

Report to Dame Brionna of Stanway, Captain of the Archducal Guard, Military Advisor to His Eminent Grace, Archduke Alastair, and member of the Archducal Council  
From Sir. Clarence Richards, Military Intelligence

Honored Dame,

While I know that many things occupy your time and energy, I believe that it is appropriate that you know how the situation has evolved in Caligshire in these last few days.

The defeat of the Horde of the Gut-Rippers has resulted in a better result than our wildest hopes – our scout vollar crew reports that the Gut-Rippers have continued to flee in rout beyond the border of Canberry, and are now several miles beyond our border, still in full flight. Furthermore, evidence is that several small clans and bandit groups that were nearing the courage to also take advantage of situations as they emerged in Caligshire have, instead, begun to pick at the flanks of the fleeing Gut-Rippers, and are turning away from our borders to continue a pursuit. Not only is this encouraging the Gut-Rippers to continue to flee – as in a rout rumor is OUR friend; but it also is drawing away additional potential marauders.

At the same time, the defeat of the Lidless Eye, which as your honour may remember, drew away in good order to the northwest, is less that exemplary. The horde fled to just beyond the historic border, and there stopped at a set of recent fortifications, apparently constructed by the smaller Gutwreck horde. Anchored by two full baileys – rammed earth and timber primarily – with a loosely fortified line between – the fortifications command high ground and three major springs. Artillery has been emplaced in both baileys and a pair of watchtowers, and the combined forces of the two hordes inhabit the trenches, towers, and baileys like professionals.

At this point a clan of Ogres, the Galtrough, accompanied by a family of Hill Giants and possibly commanded by an Ogre Magi are approximately a day away from further reinforcing the position.

Devin Rollingheath has slowed his advance, although he too has received unexpected reinforcements.... I think (see his attached report to you)... as his force is irregulars and taking a fortified position, even rammed earth and timber from any determined force, even orcan, is unlikely. Further, if he engaged, and lost the engagement – well, the ramifications are obvious. He and his force constitute the only reason the hordes aren't all over Caligshire already.

Respectfully,

Sir Clarence Richards, Military Intelligence



The enemy held the high ground here. See report.

Lidless Eye at border of Calligshire joined with Outwretch horde -- fortified stockades, log/mitch style and line.

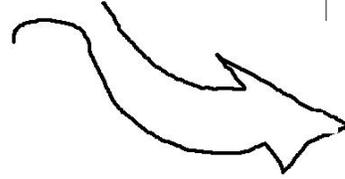
Devin Rollingheath and irregulars. see report.

Out Rippers continue to retreat back West, further than expected, remain in rout.

2. Galtrough Ogres headed to join Lidless Eye/Outwretch -- about 90 ogres, one family Hill Giants, possible Ogre Magi.

To the Village of Plentiful

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To Dame Brionna of Stanway -- update and analysis of situation in Calligshire. Prepared for Sir Clarence Richards by the Department of Cartography, Military Intelligence.

Unto the honored Dame Brionna of Stanway, Imperial Military Advisor to his Most Gracious Eminence, Alastair, Archduke of Canberry  
From Devin Rollingheath, commander (ad hoc) the Caligshire Front

Honored Dame, and by your consent, Gracious Eminence,

While we have driven the ravagers back from the territories of Caligshire, I now approach the end, I think, of the capability of my force. The Lidless Eye have retreated to a strongly fortified wilderness position in the foothills beyond the northwestern border of Caligshire. Technically, in fact, they are in neutral territory, and there could be a question of the legality of my pursuit – however, I feel that since they were invaders within sovereign territory belonging to the Archduchy, my pursuit was justified under all diplomatic expectations, and treaties to which we are signatory.

However, my soldiers are irregulars, and while victory is heady, the enemy is now in fortified positions, with plenty of fresh water and apparently with fresh allies – the Gutwretch horde – to strengthen their already considerable numbers. With permission of the crown, my inclination is now to fortify, several miles from them, and prepare for prolonged skirmishing – something that both we and they are adept at – until such time as a solid force, if you would, can come to my aid. That will, I believe, prevent any additional raiding from them and keep them pinned down until they can be disposed of.

I also need strong advice, for I have come into possession of an element that was unexpected. As may have been reported to the court, rumor of a vollar in the northwest has run about for some weeks. Rumor also that the vollar had at times fired on the raiders. Yesterday eve said vollar landed, as we made evening camp, and an officer, one Siki'Yana of the house of Tyrnea-Moriquendi'rim – an elf very much appearing as a high elf or perhaps sea elf – descended to talk to me. It was then that I realized he was neither high nor sea. He told me that he and his crew of 8 were defecting, with their vollar, to our forces. His crew – 8 drow, then descended, and they all made a great show of removing insignia, house seals, and other such symbols, and burying them. This would have been less confusing if they had not wept, cut themselves with crystal knives, and reverently buried each of the symbols, drenched in their own blood, repeating ritual words which, one of my men, who speaks some elven, interpreted as something to the effect of “never again in moonlight, never again in starlight, never again to be spoken, never again to be sung.”

They then wrenched the symbol off the very airship, and shattered it with a blow from a crystal hammer – and then buried its pieces. They wept more, and then declared themselves ready to die for us and for the Archduchy. The whole display was so bizarre that I tried to question the officer in charge in more depth, but he only said, very sadly I thought, “the truth of the words that are not spoken, the order that comes not from the commander but from the traditions is absolute. The order that cannot be spoken is the one most to be followed when it is at last heard. – have no fear, we will serve as we have said, and when all is said and done, you shall honor us by killing us – but not until all is finished that was started.” And he would speak no more of it – though those words make scant sense to me I am afraid, and yet oddly burn in me.

The vollar is an ultra light – their equivalent of a scout vollar, but it mounts a single 'death lance' for which they have 70 charges, though the commander said that with no great psion, they cannot recharge the weapon, and the drow and their commander are well equipped, well appointed, and battle ready. My gut tells me that they can be trusted, but I wonder if I am insane to think it - and I ask your counsel on this.

Respectfully,

Devin Rollingheath