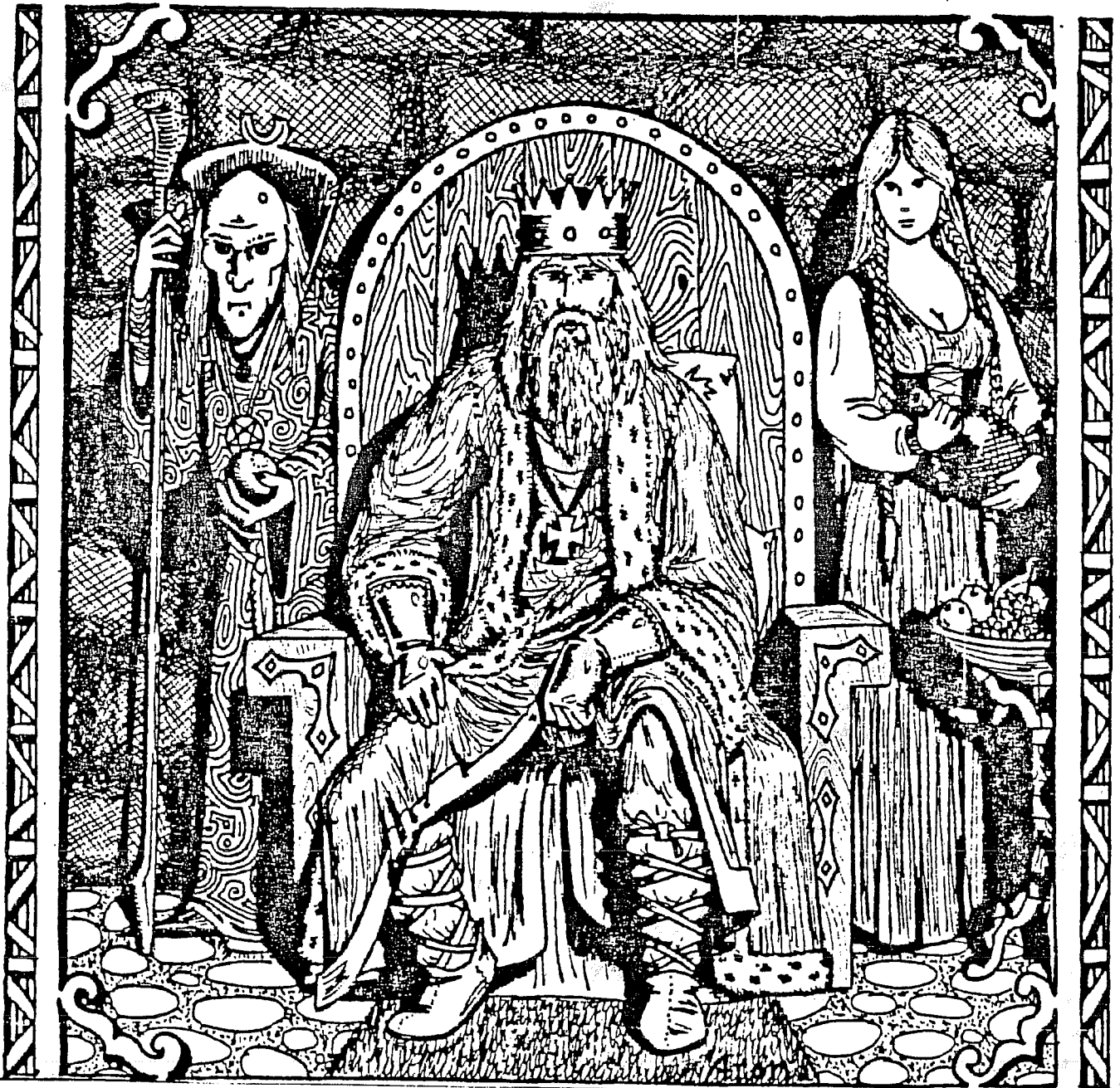


WELCOME TO AMTGARD




This booklet and all other Amtgard supplements are the property of Amtgard. Supplement number one: Welcome to the world of Amtgard was printed in Amtgard, Kingdom of the Burning Lands (cc). All authors and artists retain the rights to their work.

Welcome to Amtgard, a medieval and fantasy oriented organization that originated in El Paso, Texas in early 1983. Since then chapters have been established in such diverse areas as Arkansas, Florida, Colorado, and Illinois. Groups as successful as the parent chapter are flourishing in Austin and Dallas. Just what is Amtgard? We recreate the feel of the medieval era and the genre of fantasy literature by staging mock battlegames. These games are fun, good exercise, and run by a group of referees called reeves. Participants wear garb reflective of the era to encourage the feel for the period(s) we endeavor to recreate. We also hold feasts, tournaments, run quests for magical items, and generally participate in any events that have a medieval tone to them. Amtgard has done a demonstration at Renaissance Fairs, at S.C.A. events, for the Boy Scouts, at science fiction conventions, at universities, and even at several high schools. Amtgard has staged an actual medieval wedding. It is recreation in its purest sense. Amtgard received its non-profit status in 1986, and since then has also striven to be an educational organization. This booklet is Amtgard supplement #1. Other supplements include the art of garb making, cooking and feasting, art and artists, historical research on the medieval era, and so on.



All articles and art rendered in the Amtgard supplements are contributions from Amtgard members. The articles that follow are intended to give the reader an idea of the Amtgard experience: cover art by Aron (Len Nellson),
* Creating a Persona by Sionnach o' Ros Sidh (Kris Andrews)
* Introduction to Garb by Gwynne (Kris Donnelly-Sasser)
* Battlefield Tactics by Aramithris of Meadowlake (J.W. Donnelly)
* A Magic-user's Survival Guide by Tawnee Darkfalcon (Michele Ellington)
* Other art by Aron, Gwynne, Tawnee, and Nithanalorn (Richard Fox)
* all rights to the articles and art reserved by the authors and artists





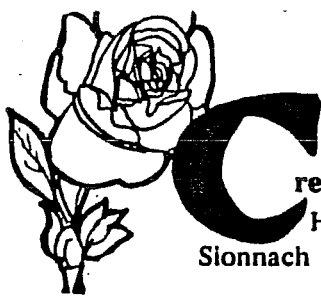
AMTGARD, KINGDOM OF THE BURNING LANDS (Inc.) cc

Amtgard, Kingdom of the Burning Lands is a non-profit, non-sectarian group devoted to recreating the elements of the medieval historical and fantasy literature genres. The thrust of Amtgard is both educational and recreational, with major group efforts devoted to reconstructions of medieval combat. Amtgard "weapons" are safe, foam-padded replicas of the real things. Anyone may join. To become a member one must:

- 1) obtain a copy of the handbook of rules and read it
- 2) develop a persona and persona history
- 3) make a costume for yourself that is fitting to your persona
- 4) fill out a membership form and waiver and turn them in to the prime minister. Minors must have their waivers signed by their parents or legal guardians. Minors under the age of 14 may not participate in combat without special permission of the Crown.

Subject to the preceding criteria, anyone may participate in Amtgard functions. However, there are certain advantages for those whom choose to financially support Amtgard. Donations to the treasury (informally referred to as "dues") are \$5 for every 6 months or \$1 per month. People up to date on their "dues" are considered to be contributing members. This status entitles a member to receive a copy of the handbook and issues of the Amtgard newsletter. It also, with a minimum attendance stated by the Crown, allows the member to vote in Amtgard government (the Allthing). Funds received from donations are used to finance Amtgard functions and projects such as printing costs for handbooks/newsletters/fliers/etc., renting sites for feasts, purchasing prizes for tournaments and quests, and so on. No one is required to pay "dues" though some kingdom officers are required to be contributing members. We have no "pay for play" rules. Non-donating members are able to participate in all activities and receive all benefits not specifically listed as exceptions in this paragraph.

Amtgard has been approved on local, state, and national levels. Activities involve such diverse areas as medieval feasts, chess tournaments, historical research, and enactments of mock feudal combat. Amtgard frequently stages demonstrations at conventions, renaissance fairs, and universities. Amtgard stresses safety and legality in events. Participants range in age from 14 to 48, although most "Amtgarders" are college and high school students, with a large minority from the military. People wanting to try Amtgard are always welcome and the general public is encouraged to come out and view the games.



Creating a Persona For Amtgard

Hints and Ideas by Kris Andrews
Sionnach o' Ros Sidh, Champion of Duke Seregon

Everyone would like to live in a fantasy world, and that is exactly what Amtgard seeks to simulate. Amtgard is a world of medieval fantasy -- a place where knights, lords, elves and sorcerers mingle on magical landscapes. And, in order to become a part of this world, you must create a new identity for yourself, an alter-ego who exists side-by-side with the other denizens of this fantastical place. Whenever the society meets, you BECOME this new persona, in dress and in speech, in attitude and in combat. As you play your character, you interact with the personae of other club members, in effect creating among yourselves the wondrous, imaginary society that is Amtgard. What follows are hints and guidelines that will help you in selecting the persona you will become to enter into this magical place.

The inspiration for your persona may come from any source -- legends, history, fantasy fiction or your own wildest daydreams. For instance, if you like the idea of playing an elf, you may choose to be a traditional Germanic elf, a lighter, lither Tolkienesque elf, or even a sprightly Elizabethan spirit. Or perhaps a historical era appeals to you -- a druidic sorcerer from ancient Ireland. Where you draw your ideas, with a little research you can learn how to dress, fight and most importantly, act in character. Remember that Amtgard is a world of MEDIEVAL fantasy, which roughly translates into any time period from prehistory to the Renaissance. While this may not mean much in fantasy fiction set on alternate worlds, at least the medieval spirit must be maintained (in other words, no laser toting space pirates, although a low tech warrior from a post-holocaust Earth might work). Also, while you may be inspired by actual fictional or historical characters, the persona you create must be original; so that while it is great to play a Cimmerian barbarian or an Arthurian knight, you cannot choose Conan or Sir Lancelot as an alter-ego. Beyond these considerations, however, the only limit to your persona is your own vivid imagination.

Something to keep in mind when selecting a persona is the Amtgard system of combat. In combat, there are several classes of character, such as warriors, barbarians, wizards, scouts, assassins, and so on. When you are on the battlefield you must elect to be one of these classes of character for that particular melee. However, in a different combat session (and there are usually no more than three at a weekly meeting) you may play a different character class. In other words, on week you might be in the mood to walk onto the battlefield as a heavily armored juggernaut, whilst the next week your fancy may be the elegance of a monk or the tenuous power of a thaumaturge. It is encouraged that you try each of the classes for yourself and experiment. For this reason, you may wish to choose a persona that can justify switching roles. For instance, elves are ideal for alternating between warrior, scout, and wizard. Likewise, an outdoorsman could equally be seen as a healer, archer, monk, scout or warrior. One crafty fellow could interchange as scout and assassin. But some combinations are harder (though naturally not impossible) to justify, such as a 10th century Danish viking (a classic barbarian/warrior) becoming a sly, unarmed magician (which would probably roll the eyes of fellow Amtgardians). Later, of course, to counterbalance your first character, (a small and slippery thief, let's say) you may create a second persona altogether, perhaps a knight who dabbles in the mystical arts. Initially, however, it is advisable that you develop one persona fully before spreading yourself (and your character's experience) out. Also, it is simpler at first to play a more physical (read: non-spell casting) character class in order to become accustomed with the rules of combat. Then, you may begin playing wizards and healers. Most importantly, keep in mind that these

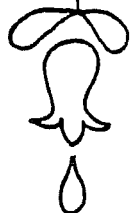


character classes are simply designed persona, but by no means a limiting or deciding one. The final factor in what your character is and does is your own, unique imagination.

Lastly, something to consider in choosing a persona is your personal, physical attributes. This is not to say that if you do not consider yourself particularly quick or large, you should not be an elf or a Zulu warrior. But let's face it, a six foot four inch, two hundred pound hobbit just does not work. While such a character might be amusing, it is better in the long run to select a persona that (roughly) fits your body type. Not only will this paint a stronger picture visually, but I think it will give you a more positive attitude about the character and about yourself. Many people are unaware of their own, physical potential and what better way to explore this than in the fun and harmless thronerooms and battlefields of imaginary Amtgard? The closer your persona matches your own physique, the less you will rely upon abstract rules to equalize yourself with other Amtgardians and consequently, the more of your own potential you will be able to utilize. Of course, we all know that the object of fantasy is to allow you to be something you cannot be in the mundane world, and this idea is reinforced here by insuring that you are actually BECOMING your persona at every meeting of the society. One of the useful attributes of fantasy is its power to allow you to explore yourself. This very act in itself becomes an adventure. Remember that not everything in fantasy is combat and the same is true in Amtgard. Select an alter-ego with which you feel comfortable, both mentally and physically, and that much more of your energy can be channeled into having fun.

By now, you should have an idea of what type of persona you would like to create. From here you might want to perform a little research to come up with a background for your new self. As an example, let us say that you have chosen an Elizabethan elf as a race. This means that you will be much more magical in nature than say, a Tolkien elf, and you will be of the Oberon/Titania cycle. Minimal reading will tell you that these spirits were derived both from elements of classical mythology and elements of Celtic/Germanic legends. Now choose which (if not both) side appeals more to you, and explore it. For instance, your elf might be more Celtic in nature, a fairy tale rogue with a fleet foot and a flashing sword. Elizabethan elves as often as not had magical origins rather than biological ones: the birth of our example elf might have come say, at the dawn when the sun opened the petals of a rose in a fairy ring, a rose on which the mightiest warrior of Ulster in Ireland bled his final drop after falling to the superior numbers of his foes: the rose bloomed at sunrise and an elfin infant awoke at its center. A brief life story will come with a little day dreaming; our elf was raised by fairies and leprechauns but, alas, the influence of the warrior's blood (perhaps his "father", making him a half-elf?) drove him to explore the world of men, and he became a magical, capricious wanderer; until finally he came to the Grand Duchy of Barad-Duin and established himself as the Duke's Champion. The name should catch the spirit of the character: our elf has the name Slonnach o' Ros Sidh, which is Gaelic for Fox of the Fairy Rose. From his origin, it is easy to decide a personal motif, which will be the rose: his clothing will tend to be scarlet in color, often he will bear a flower for his lady friends, etc. With a little effort and much delight, a persona is created and fledged; in this case, the elf is the character played by the author of this article.

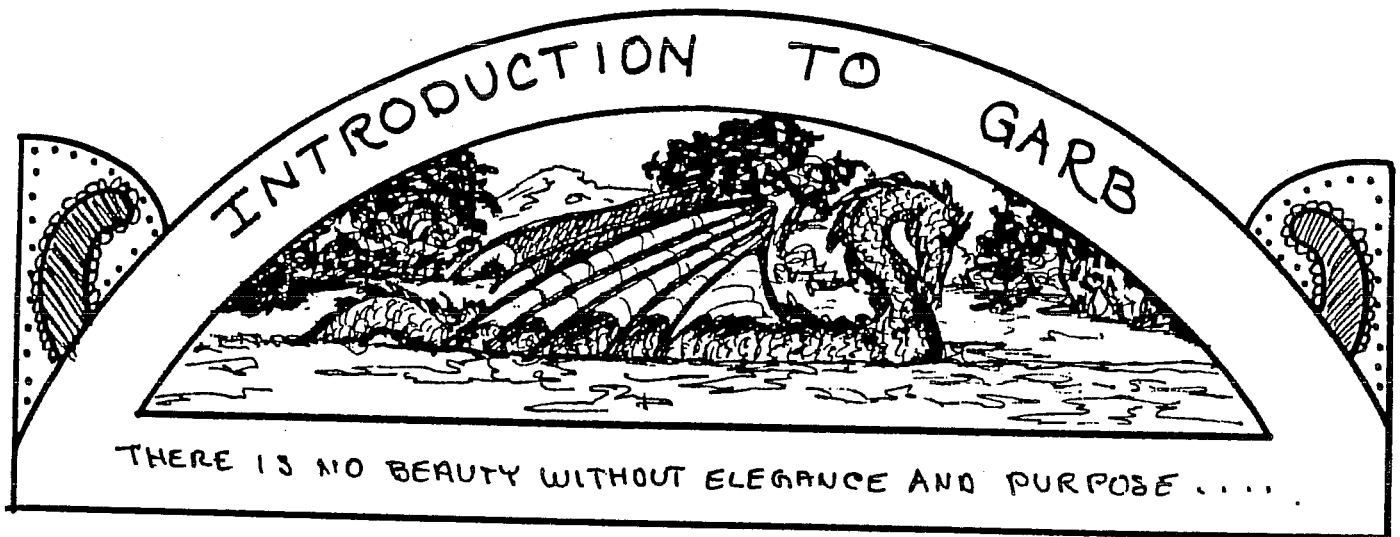
Not all origins have to be as colorful as this. You may choose to be a dwarf from a mountain army, or the grandson of a Roman Centurion left behind in Saxon England. You may even simply explain yourself as a Norse viking or a wizard in a tower. The more research and imagination you put into your persona, the more believable, interesting and downright fun it will be, both for you and for your fellow Amtgardians. After you have chosen and named your persona, you will have to form a mental image of what sort of clothing you will wear,



what sort of weapons you will use, what speech patterns would be appropriate, and so on. In short, think of what you will do to transform yourself into your new identity at a meeting of the society. At first, your costume need only be basic. There is a Clothiers Guild in the society with folds who can help to make an outfit for you. Some weapons will be provided by the club, but eventually you will want to make you own and personalize them to your character. The most important thing that you must provide at a meeting is a good understanding of who your persona is and a healthy desire to have fun being that character. I guess above all other pointers I have given in this article, this last one is by far the highest priority. If in creating a persona you use good sense, a dash of effort, and a heaping helping of your own unmatched imagination, there is no reason that you cannot, though your persona, live out that life that everyone wants, on the wide and magical landscapes of Amtgard.

*Homach
to 264
Fitch*





There are probably aspects of Amtgard more important than garb but it has to figure near the top of the list. This statement is prejudiced of course as I am into garb both by predilection and by edict. Stop and think about garb for just a minute. Would Amtgard be as much fun without garb? Picture a feast without garb!

Why is garb so satisfying? Why is any Amtgard function enhanced by garb? I think one of the biggest reasons is the difficulty in expressing, via what you wear, your true personality/persona in the mundane world. Let us face it, folks, mundanity by the very definition of the word, i.e., mun.dane (1) of the world, (2) commonplace, everyday, ordinary, etc., is boring! This is not to say you should give in to that impulse and wear a cape to school or carry a broadsword to work but it is good for the psyche to wear a cape and carry a broadsword sometimes - hence Amtgard and garb.

Let us consider the word garb. According to Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, Second College Edition:

garb (garb) n. (OFr. garbe, gracefulness - It. garbo, elegance, prob. ult. -Gr. kalopsois, making beautiful - kalos, beautiful + poiein, to make (see POET)) 1. clothing; manner or style of dress, esp. as characteristic of an occupation, profession, or rank. 2. external form, covering, or appearance 3. (obs) style; manner - vt. to clothe; dress; attire.

Note the words used in reference to garb, "gracefulness, elegance, beautiful, style". Quite a difference from commonplace, everyday, ordinary, and etc. wouldn't you say? I especially like the reference to the word poet.

I personally think garb and the marvelous words used to describe it are strongly tied to appropriateness. In other words, a bikini can be graceful and elegant at pool side but just the opposite at a symphony. Most of us have already spotted the obvious in that we normally will not wear feast garb to a ditch battle. Not only do satins, brocades, and velvets not take to intimate association with grass, dirt, rocks, and etc. but who can afford to have them dry cleaned one a week! This is however not to say that fighting garb cannot be elegant and graceful. Combining these two virtues with sturdiness and ease of upkeep is not as difficult as it may appear.

Basically dress garb and fighting garb are much alike in design. It is in the material used that difference is apparent. Three basic patterns will serve to produce a basic garb wardrobe. We are of course referring to (1) T-tunic, (2) Basic pants, and (3) Basic skirt. With modification of material and length the three basics can be expanded into a closet full of garb and take you from feast to fray

in comfort and style.

The most (MOST!!) important thing to keep in mind when considering the start of your engarbement is fit. This cannot be stressed too heavily. Take your time - measure everything - twice! Create your three patterns to fit you exactly and then never worry about the fit again. I would even go so far as to use scrap material for your first attempt at utilizing your personalized patterns. Cut up an old sheet. Who cares if it has purple and pink gardenias on it - this is for fit only. Sew up the major seams and try it on. Make sure you have a friend available to check the fit from the sides and back. Also make sure your friend won't laugh themselves silly over the gardenias. Modify the pattern if necessary being sure to mark the changes on the pattern itself and then go looking for suitable material.

Suitable material is anything that fits the following requirements:

- FIGHTING GARB:
1. Preferably a material that looks natural. Obvious synthetics just don't look very realistic. Go for cotton/poly blends, linen/poly blends, wool or wool blends.
 2. The rougher the treatment the garb is liable to receive the heavier/sturdier the material should be. For pants use the twills, gabardines, denims or the heavier wool blends. Use unbleached/bleached muslin for a good, cheap choice for shirts. Lighter weight twills, etc. are fine for tunics.
- DRESS GARB:
1. Anything goes. Anything! Just keep in mind that the more plush and/or delicate the material the more difficult upkeep is going to be.

THE FOLLOWING IS ONE EXAMPLE OF A BASIC STARTER WARDROBE:

FEMALE

Medium weight cotton skirt in dark grey.
T-Tunic, long sleeved in off-white.
T-Tunic, wider gathered sleeve in a dark burgundy.
Light weight skirt in dark burgundy.
T-Tunic made to floor length in a very fine cotton - light grey for feasts, etc.
T-Tunic, short sleeved in dark grey.

MALE

Heavy to medium weight twill pants in dark brown.
T-Tunic, short sleeved in tan.
T-Tunic, long narrow sleeve in blue.
Medium weight pants in blue for dress events (feasts, etc.)
T-Tunic, long, wide, gathered sleeve in off white muslin or cotton.
An over-tunic, sleeveless or a very short, capped sleeve to wear over the muslin shirt and the blue shirt. Make up in very dark blue.

Now, add some accessories in the way of belts, shawls, jewelry, belt pouches and etc. and you are garbed. Look at the above lists and figure out the number of different combinations you can make out of five or six items. With the basics listed you can expand your garb wardrobe geometrically by selective additions of just one or two more clothing items. For instance, add a short vest to either wardrobe and see how many more combinations you can come up with. A cape, especially a reversible one, will add even more dimension to your options. Keep it basic - add fancier stuff later. when you can afford garb so specialized it can only be worn one way.

SHOES - THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF GARBING:

Garb shoes. Where on earth do you get them? Is there really such a thing? Do you have to spend a fortune and have them custom made? The answers to all of these questions are (1) Where ever you can find them. (2) Yes, there really are garb shoes. and (3) No, not necessarily.

Where do you get them? Shop a lot in South El Paso. Some of those strange little shops will occasionally have the perfect soft boot or funky, totally medieval sandle you have been lusting for. I would also recommend keeping an eye on the large department stores at the various malls. I have found several pair of good garb boots at the White House and the Popular - on sale yet!

Major S.C.A. events often have merchants selling garb shoes. Amtgard Garber's Guild has also published one pattern for a soft cloth or leather shoe.

If you belt pouch is of sufficient depth and weight you can also have boots custom made but be prepared to shop all over town for a bootmaker who has anything but a western type boot pattern or last. You'll have better luck in Juarez, Mexico.

Dress shoes for male and female are not nearly as difficult to obtain as the daily wear shoe or boot. Believe it or not the modern version of cloth or leather bedroom slipper is often so close to a traditional garb shoe as to make no difference.

Whichever route you choose to take in your pursuit of garb shoes, be prepared to spend time if not money and keep fingers crossed as you will also need some luck!

CAPES: No comment save, "see various Garber's Guild publications for patterns and make sure you have at least one good all weather cape".

ACCESSORIES:

You will need and want the various items so necessary to add flair and panache to your garb. "Items" can range from jewlery, belts, pins, belt pouches, favors, headgear to you name it. Best of all, accessory items seem to be the easiest to find or make. Again, South El Paso is a happy hunting ground for the strange and/or funkey. Flea markets are also a good source for wierd and wonderful "items".

ONE LAST COMMENT:

When you have taken care of appropriateness and fit for your basic garb keep in mind a very important condition not here-to-fore mentioned. That condition is quality of workmanship. What a waste to have good pattern, really suitable material and then nullify the entire effort by casual or downright shoddy workmanship unless your persona is a serf, slave, or beggar of course. These three personnas positively require gross, raveled, and scruffy garb. Another point, beside the esthetic, is why would you take the considerable amount of time and trouble to assure pattern fit and expend your dollars on material to make up garb in such a manner as to assure it will not last beyond a few wearings? Not me. I'm too lazy to sew up anything that will not stand the tests of time, wear, and multiple washings. If you are not sure of your sewing technique find someone who is then pick their brain or, if you have enough charm or a large enough club, convince some master seamstress/tailor to make up the garb for you. GO FORTH AND ENGARB!



Lady Gwynne, Guildmistress, Garber's
Guild, Reign of Aramithris, Rex.
Amtgard, Kingdom of the Burning Lands

AMTGARD
BATTLEFIELD TACTICS

Any discussion of Amtgard fighting tactics is enhanced by certain areas of knowledge possessed by the reader. To glean most profit from this one should be familiar with the Amtgard rulebook and the various intricacies appropriate to the battlegames. Chief among these are magic, in particular offensive killing spells, and the Amtgard armor system, which can allow a properly armored person to negate multiple hits upon his person. Much has been written on various fighting techniques and styles, and any attempt to rehash the slash and parry routine of a shortsword would be redundant. Those looking for a lesson in weapon handling are referred to either the nearest fencing club or to a well stocked library. The opposite end of the spectrum, that being the strategic application of large numbers of troops, also has little bearing here. Amtgard deals with small unit tactics, between ten and thirty individuals per side per engagement. Several minutes of maneuvering inevitably leads to short and sharp clashes, especially when one side demonstrates weakness. Casualties are usually high, but never permanent. Any predetermined or organized tactics stand little chance of success considering the fluidity of most situations. Also, if your opponents are perceptive, they will tend to correct their errors on the second go round. The above stipulations in mind, this article will concentrate on those critical few seconds where a balanced standoff becomes a breakthrough and then a rout.

The temptation is to discuss the various weapon systems and their application. However, it has been shown that the higher quality fighters are generally pretty good with whatever they can get their hands on. Nevertheless, a brief look at the standard weapon classes is in order. Offensive or defensive values would be a silly notion here considering it is the comparative skill of the fighters themselves that will settle the issue. Disregarding obvious tactical modifiers such as surprise and five to one advantages in numbers, I have compiled a working table of the various weapon systems' factors that will speed a fighter to his success or demise (figure 1). Length is the effective attack range, higher values indicating a greater capacity to strike at an opponent before he can close. Speed is the relative ability to strike a single blow. Cover is the protection afforded to the person employing the weapon system. Counter is the potential to employ multiple attacks and/or parries. Encumbrance is actually the lack thereof. Systems are scored from "5" (ideal) down to "1" (as bad as it gets). Remember, the situation and the fighter can heavily influence these values.

FIGURE 1

<u>System</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Speed</u>	<u>Cover</u>	<u>Counter</u>	<u>Encumbrance</u>
Spear	5	4	1	2	3
Two hander (sword, axe)	4	1	2	1	1
Single sword	2	3	1	2	5
Sword and small shield	2	3	3	5	3
Sword and large shield	2	3	4	3	2
Double swords	2	3	2	4	4
Sword and madu*	2	3	3	4	3
Flail and small shield	3	4	2	3	3
Flail and large shield	3	4	3	2	2
Flail and madu*	3	4	2	3	3
Two handed flail	5	2	2	2	3

*includes knife or second sword with shield

I don't intend to go into this subtopic any further, but a lot can be extrapolated from the chart provided. For instance, if you like to stand away and pick people off, and then rely on your agility to escape, then you might want to employ a spear, a weapon excellent in length and speed and fairly good in encumbrance. A person who prefers to mix it up in the middle of a large melee might prefer to use a sword and small shield, which ranks high in combined speed and counter. There are other variables not included on the chart, as these are not universal considerations for all weapon classes listed. Examples would include ability to penetrate armor and shields (something at which two handers are very effective), and class applicability (ever see an assassin with a flail and shield?). A prospective combatant can improve his chances immeasurably with some careful thought (what are you going to do, and how do you aim to achieve this?), and thorough preparation (i.e.- provide your own equipment).

It has been historical practice to delineate troops via standardized classifications. Even considering the great versatility present and the highly individualistic nature of Amtgard combat, the precedent does have some use here. I have divided Amtgard fighters into six basic troop types as summarized below in figure 2:

FIGURE 2

<u>Type</u>	<u>Mobility</u>	<u>Armor</u>	<u>Typical classes</u>	<u>How armed</u>
Light infantry	fair to excellent	none	warriors/barbarians	poor to average
Medium infantry	average-excellent	1-2 pt.	scouts/many knights	well armed
Heavy infantry	poor to average	3-6 pt.	warriors/monsters	usually heavily
Light missile	good to excellent	none	assassins/monks	lightly armed
Medium missile	poor to average	1-2 pt.	archers	lightly armed
Heavy missile	poor to good	none	magic users	very lightly

Infantry are rated primarily by ability to absorb punishment: armor value and occasionally-- shield size; mobility; and to a lesser extent, weapons systems employed. Missile troops are rated almost exclusively on their ability to deal out punishment. The defensive qualities of missile troops are nearly always on a par with those of light infantry. Light infantry is by far the most common type of fighter found at Amtgard. Quality ranges from good to poor, the former being unarmored club members whom have equipped themselves with sword and shield, and the latter being new people stuck with whatever second or third hand weapons people are willing to loan out. Medium infantry are a step above lights. They are often armored while still mobile and generally include the best fighters. Unless the resistance is organized, a medium can be more than a match for a small force of light infantry. Heavy infantry are always armored with three or more points of armor and are often armed with several weapons. They tend to charge into the fray, counting on their heavy protection to shield them while they dispatch the enemy. Mobility is somewhat hampered due to the heavy load portaged about, and for this reason many of the finer warriors will not choose to go this route. However, don't let anyone tell you that a heavy is not a match for most anything else on the battlefield.

Light missile troops include assassins, upper level monks, and perhaps even healers. Armor is almost nil and their missile weapons are more of an annoyance than a hindrance, especially against armored opponents. One advantage is their high rate of fire, which can double or even triple that of medium and heavy missile troops. Their effective range is anywhere from twenty to fifty feet, which is a constant for most missile attacks. The medium missile category belongs to the bow armed archers and scouts. They tend to be slower moving but better armored than the monks and assassins. Their arrows do multiple hits to armor and destroy opponent's weapons on

contact, so they do more damage than the light missile class. Heavy missile personnel are the magic users. They are lightly armed and never armored. Many who play this class are not agile and/or athletic. This is balanced by a host of powerful spells that tend to be lethal when they connect. Heavy missile troops are the heavy artillery of the battlefield, and one can make or break an otherwise balanced engagement. There are certain anti-magical counters to magic users, but even against immune opponents may the mage wreak havoc. Shields and weapons can fall prey to magic where a potential mark can't.

One further area to be covered before plunging into an analysis of the tactics themselves is a consideration of other battlefield influences that can affect the outcome. One such example is the advantageous matching up of weapon systems. This is already crudely applied at Amtgard when shieldmen are sent to face off enemy archers. In static situations polearms can be positioned behind shields and then pick off opponents at leisure. Madus, halberds, and other long weapons should be placed to face enemy flails. A similar but more subtle area is the matching of class abilities. A typical situation is the sending of the magically resistant paladins and antipaladins against enemy magic users, but the possibilities are endless. Tired of those annoying healer and bardic spells of charming? Then send in the barbarians. A master monk will just laugh at the various death spells, etc. of antipaladins and high level assassins. The armor of heavy infantry is no proof against a healer's "sleep" spell. The interrelationship of the various classes is Amtgard's great point of divergence from other fighting societies. I also believe that it is Amtgard's great strength, for it allows anyone to participate. The best fighters are known and receive their just dues, but where else can those same excellent warriors be faced off by a fifteen year old girl simply by her pointing a finger at them? It is the class system and the use of magic that invigorates and diversifies Amtgard, keeping it interesting where other fighting societies may tend to fall into the trap of only rewarding the most ruthless and aggressive of combatants.

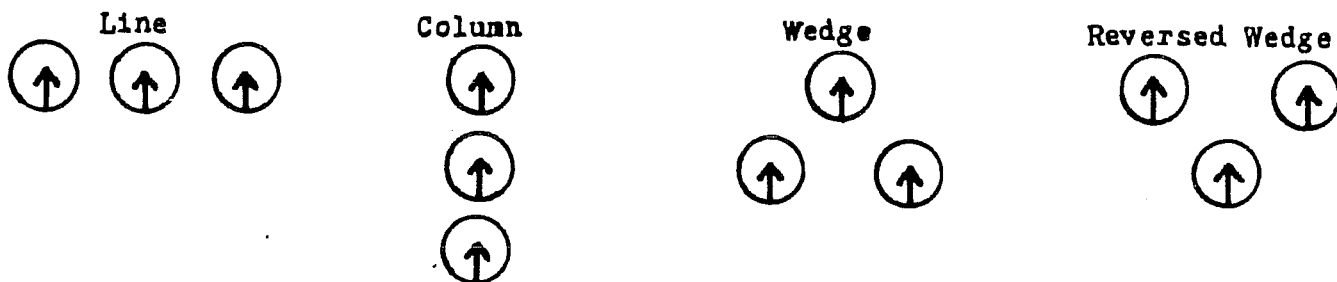
While on the subject of magic, it is worthwhile to discuss another unique Amtgard institution, the use of healing on the battlefield. Healers are not so rare as they once were. This means that if a team can protect their healers, then most wounded people can be back to normal within a few minutes at most. No one has to spend half an hour on his knees. Effective deployment, protection of, and utilization of healers can greatly lengthen a unit's staying power. Of course, the advantages conferred by healers also make them prime targets for the enemy. Roving bands of seeker-killer teams are always a danger to the healers biding their time in the rear areas. Healing also tends to stabilize the lines. What good to wound and then bypass a person if he's going to be back on his feet and behind you a minute later? The prospect of healing encourages an approach that leaves no loose ends on the field. Pity the poor soul who loses a leg behind enemy lines. His chances of seeing home again are slight. Of course, he probably has one or more lives coming since the majority of Amtgard battles are resurrection type scenarios. As most combatants don't desire to die anyway, the element of extra lives is hardly a crucial one. Then again, that person you just slew may come back for revenge. Such emotional factors, along with personality, bearing and attitude, personal feuds and alliances, and reputation all have an impact on the Amtgard battlegames.

Success on the battlefield, whatever the victory conditions of the scenario, is ultimately achieved by the elimination of the forces that can or will oppose you. It is an old maxim of warfare that victory goes to him who can put the most where his opponent has the least. It's always best to maximize your odds of success. Disregarding the uncommon but not unheard of situation where one side has such a skill advantage that it can overwhelm its

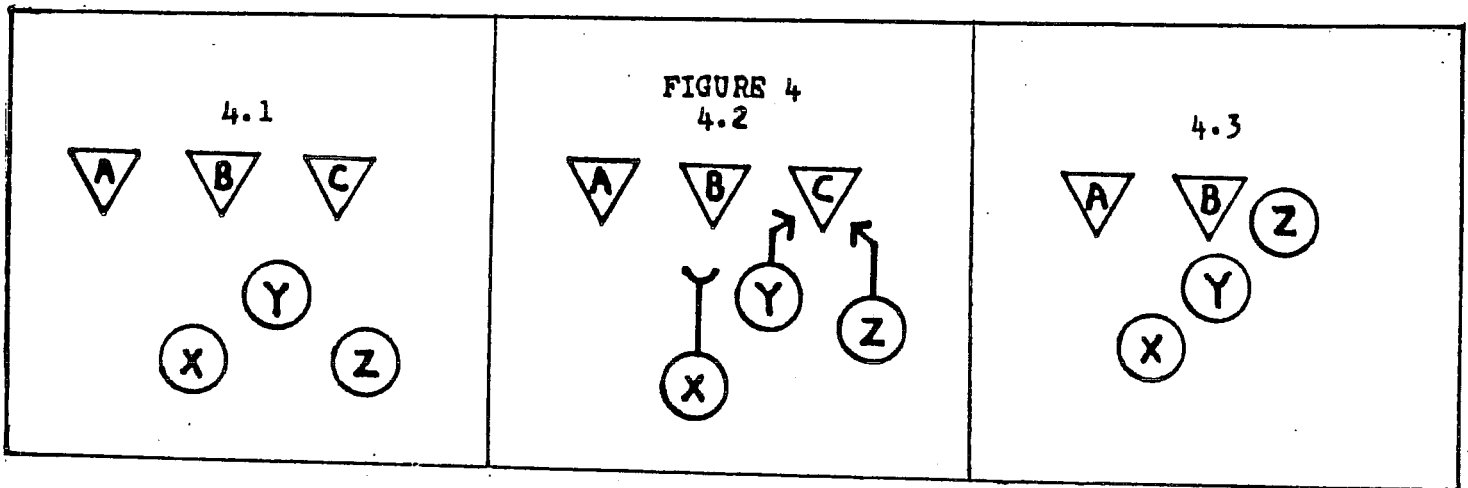
opposition in a series of individual engagements, the question becomes how can one side use its strengths (its most) to exploit the other's weaknesses (their least) while denying them a similar opportunity. Assuming a fairly balanced head-on engagement, (slaying someone from behind, while preferable in the context of maximizing your odds, requires little training, or thinking and thus, is outside the major thrust of this article) the goal is then to increase your chances of eliminating the opponents before they can respond in an effective manner. This is achieved by either overloading or bypassing their defenses, allowing a quick and easy kill. Three methods are applicable: 1) concentrating the efforts of two or more individuals on a single opponent, reducing his chances of successfully defending himself, 2) distracting an opponent so that he can't defend properly against the killing blow, 3) driving or threatening a person out of position, thusly making one of his teammates vulnerable to situations 1 and 2. Note that all three methods must be employed with haste and dispatch, or your "victims" will do upon you what you would do to them. Seizing and holding the initiative is very important. Having superior numbers and reserves to compensate for tactical maneuvering is nice, but a luxury a team will not have at least fifty percent of the time. How then do you penetrate and isolate the elements of a force roughly matched to your own?

First a few definitions are in order. At Amtgard, and in any arena of warfare, there are two basic deployments of forces (in this case, people). These are the column and the line. To these I have added the two variations most seen at Amtgard, and I will refer to these as the wedge and the reversed wedge (figure 3). The line is the most common formation; People stand about shoulder to shoulder as they face their foes. A column is much more rare. The only times I have seen it work is in attacks upon an opponent's rear. The first person in column would attack and pass through the enemy line to safety. As those still alive turned to face the departing attacker, then the second person in line would strike, and so on. This was the original "Sardakar" tactic. Other than that, the use of the column is limited, and I will not mention it any further. The two variations, really combinations of the column and line, are the two wedge formations. The wedge is attack oriented, used to push through weak spots. The reversed wedge can be defensive, an elastic position that can isolate and destroy incursions into friendly lines. I will also demonstrate that any flanking maneuver is basically a variation of the reversed wedge.

FIGURE 3

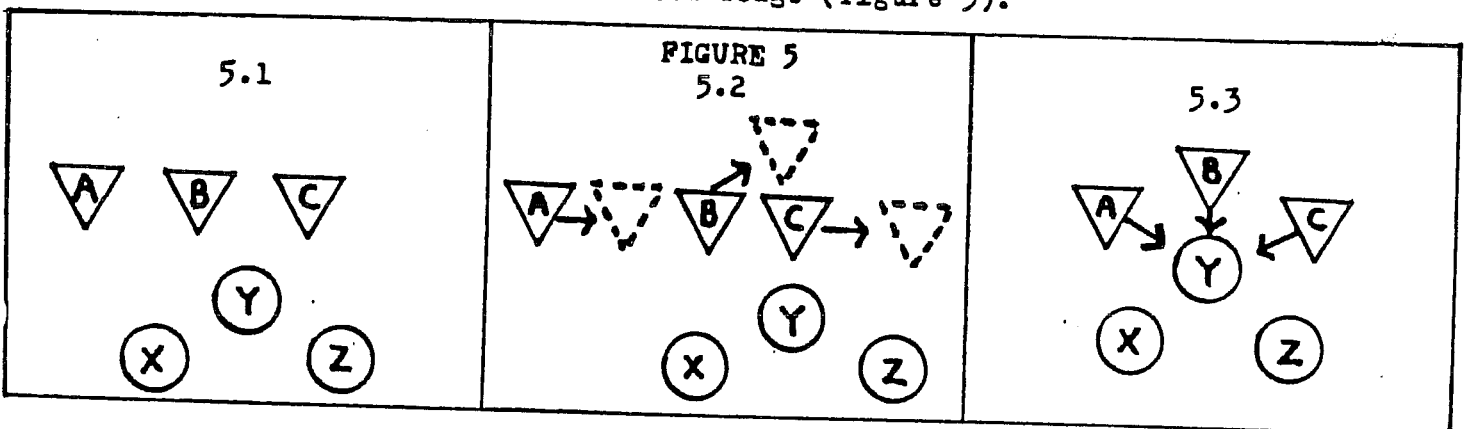


The line is basically a static formation, only good for holding actions and preferably, wearing down the opponent. Given time and many casualties, a line versus line engagement will eventually attrition one side down to easily defeatable numbers. Such tactics usually yield victory to the side with the higher numbers of skilled fighters. A force with no advantage in fighting skills, or in any case, a force that would win more quickly and with less casualties, must apply some ingenuity to its tactics. This is where the wedge formations come in. Note the progression in figure 4 as a standard line is assailed by a wedge formation.



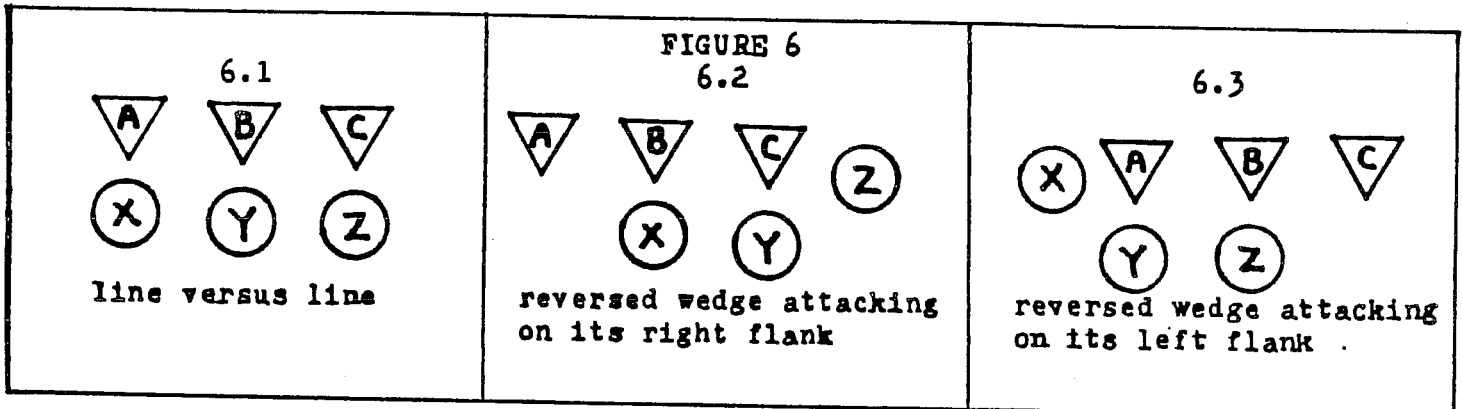
4.1- The wedge approaches. 4.2- Y splits the seam between B and C, threatening C while Z attacks C from the other side. X moves up to cover Y's left flank and to keep A from getting any ideas. 4.3- With C out of the picture, X-Y-Z have formed another line relative to the enemy and have gained numerical superiority. B must withdraw or fight at a disadvantage. Note that this attack must be carried out quickly and without hesitation lest A can move up, once again equalizing the situation. This attack will often not work if B is a magic user, or if C is heavy infantry. On the other hand, having a good polearm or magic user in position X can often cement that flank while Y and Z do their dirty work. Most people are right handed, meaning that their parry will be in the left hand. An ideal system for Y is sword and shield. That puts his parry between him and B and an infighting weapon posed as a threat to C's exposed right side. B is hampered from assailing Y because his vulnerable right flank. A good weapon for Z is a flail, this swung wide on C to further remove his parry from the vicinity of Y. A little thought will show that a wedge is not nearly so effective when matched against the right flank or center of a line.

I should not need to stress that the various weapon systems and classes employed can alter or even discount everything written here. Remember, there are no perfect plans. The best defense against a well organized and planned wedge is quick action by A. If A, B, and C work well together, then it is possible to turn the positioning of the wedge against itself. This requires the employment of a reversed wedge (figure 5).



In 5.1 the wedge is preparing to attack. In 5.2 A, B, and C all shift left so that each one faces a corresponding member of the X-Y-Z trio. In 5.3 the wedge presses the attack. Y and Z come forward, but note that Y is walking into a trap. He is now exposed to attacks from A, B, and C. Z is presented with C's parry side and X is out of position. Y will be lucky to survive. Again note the critical factor is timing. A-B-C must isolate Y before Y and Z can combine to finish off C.

The reversed wedge, as mentioned before, can also be used in an offensive mode. Indeed, most flanking movements, are by definition, a form of the reversed wedge. Notice, how in figure 6, the attacking line becomes a reversed wedge when either flank is forced.



On the attack the reversed wedge is more subtle than a wedge. There is less immediate concentration of force, and the attack can take longer to develop. Whereas you need a good defender holding the side with a wedge, the crux of success for an assaulting reversed wedge lies on the shoulders of the most advanced flanking member. Highly skilled medium infantry are almost essential for this role, as mobility and fighting skills are paramount. A drawback of the reversed wedge is its total unsuitability for a direct frontal assault. The composition of the attacking force, perhaps even more than the tactical situation, can determine which offensive mode is most appropriate. As can be seen in 6.3, an assault with the left flank can be accomplished by use of the reversed wedge. In such a situation, a breakthrough is most easily achieved by X refusing to engage A and instead penetrating to the rear, forcing A-B-C to withdraw, hopefully in a disorganized manner. One very effective variation is to put a left handed fighter in the X slot. This puts A in a very precarious spot, with his right side threatened and his parry arm on the wrong side.

The one major situation I have not yet covered is the clash between two reversed wedges. This usually develops when two opposing lines are attempting to turn each other inwards (figure 7). Victory usually goes to the side that can get around the flank first. This does not mean that concentrating on flanking guarantees a win; it only enhances the chances of such. Rather than withdrawing, a drastic measure that will sometimes work for a flanked unit is to charge ahead and attempt to overwhelm the weakened holding forces that the attackers have in the center.

