

## **Introduction**

As the name suggests, the Gamma Russia takes the basic Gamma World setting to Russia. Much of the background is taken from the excellent Rifts book "Warlords of Russia". Much of the information here will not make much sense without this book. I've also borrowed ideas from as diverse sources as Ars Magica and Warp World.

In this specific case Russia is taken to include among other places Russia proper, the Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus. The territories East of the Urals are assumed to be mostly wilderness and are not covered in any detail.

Russia itself is a frozen, monster-ridden hell hole. During the Winter months, most roads even as far south as the Black Sea, are blocked and there is very little activity. There is no central authority in Russia. Most communities are rural, small and spread out. What binds the various settlements together is the rule of the Warlords.

The Warlords are the leaders of the semi-nomadic warlike clans which rule Gamma Russia. Barbaric as they may be, the Warlords are Russia's best and only line of defense against the threat by the insect-like Xiticix and the pathologically xenophobic Simavans Monster Riders. Further still the Warlords embody the promise of a new united and restored Mother Russia.

Player Characters will be officers or specialists of equivalent rank in the Romanov Warband. They can be true Russians, Cossacks, soldiers of fortune from Finland, Lithuania, Poland or the New Soviet (a high tech enclave), or anything else that would fit a basically militaristic campaign. There are no genotype restrictions except that characters from the New Soviet are Pure Strain Humans

Gamma Russia is basically a Dark Ages style fantasy setting. The Warlords camps are comparable with the tribes of Franks and Visi-Goths who picked up the pieces of the old, broken Empire and founded modern Europe. If it helps, think of like the Pendragon rpg, but without the pomp and with blasters.



## **History of the Warlords**

In the aftermath of the cataclysm Russia found itself in the grip of a terrible Winter. The Great Winter was to last for centuries. Most Russians were driven south and west by the climate change. In the chaos of the exodus, the Russian people reverted to a clan like society.

Legend has it that even in their exile the memory of Mother Russia kept calling back her children and that generation after generation of Russian waited for ice to begin to thaw to return home. In reality the Russian clans were pushed back into Russia by the hordes of Simvan Monster Riders coming from the South. The Simvans remain a major threat to all sentient life in Eastern Europe.

Russia was a hostile country to the migrating clans. The environment was harsh. New people and creatures had filled the vacuum left by the Russians and were not about to give up their homes peacefully.

In order to take back their homes, the most aggressive of the Russian clans joined to larger war camps

under the leadership of a Warlord. Initially there were hundreds of Warlords. But once the first phase of the conquest was complete, the Warlords turned on each other. The stronger war camps absorbed or destroyed the weaker ones, all the time growing in size and power.

Currently there are only seven major Warlord camps and a dozen or so minor ones. The major Warlords are:

**Yuri Garald Alekseyevna** - a powerful, "old school" conservative Warlord and based around the Urals. He rules his territories with an iron fist, but rarely bothers with the affairs of the other Warlords,

**Pyotr Karol Burgasov** - an aggressively expansionist Warlord, he controls a vast area covering Estonia and most of the northern European Russia. His capitol is in Novgorod.

**Stephan Iiyavitch Kolodenko** - aka The Mountain King. Kolodenko the most civilized of the Warlords. He is known for his personal interest in science. His territories are south in the Caucas Mountains. Though his army is small, it is trained specifically for mountain warfare.

**Boris Anatolii Orloff** - aka The Snowdemon is mad, bloody and in charge of a huge army. His territory covers a long cutting through the south of Russia, including a slice of the Ukraine.

**Sonya Tatyana Romanov** - Warlord Romanov is the ideal Warlord of popular culture; a brave, noble warrior who looks after the interests of all the peoples she rules, not just her war camp. She rules the Ukraine and has her capitol in Kiev.

**Igor Seriyev** - Seriyev likes to present himself as a lovable rogue but is in fact a very canny operator and the head of a huge spy network. His is based in the Baltic and his capitol is in Minsk.

**Grigor Levka Sokolov** - is a brutal, wild animal. His territories are the poorest and most backwards of all Russia. Sokolv has a particular haltered for Kolodenko who with his educated and sophisticated court is practically Sokolov's direct opposite.

## **The Organisation and Economics of the War camp**

Regardless of whatever historical justification they may present, the Warlords are an invading force. In any one territory only between 5-10% of the population are part of the Warlord's camp. Rest of the population are conquered peoples made up of those who never left Russia during the Great Winter, non-Russians who settled in before the times of the Warlords and the peaceful Russian clans which did return to Russia but were not associated with one of the Warlords.

It's from these people that the Warlords exact tributes to support their vast armies. In exchange the Warlords offer protection to these villages from bandits, other Warlords and the many dangers of Gamma Terra. It ought to be said that while the villages have little choice on whether they accept this protection or not, the need for protection is genuine.

It is difficult to generalise on the organisation of the Warlord's Camps. Typically a major War camp will be divided into a dozen or so armies of 5,000 - 10,000 men. Each army will be commanded by a general. Each general will have under his command 10-30 captains who in turn command companies of anything between 10 and 300 men.

The basic unit of organisation in the Warlord's camp is the clan; a collection of extended families. The clans owe allegiance to their Warlord. The clans are also the fundamental military unit. The warriors of the clan form a company during the campaigning season. The foremost warrior from the clan is generally elected as the captain and will lead this company in battle.

In the old days, the captains reported directly to the Warlord. But as the size of the armies and controlled

territory increased, a new role was created; that of the general.

The Warlord appoints their generals personally, usually from one of the most powerful clans. The appointment of a general is always temporary. Each general is given for a year a district to govern, protect and collected tributes from. Of this tribute half goes to the Warlord, half stays with the general. From this money the general must finance his army. Given that different districts generate different revenues and the borders are pretty hazy, jealousies and disputes between generals within the same Warlords camp are common and even wars between districts are not unheard of. And of course, every time a Warlord dies, the chances of a civil war exploding within the camp is very significant.

It is the general's responsibility to attract the individual companies from the various clans into his army. Each captain negotiates with the general for the share of tribute money and loot in exchange for his companies service, depending on strength, size and quality of his unit.

Note that while the captain his company will have sworn allegiance to the Warlord, his contract with his general is only for the year, or more precisely for the warm months of the year. Come winter, the companies leave the general's army and return to their families. They are under no obligation to serve with the same general next year.

### **Other Powers**

#### **The New Soviet**

The region around old Moscow is held by the New Soviet (Sovietski). The people of the New Soviet are the direct descendants of the staff from a pre-cataclysm military installation that survived unscathed. As such the Sovietski is a comparatively high tech society in Russia. All the people from the new Soviet are Pure Strain (not mutated) Humans and they tend to be isolationist in nature. Ever since the Warlords have moved into Russia, the domain of the New Soviet has been shrinking.

#### **The Orthodox Church**

The Church is universally respected in Russia. Their monasteries can offer rest to weary traveler and even sanctuary to fugitives. Even the Warlords will respect the right of sanctuary. The monasteries are also important centres of learning. As the church has taken upon itself the task to preserve the knowledge of the past, in their cellars are stored books, films, works of art and other artifacts from before the cataclysm.

#### **Monsters**

As in the rest of Gamma World, the wilderness is filled with dangerous mutated predators and other monsters. In Russia two distinct semi-sentient races have evolved which are particularly dangerous; the Simvan Monster Riders and the Xiticix. The first are man-eating primates famous for riding into battle on their dinosaur-like Ostrasuri. The latter are an insect-like civilisation. Though not individually intelligent, the Xiticix are controlled by a hive mind.

### **The Romanov Camp**

The party will start off as part of the Romanov War camp. The Romanov camp occupies what was once the Ukraine. The Warlord is Sonya Tatyana Romanov. She claims to be a descendant of the Tsars, but that highly unlikely. However she is a strong leader and well regarded by her people.

The capital of the Romanov territory is Kiev. Kiev is the most advanced city in Russia outside of the New Soviet with a population in excess of 200.000. However the Sonya's actual head quarters is in Krakov

where she has built her Winter Palace.

The Romanov Camp maintains good relations with the Kolodenko and Seriyev Camps as well as the Sovietski. They are nearly always at war with the "Mad Snowdemon", Warlord Orloff.

### Technology

Gamma Russia is mostly preindustrial. The people are in general poorly educated. However high tech equipment like the ubiquitous AK-200 "kalashnikov" impulse laser rifle or the Lynk snow-jetsled are commonly found in the war camps. These are purchased (often illegally) from the New Soviet or New German Republic traders much in the same way as Apache warriors might have gone into battle with white-men built repeating rifles.

### Special rules

I use mostly the 4th edition GW rules for this game. The following are rules I use which differ from vanilla GW. The first two are the house rules I apply to all my GW campaign and would be lost without.

The regular Folk rule - Apart from the PCs and important NPCs, regular folks only get 1 - 2 d6 hit points and no useful mutations. See my web site for more details

The KO - Any hit which cause damage > than the target's CN score results in a KO. The character is out cold for the remainder of the fight.

Grogs - To underline the fact that the PCs start off the campaign already as important figures in the War camp. As such each PC will have ordinarily two grogs at his command. Grogs are basic rank and file soldier in the War camp. The Term Grog comes from Ars Magica, I believe.

Grogs are created by rolling rigorously order 3d6 for each stat. For Grogs, the CN score is also their hit points which makes them a lot more fragile than the PCs. Grogs can be of any genotype but they get none of the bonuses or useful mutations. They will be armed with basic Dorcbuster rifles (see below) and a normal melee weapon.

The player is responsible for roleplaying his grogs. Grogs can participate in combat, go on errands and help with any physical work. However if the player's PC is present, only he can make attribute checks. In other words if the PC has failed his tracking or perception check, he cannot retry using the grog.

Also, for this campaign I have redesigned most of the GW weapons. These weapons are detailed on their own page.

[Back](#)