

Grimwald's chronicles part 91

After our enlistment we are taken to the training camp. Although we are officially hired as instructors most of us know very little about proper army routines. Somehow Reed has managed to get into the training program for the aides de camp and is now learning all about military signals. Even though I try to tutor my companions only Cuura has the mind to grasp the classes on ranks, routines, default orders, standing orders, military acronyms and formations. Cuura and I are even allowed to enter the advanced classes on signs and counter-signs so that even in dim light we can convey orders silently through our motions and stances. The rest of my companions are not really into intellectual pursuits and spend most of their time on the obstacle course learning how to climb, cross streams, clear walls and fences as a group.

The instruction on the enemy and tactics takes place during the long march down to the moors. The inhabitants of the moors are quite primitive and due to the lack of iron and wood their weapons and armor are equally primitive. What they do have is numbers. There are thousands of greenskins wandering the moors, but fortunately without a strong warlord to unify them the individual tribes are no match for us. The troops learn never to chase fleeing goblins, because you are sure to run into traps or ambushes. To lure and surround the strong, but stupid orcs and to avoid the ogres and trolls leaving them to the archers and ballistae. When Nethander starts talking about undead he is quickly silenced. Doesn't the fool understand the terror which the common soldier has when faced with the unnatural? Well if you speak with demons, the undead are indeed a lesser evil so I can imagine his lack of understanding. Another menace the officers choose not to talk about are the great packs of wolves prowling the moors. Always looking to hunt down and kill the weary, wounded and careless who stray from the group.

The journey is uneventful and we make it to a barren hill which is to be the rendezvous point between our army and the troops from Waterdeep and Silvery Moon. On our second night in the moors the alarms sound. I grab my gear and rush out and see the supply tents are on fire. While the combat troops engage the goblin intruders I and the sappers rush to quench the fires and save what we can. The goblins smashed the water kegs and released plague carrying vermin in the area. Their destructive work was already half done when the guards spotted them and they started torching the camp to escape in the confusion. There is a great turmoil with half clad troops trying to get into formation in the restricted space and spike growths blocking the counter attack by the men-at-arms. Then some idiot starts firing volleys of arrows inside our own camp and the other archers follow suit causing more casualties on our side than on the enemy. Fortunately the archers are distracted by a pack of wolves bearing down on them. Luckily Cuura leads a charge killing the alpha wolf and sending the rest scurrying home with their tails between their legs. Within minutes the goblins and wolves have fled back into the night except for a few caught in a spike growth. They are taken into custody. I am certain they will betray their tribe to save their own hides so we can gain some valuable information about the local situation. We were lucky the local tribe was not strong enough to mount an all out attack, because our defenses were woefully insufficient against the sneaky bastards!