

LEGION

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Editorial

JFF

Welcome to another issue of Legion. This is possibly the last although it may yet surface again one day. We have a few odds and ends in this issue. Some sea shanties to sit alongside articles in issue 30, a look at military colours in The Empire and a look back at a first encounter with WFRP3.

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Editors: The usual suspects.

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Worst Game Ever

Why I didn't buy WFRP3 by Anonymous

So, I managed to run my demo at my local game store using the demo pack. I'm not saying it was all FFG's fault, because some of it may have been down to bad luck, but things could possibly have gone better in some ways.

Firstly I was a bit late getting to the store, because I was still reading up on the rules, on the bus and missed a couple of stops trying to get my head round the recharge rules. I had the box open on the bus, of course to get the rules in and out and to refer to the cards. But the main fault would lie with the bus driver for the sudden emergency stop, I would think.

And so the cards got a bit wet and sticky, a plastic cover might be a good idea, and I recommend it to FFG. They do covers for cards so why not one for the whole box? They say don't eat or drink on the bus, I know, but I was in a hurry, and wanted to get as many rules down as possible. And it was only a couple of donuts. And a can of coke. The rest of my meal missed the box and fortunately spilled all over the bus, instead.

So, I was a bit late, but it didn't make much difference. Only one of my players had got bored and gone home. But luckily there was a Magic the Gathering person there, and I managed to rope him in even though he had never roleplayed before. He had played a lot of D&D, though.

I had practiced a proper presentation to give everyone, instead of just turning up, as I thought that would look a lot more professional and be a good advert for FFG. So I had the owner of the store play Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi on the PA, while I ran into the room carrying the box and doing a little dance, thing. It was pretty classy, but unfortunately the store owner's stereo had packed up, but he had a walkman, and so two of the players shared the walkman earpieces, and I got them to hum a bit of the melody so the third player wouldn't feel left out. So that worked well. Everyone said it was good.

So, eventually, I got everyone's characters out and explained a bit about them. I wasn't very impressed with the pre-gens that came with the adventure, so I made my own up to properly highlight the system advantages. I had to make my own career cards up, and actions and things, but I made sure they were the same as (well, similar to) the real ones in the box. Although I didn't have any scissors, so they were all A4 size. I made sure they had proper illustrations, and even though I'm not a very good artist, and I only had a biro and a single orange crayon, I think they came out pretty good.

So, I made an Ogre High Wizard of Ulthuan (which is a pretty hot combo, if you houserule adding the strength bonus of the ogres and the Intelligence bonus for being kinda elvish. And

there was a 3rd level (or whatever it's called) Witch Hunter, and a Keeper of Secrets. I thought having those two there would be an interesting test of the Party Tension Meter!

I'm not sure who turned them against me but the players all said they wanted to play with the stuff in the box, instead of my bespoke tailored homemade and illustrated house-ruled pieces. And they wonder why selfish players have such a bad reputation. Sometimes they're so rude and inconsiderate it just makes you want to lock yourself into a room and never come out. So, anyway, in the end the store owner managed to persuade me to come out of the toilet, and to play with the 'official' pieces.

Which was when we had our first problem. All the action cards had stuck together, which is very shoddy production quality from FFG. I think cards and stuff should have a special coating to protect them from jam and coke and stuff. After about an hour or two, we'd managed to pull all the cards apart and lick the sticky stuff off of them. Some of them tasted quite good.

By this time another of the players had to go to an urgent operation (he was a surgeon, or something –which was pretty advanced coz he was only about 15) but that didn't matter because the session was really starting to go well. I gave them their characters, and whatever and told them stuff about the rules and then they entered my dungeon. I didn't really like the look of the introductory adventure, either, so thought it was best to make my own. Actually I didn't have time to make one, but it was pretty easy to just adapt one of my old D&D dungeons.

In the first room there were a dozen kobolds, which I thought would be a good test of how strong beginning characters are. I didn't bother converting D&D stats to WFRP, coz after all,

system isn't important, it's all about the roleplaying. (Although, having Strength 12 Kobolds against a Strength 3 roadwarden is a very sharp test of roleplaying skill.)

So, in the first room I decided to change it to 1 kobold, even though TPKs are a good test of a system's robustness, we had to run the whole encounter again just because of some whiny players. I did add one surprising and innovative enhancement. Because actions are taken in full view of everyone, and they say important things about the nature of the setting, I thought it would add to verisimilitude if each player stuck his current action to his forehead (this was quite easy to achieve, actually, because of all the jam and stuff).

It was at this point that another of the players had to go to an emergency operation, at the same hospital, actually. It's a small world. So the final player was left to meet the extremely strong kobold in the climax to my demo. I thought I was going to win. But, the player rather amazingly kept coming up with cool moves, and hitting me for loads of damage. And pretty soon my kobold was a defeated and crumpled heap in the middle of the dungeon.

It wasn't until we were packing up, that the player revealed he'd actually been fighting me with his red black aggro-combo Magic the Gathering deck.

So, in summary, although I did everything I could to make the game exciting and enjoyable, as well as being let down by unsympathetic players, the nature of support afforded by the core set could only be described as lacking. Which is why I didn't get the game. If anyone wants to purchase a slightly used (not mint) and dusty copy of the demo pack, could you please mail me.

Sea Shanties

One for That Sinking Feeling, One for Orphanages

Leave her, Johann

Oh, the times was hard and the wages low
Leave her, Johann, leave her
And the grub was bad and the gales did blow
And it's time for us to leave her

Leave her, Johann, leave her
For the voyage is done and the winds do blow
And it's time for us to leave her

I thought I heard the Old Man say
You can go ashore and take your pay
Leave her, Johann, leave her

Oh, her stern was foul and the voyage was long
The winds was bad and the gales was strong
Leave her, Johann, leave her

And while Manann looked on and the adventurers did rob
Stromfels called us down and the Dwarf was too heavy to bob
Leave her, Johann, leave her

Oh, leave her, Johann, leave her with a grin
For there's many a worser we've sailed in
Leave her, Johann, leave her

And now it's time to say goodbye
For the rocks a-drawing nigh
Leave her, Johann, leave her

The Cruel Ship's Captain

A boy to me was bound apprentice
Because his parents they were poor
I took him from Manann's workhouse
All for to sail on the Norscan shore.

One day this poor boy he did annoy me
Nothing to him then did I say
I rushed him to a frozen yardarm
And kept him there till the very next day

And when his hands and his feet did hang towards me
And with his head bowed down likewise
It was with an iron gasket then I killed him
Because I would not hear his cries no more.

Now all you sea captains who go out a-navyin'
I pray a warning take by me
Don't you go abusin' your poor prentice lads
Or else it's hanged you'll surely be.

Flying Your Colours

by Peter Rutkowski

The moral greyishness of the Warhammer World is one of the greatest assets of WFRP. Moody black-and-white illustrations in publications like WS sustain this uncertain atmosphere, but, naturally, they omit what colour there might realistically be in WFRP. This article attempts to introduce colour TV to the game without diminishing the moody tone.

Colour should be used sparingly, but effectively. Standard encounters of course are no problem even to the uninitiated gamer: peasants are all drab hues, Slaaneshi club-nights are reminiscent of the best and worst of later 60s transcendental disco slide shows, and for a patrol of Reiksguard Knights in their shiny no.1-fluted-armor you will have to invent sunglasses. As is to be expected, there is more to The Empire than that.

Long after The Empire and its provinces were established and standing armies were established, the fashion and necessity for uniforming the military arose. It started with nobles furnishing personal retainers, either with shields or ceremonial capes showing simplified versions or parts of their coat of arms. From this evolved the custom of clothing regiments in their commander's family colours and then whole armies in a province's basic heraldic colours. Simply put, it was a move from aristocratic vanity to the first attempts at battlefield communication. And it helped give commoners an effective way of identifying with their homeland.

The WFRP skills section states that characters understanding heraldry may “know to whom [a heraldic device] belongs, and know a little of [its] history and genealogy, after a successful test against Intelligence”. Noble PCs will also know how to differentiate provincial colours. PCs with a military background also know about such distinctions (but not individual heraldic devices unless from previous experience: commanders, enemies etc.). At the GM's discretion they may attempt to learn the heraldry skill, include it during character creation or simply make a test against Intelligence, perhaps adjusted according to personal background, i.e. mercenaries get around more than soldiers, so they stand a better chance. Marines and militiamen have no such knowledge due to their restricted operational areas.

Following is a list of provincial and Imperial military uniform colours. Former soldiers and mercenaries will often only wear the best-preserved parts of their original uniform. Buying clothes in various colours is no problem in the bigger cities of The Empire. You will even find Reikland colours in Middenheim. Normally, colour codes are only of relevance on the battlefield, but mischievous GMs might want to stage a bar-room brawl just because the ex-Reikland soldier PC sits in a Middenheim pub. Note that nobility, regimental and higher army officers do not adhere to these colour codes; they wear what they fancy and design their coats of arms according to personal taste, limitations being the traditional heraldic codices.

The list is by no means gospel and WFRP groups can feel free to ignore or juggle around with them. Some schemes are conjectural (meaning I invented them) and most contradict the schemes shown in the current WFB Empire army book.

Imperial Household: purple and blue

The Imperial Household in Altdorf is unique in representing a noble house with no provincial tie. The Emperor might come from any part of The Empire and so his staff and servants are expected to shed their provincial identity as well. The combination of Imperial purple and river blue (The Empire's lifelines) is not seen much outside Altdorf; virtually the only such occasions are Imperial messengers and the entourages of higher officials and envoys.

Imperial Army (“Reichsbanner”): black and yellow

These are the professional core units around which The Emperor builds his army in times of war. Originally they were mercenaries employed by the rulers of Altdorf and therefore wore the city's red and blue colours. When they changed over to Imperial service black was chosen as a pious sign of reverence to The Empire's founder and yellow for sheer contrast. Some officers wear sashes of Imperial purple denoting service on the Imperial household. Others use red, signalling comradeship with the Reiksguard which is incorporated in the Imperial army as the heavy contingent.

Reiksguard: red

Long before anyone thought about uniforms, groups of knights fighting for Sigmar Himself banded together on the eve of battle and made a blood oath to watch out for one another during the

fighting. From this custom arose first the blood red banner of the Reiksguard, followed by the knights donning pieces of red cloth to show their devotion to the Sigmarite cause. In battle, the Reiksguard of course wears full plate armour. Therefore, the colour red appears only on their shields, helmet crests, troop colours and as strips of cloth tied around arms and legs in a slip-knot. But for court-service and when off-duty, members of the Reiksguard will don all-red garments, slit and stuffed according to the latest fashion. The more discriminating knights reduce this to a bunch of red feathers on a cap.

Imperial School of Gunnery, Nuln: black and red

The colours of the Imperial artillery officially refer to the piety of the city's rulers (black) and their belief in Imperial unity (red). Nuln citizens think they stand for the artillery's main components, smoke and fire. The veterans of the school reserve a cruel joke for novices: Black means the gunpowder-coloured bile one spits during battle and red stands for blood, your own as much as the enemy's. Many merchant houses providing metal, powder and wood for the school have changed their family's heraldic colours to black and red and display them prominently on shop signs.

The Moot (Imperial Army contingent): green and yellow quartered

Halflings who serve with the Imperial baggage train have adopted a variant of the Stirland coat of arms as their field sign. Green and yellow quartered shields hang from the sides of the waggons, green and yellow quartered pennants fly above the sites where doctors perform their butchers' work, cooks prepare meals, wives tend children, blacksmiths sharpen swords and whores see to the carnal

needs of heroes. The Imperial baggage master (often a Halfling) and his assistants always wear outrageously combined green and yellow garments while the non-combatant members of the train sport sashes and ribbons of green and yellow, sometimes emblazoned with a small black Imperial cross. Halflings joining provincial baggage trains wear the province's colours.

Reikland: red and yellow

This is one of the traditional colour schemes with clear symbolic meanings. Red refers to the favoured Sigmarite blood colour and yellow stands for the agricultural riches of the Reikland. Reikland soldiers take it especially badly when an outsider makes some witty remark that their uniform might have something of a jester's costume.

Altdorf: red and blue

In former times the Altdorfers sported the same colours as Reikland soldiers. But with the rising wealth and power of the city the need to distinguish themselves from 'the peasants' was felt. For this the city substituted yellow with blue as a more fitting comment on the two great waterways Reik and Talabec meeting at Altdorf.

Nuln: black

Foreigners might think the colour of this city state's army a pious reverence to the cult of Morr, but it really just conveys the no-nonsense attitude of the professional classes in working hard, praying hard and not flaunting your wealth. More enlightened Nulners tend to explain the uniform colour with reference to the

legend of Nuln University once providing volunteer units from its students who wore their black college garments into battle. Some jesting minstrels say black was chosen so as to let the gold and silver of the fat nobles, merchants and officers shine more brightly. Non-Nuln officers and commanders of the Imperial military who want to demonstrate their modern belief in the science of war wear solid black clothes and reduce the Reichsbanner yellow to sashes or arm and leg ties.

Wissenland: green

Rolling hills and endless fields are the dominant feature of the southern Empire. Wissenland and other provinces have a strong tradition of beer brewing, and it is a rare day when a traveller might not see some hill covered with green hop-poles. Wissenland was the first southern province to use the colour green for identifying its troops and thus retains the privilege of solid green garments. Using only one colour also refers to Nuln and its black-clad army to which Wissenland is attached.

Middenheim: purple and white

The lords of Middenheim have always had pretensions on the overall leadership of The Empire. To constantly reference this claim and also to provoke the Sigmarites of the lowlands the city's rulers adopted regal purple as one of Middenheim's colours. White shows the purity of Middenheimers in the middle of a hostile forest crawling with Chaos spawn and also refers to the cult of Ulric.

Middenland: white

The Middenland army proudly displays its piety and anti-Chaos belief by wearing pure white uniforms in accordance with the colour of the Ulrican clergy's garments. Veterans will also tell that white is the best way to distinguish friend from foe in the dark forests of the province while hunting down beastmen.

Nordland: blue and white

Their uniform tells of the blue sea, white sands, the cruel winter and the spring sky. At least, that's what some minstrels include by way of explanation when composing an ode to the highly disciplined, calm and restrained Nordland troops.

Ostland: black and white

Pious and pure, that's what Ostland stands for. A harsh country long colonised by The Empire and still not fully tamed. Devoutly Sigmarite, the Ostlanders pray hard and fight even harder. Their military consists of grizzled professionals on one side who think their colours perfectly reflect the austerity of Ostland life and fervent idealistic believers on the other side who would never accept any moral shades of grey, so to speak. Ostlanders often have warrior priests or monks attached to their companies as well as lay preachers in the ranks. The clerics wear robes in black and white instead of Sigmarite black and grey.

Averland: red and green

In ancient times Averland saw heavy fighting with marauding Greenskins and rampaging Chaos hordes. One legend tells of a small troop of rangers holding a vital ford against an Orc army for five days until other Averland troops could come to their rescue.

When they met the surviving rangers their shredded green clothes had turned to a reddish brown of dried blood. The Averland army commemorates this heroic feat by wearing a combination of red and green.

Talabheim: green and white

Ulrican white and Taal green. As the two statues of the gods sit over the entrance to the city, so the Talabheim army shows this double belief through its uniform. Occasionally, soldiers from different Talabheim regiments will engage in controversies over the amount of green or white in the respective uniforms. Those with more white – Ulricans – will question the loyalty of those Taalites with more green in their uniforms, and vice versa. These quarrels are mostly confined to taverns when off-duty, but there have been Talabheim officers known to forget facing the enemy on the battlefield because they tried to mediate between conflicting regiments on their own side. Wissenlanders and Ostermarkers like to compare the Talabecland colours with maggots sitting on a rubbish heap.

Hochland: black and green

The Hochlanders copy to some extent their Talabheim allies but instead of Ulrican white have chosen quiet black as being more sober and less ostentatious. Many of the wood-cutters, hunters and trappers volunteering for the army in times of war favour this inconspicuous combination.

Talabecland: green and purple

When Talabheim seceded from Talabecland, Duke Dieter decreed that his army should no longer wear the Talabecland colours. The

former Emperor chose southern green (in contrast to the association with Taal) and Imperial purple as a silent but visible protest against his forced removal from Altdorf.

Ostermark: brown and white

The poorhouse of The Empire, the League of Ostermark's social structure is more in tune with Bretonnia than with its Imperial neighbours: The nobility gets everything, the people get nothing. While a typical Ostermark coat of arms might not be readily discernible for all the gold and silver paraphernalia, the Ostermark army can be identified no matter what. They wear slit and stuffed garments like any other army of The Empire but their colours are the coarse peasants' burlap brown and unbleached linen white. And while the people of this province generally have no truck with their betters (roadside brigandry is rampant here), the uniform has done much to imbue the military with a distinctively national esprit de corps. Being attached to Talabecland has led to countless combined operations of the two provinces' armies, and the Talabeclanders have learned the hard way not to look down on their poorer comrades.

Stirland: green and yellow

The Stirlanders might be devoutly Sigmarite and unionist to boot, but they also keep up a mild rivalry with the Reikland for the position of Imperial heartland. Therefore the Stirland army wears a near copy of the Reikland red and yellow. As they are southern Imperials they have chosen the South's green over the Sigmarite

red. Then again, Stirlanders also see their colours complementing the Imperial army's black and yellow.

Sylvania: grey (argent) and red

Riddled with outbreaks of vampirism, Sylvania has never been a choice member of the Imperial family of provinces. The few truly loyal nobles and vassals therefore keep a firm hold on their Imperial heritage. This is reflected in the colour red taken from the Reiksguard troops who originally conquered the province. Grey – or argent to give it its correct heraldic name – in contrast unashamedly proclaims the reason for The Empire holding onto the province: nowhere else are more silver mines which provide the prime material for Imperial currency. This colour also acts as a memento of the province's rulers' vow to protect the Dwarf communities mining the silver.

Sudenland: red and white

The Sudenlanders are notorious for always being of a different mind. Green might be the dominant colour of the southern Empire but the Sudenlanders ignore this and favour a flashy red-and-white scheme. Officially, the colours are explained with loyalty and purity. The man on the street – in true Sudenland style – will tell a different story: red is the colour of the fresh meat Sudenland soldiers are happy to count as part of their barracks diet. And white are the "Suden-Wuerstel" (southern sausages) for which the province is famous. Non-Sudenlanders say, infamous. Some Sudenlanders of course claim the uniform is really about blood spattering beer froth when off-duty soldiers have a go in a tavern.