made and used, it can hook a shield or pin a weapon, greatly reducing the effectiveness of an enemy and leaving vulnerable to your companions' attacks. It can be used at normal ranges like any weapon, but can also be used to slash and thrust in close quarters like a dagger by grabbing it right below the head. And the focus of weight on the head make it much less likely to be sluffed by an over-exited foe.

But it has to be made well. Axes can easily come apart in all this roughhousing. The lower portion of the head should be reinforced with leather or carpet to increase its durability. Since that area is not a striking edge, courtesy padding is enough and it

should be well covered in duct tape. And the entire head must be VERY well connected to the shaft or the entire thing will come flying off at the most inappropriate moment.

Beware the mass of the weapon. An axe that has too much mass may feel perfectly balanced and light in the hand, but deliver a massive impact that is well beyond safety limits. Real axes are supposed to do this, but boffer axes should minimize this effect.

Bucklers

One of the most under-used shield types is the buckler. In a tournament they are of little use because they are not as well controlled as a standard shield, get in the way of off-hand attacks, swing and twist at bad times, and are a general nuisance to have around.

But in a war, that all changes. Typically used by archers and spearmen, bucklers allow that extra degree of protection from the occasional arrow or throwing knife and random spear thrust. They allow both hands to be used with weapons that need precision rather than swing. Since they can be made of lighter materials without sacrificing strength, they are less cumbersome to carry than the typical shield.

Most bucklers are strapped to the forearm and controlled by a strap across the palm. A better way to carry it is to strap it to wrist and elbow, with a significant portion sticking past the elbow to allow full motion of the hand. Straps should be set high so the buckler will hang near-vertically and resist twisting

with the arm's movement. Another version straps to the upper arm (like a gladiator's galerus) where it stays out of the way and does not restrict arm motion (but it can restrict your vision, so be careful).

Armor

The greatest advantage a Warrior has is his armor. With no immunities and limited ranged weapons, he needs the extra protection to stay alive in any fight. But all the classes need to maximize protection in time of war. Victory goes to the side left standing, and this is often the side that can outlast the other.

As described in Chapter 3, there are several standard troop types that many classes can fill, and each type has certain armor needs. While fighters should wear all the defense they can (obviously), they also need to focus on specific areas when full-body defense is not available.

Shieldmen need to maximize protection on the arms and legs before all else. A spear thrust under a shield into the shins can ruin his effectiveness, and his arm becomes exposed every time he attacks or obstructs the enemy. Torso armor is not well liked in the shield line because it is hot and constricts movement but lighter armors are of great value, especially those that cover the rear torso since that's where most killing shots will land.

Spearmen have less need for leg protection (that's what shieldmen are for!) but they are very exposed in the front torso and arms. A pair armored sleeves and a breastplate will solve this nicely. Don't worry too much about your rear torso; if your back is to the enemy, you're either running away or your army has just collapsed. In either case, you've got bigger problems than armor can solve.

Flankers should keep armor light and flexible. Even though you're going to be in near-constant combat and need additional protection, you need speed and reaction time even more. Wear as much as you can without slowing yourself down and focus on your legs. If a flanker loses a leg, he's as good as dead.

Bowmen are in constant motion but usually don't move all that fast, so the need to keep armors light isn't very great. They also draw hostile attention from many different directions, so all-around coverage is important. However, if they lose a leg they no longer

have the ability to see (and shoot) over the shield line, so keep those legs protected.

Helmets

Head shots are not legal, but they still happen. In the close confines of a shield line, it happens a lot. A lot of Shieldmen have received more knots and bruises from their own people bouncing spear shafts off their noggins' than they got from the enemy. Shieldmen should seriously consider a helmet of some kind, or at least a padded cap.

Spearmen and Bowmen need full-range vision that a helmet will restrict, but Spearmen also have their upper body exposed more than the rest, and more shots will drift toward the face than normal. Spearmen might want to consider a face guard of some kind. Bowmen can often get by without it. Let your personal experience decide.

Flankers... well, it depends on how far out you stick your head. If you get hit in the head a lot already, you'll probably keep on getting hit there.

Eye-Wear = Anybody with glasses should probably either wear protective goggles, eye-cages, or sport lenses. Yes, they are expensive. So is a new set of glasses and you don't have to do without seeing until the replacement pair arrives.

Greatshields

Greatshields have a maximum surface area of twelve square feet and can be no larger than five feet tall. This massive shield is too cumbersome to be used in tournaments (except by really big players) so they are rarely seen outside of wars. Many of them have multiple straps and handles so they can be more easily carried by smaller people or used in different postures.

By royal decree in Drakenfjord Kingdom Law, greatshields can only be used in a time of national crisis as declared by the Monarch, or in authorized training sessions for those emergencies. Also under these conditions, all classes may use one size larger shield than normally allowed.

Chapter 8 : Juggling Rules

Juggling has been described as medieval football. It is based on the movie "Blood of Heroes" and involves two 5-man teams trying to put the ball (officially known as the Dog Skull) on a stake set at the opponent's end of the field. Different versions are played by many LARP organizations.

Many variant rules exist for this game and can be found in an online search. Although the rules described here are Drakenfjord-specific, they can be easily adapted and players of one version can quickly pick up on the changes and local flavor.

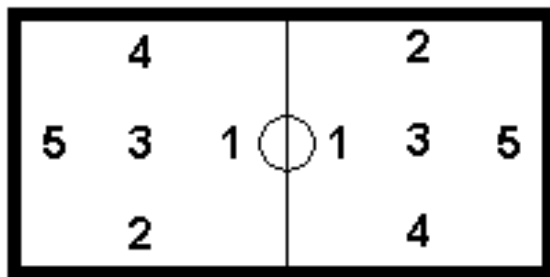
The Field

The playing field is 100 feet long and 50 feet wide. In the center is a 10-foot diameter circle. At either end of the field (five feet from the center of the boundary line) is placed a stake or bin of some kind. These must be field legal so as not to cause harm if someone falls on it.

The Players

There are five positions on each team, each with a different set of weapons.

- 1. Quick** - Dagger.
- 2. Slash** - Two short swords
- 3. Shield** - Short sword and small shield
- 4. Chain** - Two flails (or short sword and flail)
- 5. Heavy** - Long weapon (4 feet or more)



Game Progression

In the movie, game time was kept by a guy picking up a small rock and throwing it against a metal sheet to make a *bang!* Every toss counted as one "stone".

In the HFS version, the Beater keeps time by beating on a shield, drum, or something that makes a suitable *bang!* every two seconds. Every strike equals one stone, and should be called out as they happen. The actual timing is to the impact, not the voice call.

There are at most three rounds. The count is stopped after hundred stones (end of the round), by a hold, if both Quicks are shattered, or if a team scores. There is brief break between rounds.

When the first stone is struck, the game begins. Players may move around, but only the Quicks can enter the central circle until the Dog Skull is touched. Before this time, an entering player is killed. Once touched, the Dog Skull is in play and anybody may cross through the circle.

Players have five lives. A death-count is fifteen stone. Pinning and Lay-Where-You-Die rules are in effect (see Chapter 2). Shattered players must leave the field as fast as they can. All lives are restored after the round is over. If the Quick is killed, the Dog Skull is dropped, not thrown elsewhere.

Substitutions (swapping players or positions) may be made only between Rounds.

Players that touch or cross the outer border are stunned for five stone. This does not cost a life, and players cannot be killed while stunned but they may be pinned.

Scoring

The first team to put the Dog Skull on the opponent's Stake scores a point. The Dog Skull has to stay on the stake (or in the bin) without bouncing out.

Three rounds are played, and the team with the highest score after three rounds wins the game. If there is no clear winner after three rounds, the game is a draw.