

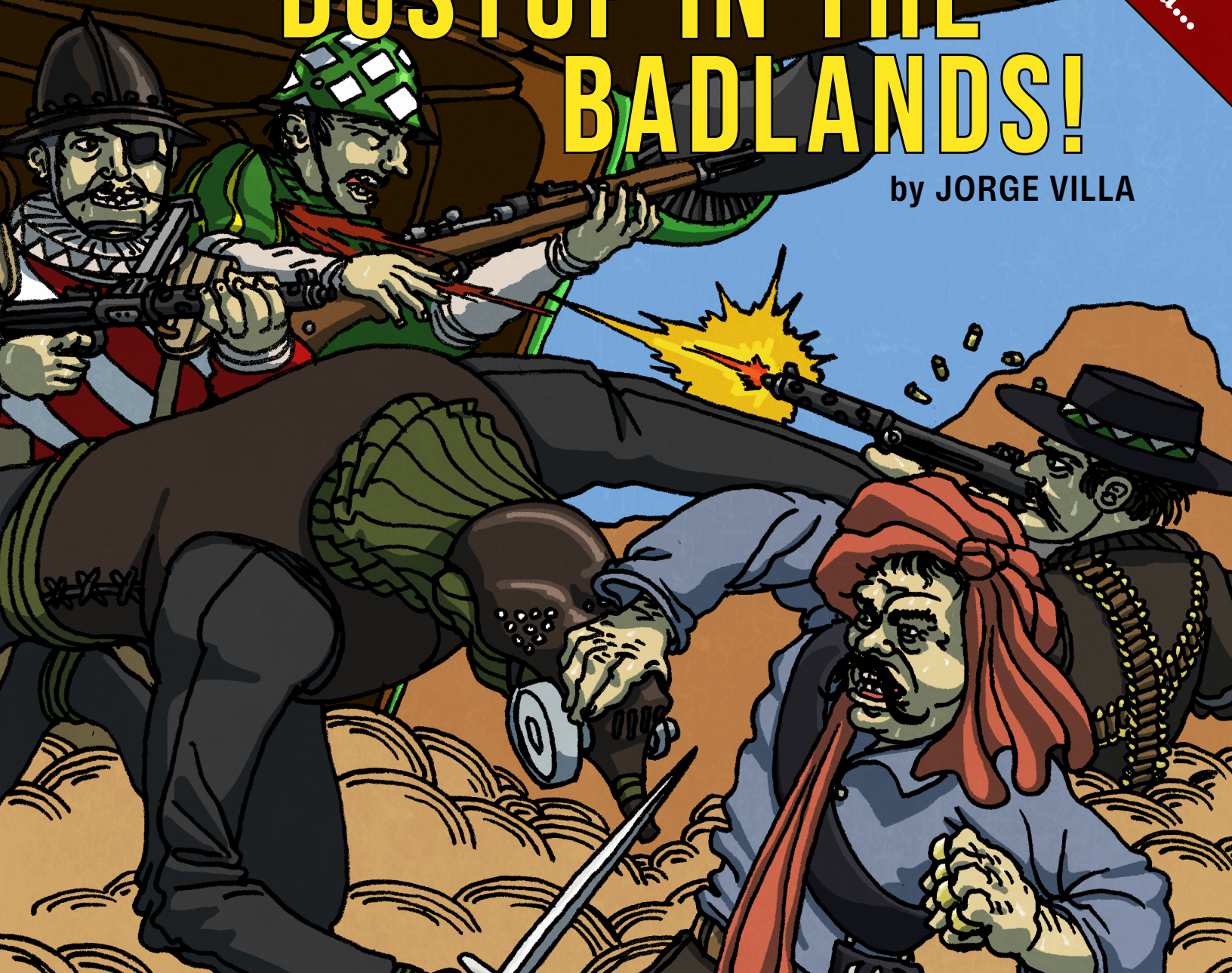


BRAVO

DUSTUP IN THE BADLANDS!

His vision was getting blurry... they had him surrounded... he was lost in the middle of a...

by JORGE VILLA



SCENARIO: BUSTING UP MANOEL'S GANG

A legion of tough Santi hombres...
(Find out their story on page 3.)

...battle the *Commandant of Death!*
(Join his savage hunt on page 4.)

DREKFORT MERCHANDISE



NAME: Langport Blues Dress Patch
FACTION: Federal **SIZE:** 3.95x3.5"
COLOR: Blue and Gold **PRICE:** \$10
DESCRIPTION: Intermarine compass rose with the seven state-stars of the Federation surmounted by a roll of the Intermarium's oath of loyalty. Issued to the bodyguards of the states-holders at the Tulip Houses in Vansa.



NAME: Regent's Oath of Loyalty Patch
FACTION: Luparic **SIZE:** 3.2x3"
COLOR: Black and White **PRICE:** \$10
DESCRIPTION: A Carcal-style shield with a white on black fur of "bloodied" hamecons, a golden inscription above in the luparic tongue which commends the Chasseur for an act of valor which proves loyalty to his country.



NAME: Rygolic Friendly I.D. Patch
FACTION: Rygolic **SIZE:** 3x3"
COLOR: Green and Red **PRICE:** \$10
DESCRIPTION: A low-visibility variant of the F.O.F. I.D. patch worn by Petty Staters cooperating with N.R.H. forces, with a grid pattern encircling the ligature of the Rygolic empire and an outer rim of red.



NAME: Cadet Arms of House De Haro
FACTION: Santagrine **SIZE:** 4x4"
COLOR: Various **PRICE:** \$10
DESCRIPTION: A variant of the coat of arms of the fallen dynasty that once ruled the Commonwealth flown by a cadet branch. The torches hold the nuclear fire while the gauntlet wields a bomb that remade Santagrina.

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DOGFACES DRAW IN THE DRINKERS' DEN!

by JOHN DRAKOULIAS

from one side of his mouth to the other
as he waited for the serving girl to return
with his cocktail.

His company had just yesterday
pushed a Regency landing back into the
sea. The Army of the Ebon Forest's forces
took positions in some seaside village
before being forced to abandon their
holdings, scattered survivors dispersing
amongst the mangroves. A victory to be
celebrated if it hadn't taken most of their
ammunition and fuel to achieve.

Unable to countenance the thought of
abandoning his imported tanks to AEF
salvage crews or worse, Simmons ordered
the Stink Pigs Mixed Mercenaries to pitch
tents before conscripting one of his
trusted officers and hitching a ride on
the back of a local truck. He wagered that
at the nearest town he could negotiate
for some supplies or at least a stiff drink.
What he didn't bargain for was to look up
from his shadowed booth and spot a trio
of dishevelled dogfaces stalking through
the front door.

Looming over the counter, the first of
them growled, "We are searching for two
men—a terrorist and a traitor..."

SIMMONS puffed on a fat hand-
rolled cigarillo and used his
free hand to rub his aching temple.

Girard, his infantry commander,
panted through the humid coastal air and
dabbed his forehead with a cool damp
cloth. Balling it up in his hand, the lupar
dunked it into a bowl of ice and water
sitting on the table between the two men
before resting the sopping scrap of fabric
on his brow with a satisfied sigh.

Summer on the Sovacostan coast was
doubtlessly an uncomfortable affair if
you were cursed with fur from head to
toe, but Girard did himself no favours
with his wild braided mane all weighed
down with beads and torcs. Simmons
reckoned that his subordinate would be
better served tossing his thick Chasseur's
jacket instead of just ripping the right
sleeve off, but he had learned time and
again not to press a son of the forest on
his fashion choices.

The merc captain rolled his smoke

NONE of the hombres had the guts to talk before the “big man” had spoken the first word. But he wasn’t talking, as usual. He was just standing there, sucking his gums, looking over the blasted desert.

Now, that isn’t to say that the guys on the hill weren’t big, bad men themselves. There were about eighty in all gathered there, sweating in the desert air. They all held pistols. They wore masks over their eyes, or tied neckerchiefs over their mouths. Underneath their rough wool clothes, each one carried a scar for every day of the year. They rode across the desert on the backs of horses, on the decks of armored cars, or even in the gunner’s seats of tanks. Any one of these fellows could have right then and there taken his horse to the nearest pueblo, shot the village marshal, and snatched any girl he wanted right in front of her daddy—and nobody would have had the guts to stop him.

But at this place, on this morning, every single one of the big, bad hombres stood obediently, and all out of respect for one man—the biggest, baddest hombre of them all. Manoel Fortune, the scourge of Alqitania.

The bandits in Manoel’s gang respected him because he was the only one who was one smart enough to make big money without asking for a job. Manoel didn’t work for any baron, or any petty prince, or least of all any “penny-pinching, grease-stained Federal” (as he liked to call them). Manoel only worked for himself, and he’d rip off anyone—all the way down to his boots—in order to stay self-employed. He was known to have pulled a man’s arm out of its socket for not getting out his wallet fast enough.

So it happened that on that morning, Manoel had called his guys for another one of his famous scores. Problem was, none of them knew what it was he was planning. They rarely did.

Far off in the distance was a little watering hole by the name of Cerda Gorda. It was a smallish trading post, with big, sturdy walls, built around the crossroads of two country highways. A couple hundred folks were living inside, kept safe by the great limestone towers that watched over the gates. It was a good place to barter, a safe place to get beer, and the last bastion of the law before the road wound south again, back into the deadly anarchy of the masterless Alqitian desert.

It all belonged to Baron Donny Bala-Piedra, the richest man in the Dunes.

Manoel was looking at it.

“You all know the place,” Manoel began. “You know the roads going into it. The roads going around it. Most of you know the name and location of every town with gas in the next hundred miles. You know what haciendas are good for layin’ low. Heck, you know what ditches are good for layin’ low, too.”

Manoel turned to his men and pushed up the brim of his sombrero. “The highways have two Veldjen tollbooths. One close, on the Ocho Siete, the other on the Siete Nueve, halfway to Dromo Deangelo. They keep a Vauban running at the Paraiso oilyards. Then there’s the highway patrol, which stops in at 9 sharp every second day; a Cataphract and a Castellan, and a wagon with whatever guys they have handy. On top of that, Don Cabeza’s pipehitters have some birds parked somewhere southwest, in the hills...”

Manoel stopped and pointed to one of his men. “And in Cerda Gorda?” The hombre faltered.

“The mayor,” said the hombre.

Manoel kept his finger on him.

“In his ‘copter.”

Manoel did not lower his hand, but shook it vigorously up and down with each word. “And what do all these things have in common?”

The hombre swallowed. “They’re the only soldiers within a half-day’s ride.”

Manoel nodded approvingly. “Goes to show that I don’t have to tell you guys everything.” He paused, satisfied. “That’ll be good enough,” he said with a sense of finality.

There were some raised brows, grunts among the hombres that turned into murmurs. They felt something in the air, but what it was, they didn’t know.

Manoel heard the chatter. He made his voice sound twice as big. “Follow me! I got something to show you.”

Manoel led the men down to a low, reedy saddle in the dunes. It was full of bushes good for napping in shade. Something huge, wide, and oddly-curved was squirreled between the foliage under a canvas tarp, thrown with little brown and yellow grasses to appear discreet.

“Boys, every place has its secrets. You never know what you may find. I’ve found a secret, there, in Cerda Gorda. Seven of ‘em.”

The hombres stopped their muttering. They were starting to get the picture.

Manoel continued. “Bala-Piedra set up seven hidden caches to hold shipments of his ras-el-hanout before it’s delivered across the

badlands, between his territories in the north and south. Every month, new kit is buried in the caches, then picked up at night by movers. They got all kinds of money in there... big money. Fuel. Armor. Missiles, bombs, shells. I don’t hardly know how they get so much plutonium,” he added thoughtfully.

Manoel took off his hat.

“Tomorrow morning, twenty of you are gonna put on your most respectable clothes and ride into town at different hours. You’ll make small talk, drink a little, look inconspicuous. At the fourth bell, you’re each gonna grab the pistol from your ankle and shoot one lawman dead.”

The hombres were silent as a morgue.

“Piedra’s not that stupid. He’ll be sending his cavalry. I need three of you to hop on the radios in the watchtowers. You’re my shot-callers,” he said. “You’ll look west and tell the rest of us where to go when the tanks roll in.”

Some of the men nodded.

“Today, we’re going shopping. I need cars, donkeys, green paint, and straw. Sticks and cans that look like machine guns. We’ll need some dummies to keep the highway patrol guessing where we’re hiding.” Manoel paused, then he snorted and snapped. “Prep starts now. I trust you all can follow instructions, ‘cause this evening, I won’t be there to boss you.”

The muttering came back, and it turned into an uproar. “Why can’t you boss us?” demanded one of the hombres.

“Because I’m gonna be busy,” barked Manoel. He crouched over and unhooked the corner of the canvas and threw open the flap.

The cockpit of a hotrod helicopter gunship glinted under the moonlight. It was red, covered in drawings of trees with yellow flowers.

“A you-knee twenty-eight...” blurted one of the gangsters.

“I got it from the mayor,” said Manoel. He gestured for three of his men to come help him with the tarp. “I got to learn how to fly this beater before I got to use it.”

The hombre came over and ran his finger savoringly over the fuselage, gazing at Manoel’s muddy reflection in the glass. “But how’d you get the gunship, Manny?” he asked.

The big man scoffed. “Tell his widow that I won it in cards,” said Manoel.

*

BLUFOR

MANOEL FORTUNE’S GANG - 300 PTS, 9 COMMAND

GROUP 1

Lingering in the town.

- * Santagrine Militia (x3)
- * Volley Team
- * Light Gun Team
- * Machine Gun Team
- * Bombard Team

GROUP 2

Rolling over the dunes.

† Originates from northeastern board corner.

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| * Mounted Sergeants (x4) | * CB.61 “Galgo” (x3) |
| * CB.76 “Misericorde” | * VC.44R “Whirlwind” |
| * ↳ [T] SB.18 “Retumbo” | * UNI.28-03 “Man-at-Arms” |
| * CB.76 “Misericorde” | * MC.17-86 “Spada-Fresco”† |
| * ↳ [T] SB.15 “Pom-Pom” | * “Shot-callers” (x3) |

BARON Donny Bala-Piedra got a call that evening from his top lieutenant. He shoed away the servant girl who was busy rubbing his feet and answered the phone brusquely. "What in thunderation's happening that's worth robbing my leisure?"

"It's worth your time," growled Don Pedro Cabesa de Minerelia, Donny's right-hand man. "Someone's heisting the checkpoint at Cerda Gorda."

Don Pedro's silver nasal prosthetic, which replaced his nose after a disfiguration by a would-be assassin, whistled shrilly over the receiver. "They knew what they were doing."

Baron Donny leaned into his armchair, wadded a lump of tobacco, stuck it into his mouth, and chewed hard enough for Don Cabesa to hear it loud and clear over the over the phone. Don Pedro understood he had to get on with it.

"We can't get ahold of the mayor or the sheriff. That means our triggermen are all bought or shot. We're lucky to have gotten a warning radio from one of the watchmen, whom I doubt is available for further comment. Whoever did this knows about the stuff. There's no doubt. The guns, the plutonium, all of it's still in the caches. I bet fifty escudos they're being exhumed as we speak."

Baron Donny chewed ruefully, and another note came from Don Pedro's nose.

"They think they can rob you and get away with it, my Baron."

Baron Donny kept his cool. "Not without a fight." It was a statement, not a question.

Don Pedro chuckled. Pedro was no slouch, and Baron Donny knew it. The Baron relaxed into his chair.

"My Baron, guess who's back from vacation? I've already sent El Arrancador."

*

"Copy, over."

El Arrancador's copilot took the headphone off one ear before issuing his report. "We have word from the scouts, sir. Looks like only two or three dozen in town. They aren't carrying anything serious, just what they scrounged off the militia... A bombard, machine guns, a light gun, but mostly rifles. They're keeping a low profile. Must think we haven't noticed. They've already started digging up the caches. Doesn't look serious, but... we can't find the mayor's Man-at-Arms."

Arrancador's UNI.28 was still on the ground, in the shadow of the slip face of a

wavy dune. He looked intensely at the crews of the other aircraft in his retinue. His nephew, Tito Maza, was checking his Graf's engine. The Black Fangs were sitting in their Squire playing cards with the tankbusters. None of the men other than him seemed to be taking it seriously.

"We wait for the backup," said Arrancador. The copilot was puzzled, but assented. "Yessir."

A moment passed.

"Permission to ask a question, sir?"

Arrancador nodded. Slowly.

"Why, sir?"

Arrancador felt a pang of frustration, but he stayed collected. His eyes moved suspiciously. "Because it doesn't make sense yet."

The copilot thought about it. "Permission to ask another question, sir?"

Arrancador stared daggers at him. Then he nodded again.

"Well, ah... why's it not make sense, sir?"

"There's nobody left in this part of Alqitania dumb enough to heist a Baron's town with a handful of men, no tanks, and no covered withdrawal."

The copilot wanted to ask another question, but he wasn't going to push his luck. Arrancador sensed this, so he continued.

"There are only smart men left. There are no dumb men left to rob him because the Baron has already hired them." Arrancador ended his answer by promptly smacking the copilot upside his helmet. He then turned and leapt out of the cockpit.

Arrancador held up his his binoculars. He looked at one highway, then the other. Tanks in the baron's livery were coming up both ways.

"We're going in when they do," he said, then he looked at the men and dogs playing cards. "Commandos! Fifteen minutes!"

The dealer in the squire nodded and began collecting the players' cards.

Arrancador hollered for Tito, who came over briskly. With Tito before him, Arrancador relaxed his guard, just enough so that only Tito could see it. "How does the Graf look?"

"Well enough," said Tito. He looked back knowingly at his uncle. "Are we ready?"

"No," said Arrancador. "But don't tell the rest of them that I said that."

"You seem skeptical of this whole affair, uncle."

"There are more of them out there. They're just smart enough to hide from us."

"What makes you so sure?"

"I'm not so sure."

"Do you think the mayor sold us out?"

"Pfeh."

Tito Maza nodded, and El Arrancador didn't say anything further. He put up his binoculars again, looking at the horizon and the fields outside of Cerda Gorda.

Tito, after some time, started back towards his helo.

When his back was fully turned, Arrancador snapped his fingers with reproach. Tito spun straight in place to face him at attention.

Tito could see fierceness in Arrancador's face. His cool, calculating expression was replaced with a merciless scowl, yet his voice remained even.

"I didn't dismiss you, nephew."

Tito swallowed hard. Arrancador slowly handed him the binoculars.

"I'm getting old, Tito. My sons are dead. You will have to carry on my business of killing in my stead. You will have to respect your lord Bala-Piedra as you now respect me."

Tito opened his mouth to apologize.

"Shut up, boy. I didn't give you permission to speak." Arrancador hovered his head over his nephew's and glowered icily down at him.

"Look at the battlefield and tell me what you see."

Tito shakily pressed the binoculars to his eyes. Even under the protection of the eyepiece, Tito could still feel his uncle's glare burn his skin through the plastic of the binoculars. Upon realizing that this was another one of his uncle's "tests", he became even more nervous. But Tito was clever, and knew not to speak rashly. He remained silent and took his time. Arrancador did not rush him.

Once Tito had at first become relaxed, then absorbed in his reconnaissance, El Arrancador started to watch the rest of the retinue again from the corner of his eye. The tiny vehicles creeping along the roadways grew, gradually, less and less tiny as they approached their staging points before Cerda Gorda. The Black Fangs and the tankbusters and those lazy, good-for-nothing mercenary pilots were all dragging their feet in preparing the wargear. That is, until they, too, felt the prickling gaze of El Arrancador's deathly, wandering eye. Then, they quickened a bit. More than a bit.

"I see something, Uncle! You were right. A Galgo, peeking at us from over the dune."

GRAYFOR

EL ARRANCADOR'S FORCE - 300 PTS, 9 COMMAND

GROUP 1

Flying overhead.

- * UNI.28-AC "Don"
- * PEG.123-AC "Graf"
- * PEG.60-11 "Squire"
- * ↳ [E] Black Fangs
- * ↳ [E] Volley Team

GROUP 2

Storming the trodden roads.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| * Steam Tractor | * VBD.127-DB "Castellan" |
| * ↳ [T] War Wagon | * VE.378 "Cataphract" |
| * ↳ [E/1] Gren. Team | * VC.2 "Veldjen" (x2) |
| * ↳ [E/2] Santi Militia | * ↳ [T] Field Gun (x2) |
| * ↳ [E/3] Santi Militia | * "Vauban" |

First, seven Pennants are placed on the board according to the markings below.

Third, three “shot-callers” are placed identified in any Tower on the map.

BLUFOR's bandits (Group 2) deploy from any point on the northern or eastern board edges that is within 28" of the northeastern corner of the board. GRAYFOR's airborne units (Group 1) must deploy from the southwestern corner of the board. Its ground units (Group 2) deploy from either of the two marked roads at the western and southern board edges.

After all units have been deployed, but

before spotting, BLUFOR may declare a **misdirection!** Exactly three ground units from Group 2 must then be repositioned within Fields, Swamp, or Dead Ground in exactly one of the four zones (Areas 2, 3, 4, and 5) west of Cerda Gorda. Repositioned units may not be within 6" of an enemy unit.

BLUFOR does not possess traditional TACOMs, but three “shot-callers” who are issuing orders to the bandits from the top of towers around Cerda Gorda. These are not traditional units, but a sort of special emplacement that can be placed only in Tower structures which generate command for BLUFOR and allow the calling of missions. Shot-callers are represented as minor objectives and generate three command tokens each.

To call a mission with a shot-caller, use the structure as a unit base for the purpose of

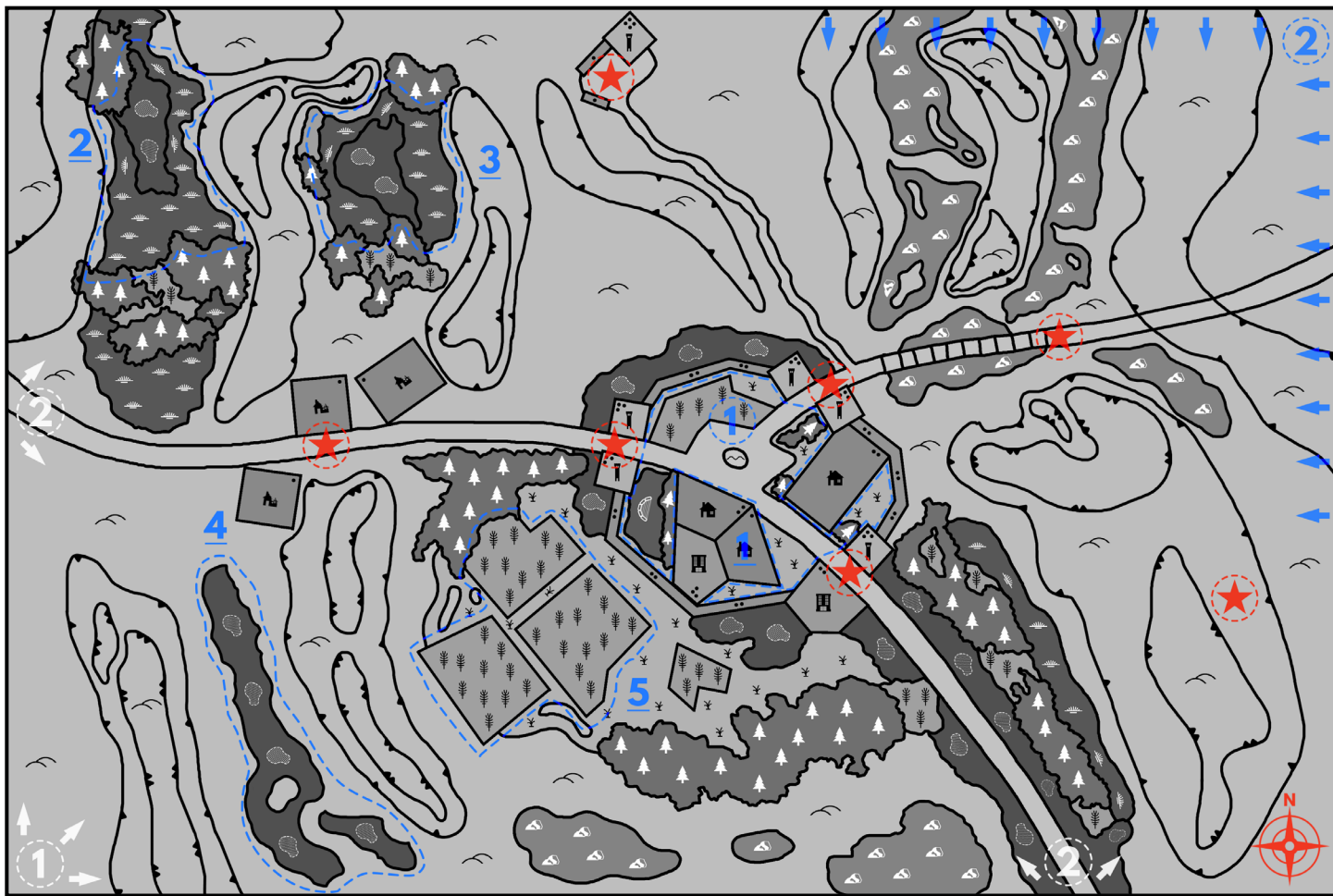
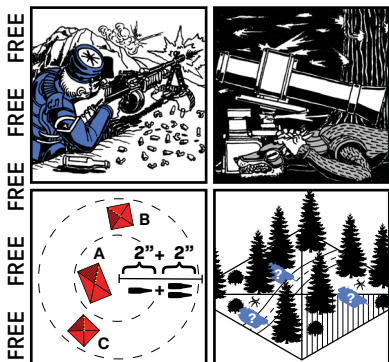
drawing LOS and other lines.

GRAYFOR can “clear” a shot-caller from a building as if it was an emplacement by having an infantry unit garrisoned inside of the tower, thus eliminating BLUFOR’s operative and removing three of BLUFOR’s command tokens.

If all three shot-callers have been eliminated, but BLUFOR still has its Man-at-Arms (Manoel Fortune), BLUFOR will still receive one command token during the Support Phase.

BLUFOR must survive until the end of the fifth round with at least four out of seven Pennants still on the map, or otherwise eliminate all enemy TACOMs.

GRAYFOR must either consume four out of seven Pennants in the Support Phase before the end of the fifth round or have cleared all three of BLUFOR's shot-callers as well as destroyed their Man-at-Arms.

[illegible]

Go download the latest edition of **FIRELOCK 198X** from <https://drekfortmdc.net/> and enjoy a robust, expanded, and clarifying revision of the ruleset, with its many old mysteries now fully exposed like the waiting legs of a lady caller. New writing, artwork, and fiery battles like this one are waiting for you. Special thanks to Robert Cambias for annealing the new scenario compendium with cracker-jack special objectives from his fanwork. Support him and his hard science fiction space combat wargame **iPMO** at [https://robert-cambias.itch.io/](https://robert-cambias itch io/).

[illegible]

SENSIBLE COOKING *for the* CURIOUS STIFF

THE ULTIMATE FOOD MANUAL

NAVARRO DINNER

COOKWARE

- › A wide cast iron pan
- › A pot
- › A small saucepan
- › An oven

CHICKEN A LA DICK

INGREDIENTS

- › 1 & 1/2 lbs. bone-in skin-on chicken thighs
- › 75 whole cloves of peeled garlic, or enough to cover the bottom of the cast iron pan
- › 2 tbsp lard
- › 1 tsp finely ground salt
- › 1/2 tsp black pepper
- › 1/2 tsp white pepper
- › 1 tbsp finely chopped tarragon
- › 1 tbsp finely chopped parsley
- › 1 cup of chicken stock
- › a splash of white wine (chardonnay is best)

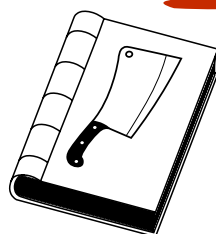
1. Heat the lard in the cast iron at medium-high heat. Take the chicken and rub on the salt and both peppers on each side, making sure to get some under its skin, and then sear on each side for four minutes or until nicely browned. Put aside and cover to hold its heat.

2. Reduce heat to low and add the garlic. Let the cloves cook briefly before deglazing with white wine. Let the wine simmer for only a few moments.

3. When the pan has deglazed, add the cup of chicken stock and sprinkle over the cloves half of your parsley and tarragon. Replace the chicken thighs on top of the bed of garlic, then sprinkler over the chicken the other half of the herbs. Cover the pan with the lid and allow it to simmer for an hour or longer, until the meat is thoroughly cooked and tender. Serve with the sides on the right.

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COLLIER'S POTATOES

INGREDIENTS

- › 2 & 1/4 lbs. of Idaho potatoes, diced
- › 1/4 lb. of softened >82% fat butter
- › 8 oz. heavy cream
- › 1/4 cup of chives & some extra
- › 1/4 tsp of coriander
- › 1/4 tsp of onion powder
- › 1/4 tsp of black pepper
- › 1/4 tsp of cloves
- › 1/2 tsp of salt, set some of this total aside for the boil

1. Add a good amount of salt to the water in the pot and boil the potatoes. Boil for about 10-15 minutes, or until fork-tender.

2. Strain the pot and quickly replace the potatoes inside. Turn down the heat to low and all at once add the spices, butter, and cream, but not the chives. Cook and mash until combined thoroughly and the color of the potatoes turns golden, about 25 minutes.

3. When the potatoes have become creamy, turn off the heat and stir in pre-chopped chives.

4. When served, dice more chives, however much you want, and add them atop the dollops of potato.

ALQITATION PICANTE

INGREDIENTS

- › 1/2 cup of olive oil.
- › 6 oz. diced white onion
- › 1/4 cup of sliced picked jalapeno
- › 2 cups of pepper paste
- › 1 tbsp of lime juice
- › 1 tsp of British curry powder
- › 1/2 tsp of refined brown sugar
- › a splash of whole milk

1. Add the olive oil to the saucepan at medium heat and add the onion and jalapeno, cooking for about 2 or 3 minutes or until the onion is soft but not translucent and the jalapenos break apart.

2. Add the pepper paste, lime juice, and curry powder, and whisk them together, cooking for 3 or 4 minutes, or until ingredients are combined and the onion is very tender.

3. Turn heat to low and add the splash of milk and the sugar, simmering for another minute. Taste and adjust, simmering and adding sugar until the picante is both sharp, tart, and sweet.