



The Gavyn Kyle FILES

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CAPTAIN GUNNBJORN

As you are well aware, I have previously compiled dossiers on prominent leaders of the united trollkin kriels. As you are also aware, my fee is considerably higher when doing so. This is largely because the trollkin generally do not keep written records of their more mundane exploits, and those they do keep are generally set in stone and reference the long dead with considerable poetic license and hyperbole. As such, reliable information on trollkin leaders is exceedingly difficult to find.

You have no doubt noticed that my fee in exchange for information on the trollkin leader known as Captain Gunnbjorn is considerably lower than you might have first imagined. This is because his extensive service with the Cygnaran military has allowed me to research his past endeavors more easily and with greater precision than others of his kind. As a result, I have provided you with an extensive file for a reduced sum.

Much of the information I was able to gather on Gunnbjorn focuses on his time among Cygnar's trenchers. His tenure there has certainly helped shape him into the leader he is today. Furthermore, the skills and experience he acquired as a trencher have continued to serve him long after ending his association with the Cygnaran military.

So what are we to make of Captain Gunnbjorn now that he has joined Madrak Ironhide's cause among the united kriels? I am certain this is a question many high-ranking Cygnaran officers have asked themselves. The crux of this matter revolves around two important issues, both of which I shall attempt to answer in this dossier.

First, is Gunnbjorn imparting what he learned as a trencher captain to the trollkin of the united kriels? Madrak Ironhide is no fool; he would certainly make use of Gunnbjorn's extensive military training to improve the fighting capabilities of his people. I think there is little doubt that Gunnbjorn is training trollkin in modern Cygnaran fighting tactics; the only real question is to what extent.

The second question is perhaps the most important for your needs. Simply, is Gunnbjorn a threat to the kingdom of Cygnar? Has the Cygnaran military's handling of Gunnbjorn simultaneously robbed them of a powerful asset and strengthened a potential enemy?

— G.K. —



Captain Gunnbjorn Summary

Born: 568 AR; Gunnbjorn is born in a small kriel in the Gnarl, but his father relocates to Ceryl while he is still an infant. There is no information on his mother, presumed dead.

Childhood: Gunnbjorn grows to adulthood in Ceryl. His father, once a warlock and shaman, is likely to have imparted some knowledge of trollkin mystical rites to his son.

Trencher Corps: 595 AR; Gunnbjorn is recruited in Ceryl by the Cygnaran military. He immediately qualifies for the trenchers and quickly makes corporal.

Trencher Sergeant: 596 AR; Gunnbjorn noted for his ability to train and inspire others. Promoted to sergeant early in his first term of service, highly atypical.

Trencher Lieutenant: 600 AR; After reenlisting for a second term, Gunnbjorn displays exceptional skill and leadership in a border skirmish with Khador. His squad is assigned to assist Captain Jeremiah Kraye; after distinguishing himself, Gunnbjorn promoted to lieutenant.

Interim Conflicts: Although there are no major military conflicts during this period, Gunnbjorn sees steady action versus Khadoran interlopers and Cryxian raiders. Also spends some time training trencher recruits near Point Bourne.

Llaeese War: 605 AR; Gunnbjorn and his platoon fight in numerous battles during this war. Late in the Siege of Merywyn, he is assigned to protect the Grand Cathedral. Although the city falls, Gunnbjorn rallies fleeing troops and defends a large group of wounded soldiers in a fighting retreat. For his bravery he is promoted to captain.

Acquires Bazooka: 606 AR; Gunnbjorn acquires an experimental shoulder-mounted rocket launcher from the Cygnaran Armory. This becomes and remains his signature weapon.

Retreat from Northguard: 607 AR; Gunnbjorn is part of a fighting retreat from Northguard. Reports indicate that he held off advancing Khadoran forces almost single-handedly to allow his trenchers to safely retreat.

Trollkin Village Displaced: 607 AR; Gunnbjorn is ordered to evacuate and relocate a small village of trollkin near Point Bourne. Although he obeys the order, he resigns his commission with the Cygnaran army soon after.

The United Kriels: 607 AR; Gunnbjorn joins Madrak Ironhide in Crael Valley, pledging himself to the great chieftain and the united kriels. He immediately begins training trollkin warriors in modern fighting tactics.

Attack on Scarleforth: 608 AR; Gunnbjorn leads successful attacks on a number of skorne fortresses near Scarleforth Lake. He is forced to abandon them soon after, however, when the Army of the Western Reaches returns to the area.

There is little written record of Gunnbjorn's childhood, but I did learn his formative years were spent far from the traditional villages of his people. He grew up among the small trollkin community within the city of Ceryl, and I think he identified himself as "Cygnaran" from a very young age. This is not to say that Gunnbjorn had no access to the myths and traditions of the trollkin. His father, Ganthak, was once a powerful shaman, and I was told he was one of the few trollkin who could command the savage full-blood trolls. Why Ganthak left the remote trollkin village in the Gnarl is not clear, although I have learned he spent much of his time in taverns, and I suspect he had a weakness for drink.

Although Ganthak's abilities may have atrophied from lack of use, it is very probable he imparted some of his knowledge to his son, who obviously has a similar talent. To what extent Gunnbjorn was educated by his father in trollkin mysticism is unknown, but as I looked over his service record in the trencher corps, I found scant evidence that would indicate he was using magic on the battlefield before his fateful meeting with Madrak Ironhide.

Another interesting aspect of Gunnbjorn's childhood is that he had no contact with the full-blood trolls that fight beside the united kriels. It is known that the mightiest of trollkin shamans can actually command these brutes in battle, a talent that Gunnbjorn now appears to possess. However, this ability likely lay dormant within him for many years and awakened only when he was exposed to full-blood trolls for an extended period of time.

—G.K.

Again, there is little record of Gunnbjorn's as a young trollkin in Ceryl, but I think it probable that he, like most city-bred trollkin, found work as a manual laborer on the docks and warehouses within the city. However, the first written record I could find concerning Gunnbjorn, not surprisingly, comes from the Cygnaran military.

After the Lion's Coup in 594 AR, Cygnar aggressively recruited new soldiers to replace Vinter loyalists within the ranks of the army. Recruitment drives were held in most major cities throughout the realm, and Ceryl was no exception. Although somewhat rare in the Cygnaran military, trollkin were enthusiastically encouraged to join, as their great strength, endurance, and fierce loyalty were all traits highly valued by the military.

The following report is from a recruitment officer to his superior referencing the recruitment of a trollkin in the city of Ceryl.

—G.K.



Date: Solesh 4th, 595 AR

From: Lieutenant Avery Grimes

To: Captain Vinder Alforth

Captain,

Our efforts in Ceryl have been very productive, and the people of this fine city have met the recruitment campaign with open arms. In the three days we held our recruitment drive on the steps of the cathedral, we inducted seventy-three men and women into our ranks, all forthright and loyal citizens.

One name on the list below will certainly stand out among the others. Gunnbjorn is obviously not a human name, and, in fact, it belongs to a stout young trollkin who signed up on the first day of our drive. I spoke with him at length and found him to be intelligent, eager to learn, and quite devoted to his city and the nation of Cygnar. I ran him through some of the basic endurance and strength tests administered during trencher basic training, and he passed them all with startling ease. In short, I think Gunnbjorn would make a fine trencher.

We are now on our way to New Larkholm, where I anticipate continued success in our campaign to freshen our ranks with dedicated, loyal men and women.

A. Avery Grimes

As the recruitment officer above suspected, Gunnbjorn was a natural fit for the trenchers. Although he was certainly expected to be a tough and competent fighter—which he undoubtedly was—what the Cygnaran military may not have expected is that Gunnbjorn possessed a keen tactical mind and natural leadership qualities.

Gunnbjorn rose to the rank of sergeant in short order, proving capable and levelheaded in and out of combat. Reports indicate he gained respect from the men in his platoon through honest and fair treatment and a sincere concern for their well being. Gunnbjorn also gained the attention of some of Cygnar's most decorated and respected officers, including the warcaster Captain Jeremiah Kraye, with whom Gunnbjorn formed a lasting friendship.

The following letter from Captain Kraye was attached to an after-action report detailing a skirmish on the Khadoran border. Kraye had been given command of a squad of trenchers drawn from the 82nd Trencher Company to aid him in driving back a force of Khadoran soldiers that had crossed into Cygnaran territory. This squad was led by none other than Sergeant Gunnbjorn.

—G.K.

Date: Glaceus 13th, 600 AR

From: Captain Jeremiah Kraye

To: Captain Galo Irving

Captain Irving,

Thank you kindly for sending a few of your boys my way to push our northern guests back across the border. They came in handy, and I'm sure the job would have been a lot messier without them. As you know, the Khadorans have been probing our borders, and it's my job to intercept and persuade them to keep to their side of the line. Of course, sometimes they get bold and cross into Cygnaran territory in larger numbers with a few warjacks in tow. That was the situation this past week near Fellig.

Now I know you're aware just how good your boys are, but I would be remiss if I didn't call to your attention the bravery, poise, and skill displayed by their sergeant—the big trollkin they call Gunnbjorn. He and his trenchers supported my rangers and warjacks like we'd been working with them for months, and that's largely because Sergeant Gunnbjorn commanded them with the kind of speed and efficiency I've only seen in the best combat leaders.

Sergeant Gunnbjorn is also quite a fighter himself. Along with being a crack shot with the military rifle, he has a real knack for hurling grenades. It was probably a lucky throw, but I saw him lob a grenade right down the barrel of a Destroyer bombard, and the blast set off the ammunition and took the Khadoran 'jack's arm off at the shoulder. I've never seen anything like it in a decade on the battlefield. The fighting eventually ended up at close quarters, and there Sergeant Gunnbjorn excelled as well. He wields an axe as nimbly as any trencher swings a trench knife. He did for half a dozen Winter Guard by himself, and I dare say he inspired his men to fight like devils to match him.

I'll wrap this up by stating the obvious. If you haven't considered promoting Sergeant Gunnbjorn to lieutenant, you should. I for one would certainly like to see what he could do with an entire platoon.

Kraye

Obviously, the opinion of a respected warcaster like Jeremiah Kraye holds some weight, and Gunnbjorn was promoted to lieutenant a few weeks after the date of the letter above.

—G.K.

In the years between 600 and 604 AR, Gunnbjorn and his platoon served primarily in the Thornwood with the First Army and were often called upon to repel Khadoran or mercenary interlopers. For several months in 603 AR his platoon was temporarily shifted to the Third Army, at the request of Captain Kraye, to join the warcaster's patrols along the western coast, helping to repel several pirate raids. Throughout this period, Gunnbjorn served with Kraye no less than six times, his platoon specifically requested by the warcaster and acknowledged for their service.

Like many Cygnaran soldiers, Gunnbjorn got his first taste of real war when Khador invaded Llael. The Llaelese War changed western Immoren for good, and it served as the proving ground for many of Cygnar's greatest military heroes. Gunnbjorn served in a more modest capacity, but his skill and heroism during the war did not go unnoticed.

While involved in many battles, Gunnbjorn's most heralded service in Llael came at the end of the Siege of Merywyn. After the Cygnarans realized the Khadorans were starting to threaten their own border, the generals made the decision to move most of their soldiers out of the city and back to Northguard. Gunnbjorn volunteered to remain behind with his platoon along with a much smaller detachment of Cygnaran soldiers that would continue to support the beleaguered Llaelese.

As the outer city was compromised, his platoon was called upon to aid the city defenders dug in near the Great Cathedral of Ascendant Rowan, the largest Morrowan cathedral in the capital. The cathedral was at the time being used as a makeshift hospice, where the priests could tend those wounded in the fierce fighting. Gunnbjorn ordered his trenchers to set up an imposing perimeter defense that withstood a number of concerted attacks from Khadoran besiegers.

Gunnbjorn was eventually ordered to return with the rest of his regiment to Northguard, but he was given leave to oversee the evacuation of the wounded from the cathedral. Reports indicate that despite a huge force of Khadoran soldiers closing in on his position, Gunnbjorn rallied a number of fleeing Llaelese units, folded them into his platoon, and battled the Khadorans to a standstill. This allowed the Morrowan priests and medics in the cathedral to safely flee the area with the wounded. Gunnbjorn followed after them, eventually leaving the city with most of his platoon intact.

The following recommendation from Colonel Bartholomew Martin, commander of the Cygnaran 77th Regiment, aptly illustrates Cygnar's appreciation of Gunnbjorn's efforts in Llael.

—G.K.

Date: Octesh 23rd, 604 AR

From: Colonel Bartholomew Martin

To: Major Kaelin Dunne

Major Dunne,

As you are no doubt aware, Lieutenant Gunnbjorn displayed exceptional bravery and exemplary leadership during our retreat from Merywyn. I have multiple reports from our officers and those among the Llaelese stating the lieutenant's actions saved the lives of hundreds of wounded soldiers retreating from the cathedral. Additionally, he showed outstanding initiative by taking command of multiple Llaelese units during his own withdrawal from the city.

In short, major, we need leaders like Lieutenant Gunnbjorn now more than ever. With the loss of Captain Ivars, the 81st Trencher Company is without a captain. So it is my recommendation that Gunnbjorn be promoted immediately and given command of the 81st.

Colonel Bartholomew Martin



Gunnbjorn's choice of weapons is nearly as famous as the trollkin himself. His bazooka is a mammoth, shoulder-mounted rocket launcher so large that only someone of Gunnbjorn's size and stature (i.e., a trollkin) could wield it in combat. How he obtained this weapon was surprisingly difficult to discover, as Cygnar, like most nations, is not particularly keen on broadcasting its failures.

The bazooka was an experimental weapon devised by the Cygnaran Armory. The concept was a man-portable rocket launcher with enough punch to deal with warjack armor and enough explosive yield to serve as an effective anti-infantry weapon. Unfortunately, to achieve both these goals, the weapon had to be robust enough to handle the rocket-propelled shells developed for it. The design submitted by the Armory engineers seemed promising on paper but proved entirely too large and heavy for even the strongest human soldier. The weapon was deemed a failure, and the few prototypes produced were shelved.

However, field tests were conducted on the bazooka, and a number of trenchers, all men of great stature, were chosen to test the weapon. Gunnbjorn was included in these field tests, and as the report filed by a senior mechanic from the Cygnaran Armory indicates, he was listed as an outlier, being the only participant comfortable with the rocket launcher. I would not be surprised if Captain Kraye's influence played some role in the bazooka ending up in Gunnbjorn's hands.

-G.K.

Date: Glaceus 13th, 606 AR

From: Mechanik Henrick Marlow

To: Chief Mechanik Bayden Talbot

The latest field test of the Mk II Man-Portable Launcher is complete, and I'm afraid the resulting data is anything but encouraging. While the warhead functions as intended, the weapon itself still suffers from severe design issues, mostly related to its impractical size and weight. I'll briefly summarize our findings here.

Recoil: The MPL uses an exhaust port in the rear to eliminate most recoil, but this has proven to be an imperfect solution. Even the smallest instability is dangerous. Private Vanders, who stands well over six feet tall and weighs nearly three-hundred pounds, was unbalanced during firing and broke his arm trying to stop the MPL from hitting the ground. The exhaust channel could probably be improved but would require significant redesign.

Weight: This is without question the main issue. The current MPL prototype weighs almost one hundred pounds, and is extremely long and cumbersome. It could be made smaller and lighter, but not without a complete overhaul in design. If this was done, I would highly recommend getting rid of the revolving ammunition housing—the gains it provides in firing rate is overshadowed by the cumbersome weight and difficulty of operating this mechanism. It may be the thicker barrel provides assurance against injury should the shell be jammed and explode, and

also that the longer barrel provides accuracy, but cumulatively they create a weapon no human being can carry into combat effectively!

Summary: It is technically true that a large enough person can lift and fire the MPL. However, the fourteen men drawn from across the trencher corps to test the weapon, all of above average stature and strength, attested that carrying it into battle was impractical. Also that extended use would be nearly impossible. All but one found the MPL to be unwieldy, difficult to operate because of its weight and bulk, and even outright dangerous because of its recoil combined with the weight.

Honestly, at this point, I regret to conclude that this weapon is impractical, and even a redesign is not in our best interests. My recommendation is that use of the standard rifle grenade be continued; it is a far more practical weapon for the average trencher in combat.

Henrick Marlow

After his promotion to captain, Gunnbjorn quickly gained a reputation as an incredibly effective leader, and he became well known even outside his battalion. This is largely due to his penchant for heroic and selfless acts to protect the men under his charge, and there are numerous examples of Gunnbjorn putting his own life in jeopardy to buy his trenchers a few precious moments to retreat or organize a devastating offensive.

Although there are many military reports that detail Gunnbjorn's heroic deeds, they do not properly convey how his trenchers felt about him. Instead, I have included a personal letter from a trencher private to his family in Caspia regarding the fall of Northguard in 607 AR. This trencher credits Gunnbjorn with saving his life as well as many of his brothers in arms during the bloody retreat from Northguard.

-G.K.

Dear Father,

I know it has been some time since I last wrote, and I'm sorry for that. You must be worried sick with all the news coming into Caspia about what happened at Northguard. Those red bastards broke open our walls and killed so many good men.

I want to tell you that I'm fine, though. We're on our way back to Corvis, and I'm writing this letter while we bed down on the road. I also want to tell you that I'm alive because of one man. He's a trollkin, and he's my captain. His name is Gunnbjorn, and father, I know how you feel about them. I know you say they are savages and thieves. But it's not true for Captain Gunnbjorn. He's brave and smart, and he does his best to protect us and make sure we get home to our families. He's also the best fighter I've ever seen. There's something about him, something fierce when he gets into the thick of battle.

When we were running away from Northguard he held off the Khadorans chasing us almost by himself. He stood there, covered by the trees, firing his big cannon at the Khadorans as they came at us. We were kneeling around him firing our rifles, and father, I felt something strange in that moment. I couldn't miss. Could be luck I guess, but if you ask me, Gunnbjorn had some way of making luck for us.

Anyway, as the Khadoran's got closer, we knew we couldn't hold them off, but we also knew that more of our boys were trying to get out of Northguard. The captain told us all to run, but we didn't want to. We didn't want to leave him. But he gave us an order and we obeyed. We left him there, and I expected he'd be killed and the Khadorans would catch us soon after. But that's not what happened.

The captain found us at the rally point around nightfall, and he brought with him a lot of the boys from our platoon. I don't know how he did it, Father, but the captain held off the Khadorans long enough for the rest of our boys to find him. You can call it prayers, luck, I don't care. All I know is that I am alive because of the captain, and I'd follow him into Urcaen—because I know he'd bring us back out again.

I'm told my platoon will be heading back to Caspia soon. I'll write again when I know more.

Coryn

It's difficult to make any definitive conclusions based on this sort of account, but I believe the strange sensation the private felt during the retreat from Northguard may have been a result of something supernatural. Trollkin shamans can certainly augment their warriors' fighting prowess, and it may be Gunnbjorn inherited some of this talent from his father. If so, it suggests Gunnbjorn may have begun to manifest these abilities even before he joined the united krielis, but perhaps without being aware of it.

—G.K.

Gunnbjorn resigned his commission with the Cygnaran military in 607 AR. The reason for his abrupt departure was not difficult to discover. My sources turned up two documents that shed considerable light on the situation. The first document is a letter to Gunnbjorn himself, containing a very sensitive set of orders.

It should be noted that by this time I believe most of the trollkin krielis of the Thornwood had already vacated that forest, but clearly some had lingered. The krielis in question here may have remained out of a belief that their proximity to the Cygnaran city of Point Bourne might afford them some protection. This time the reverse was the case.

—G.K.

Date: Cinten 9th, 607 AR

From: Major Kaelin Dunne

To: Captain Gunnbjorn, 81st Trencher Company

Captain,

You are to take your company south to Point Bourne and report to Major Harden. There you will assist the major in the evacuation of neighboring trollkin from the southern Thornwood. You will escort the trollkin to the site we prepared for them further south. This is to be a peaceful operation, captain, and I know you will handle the situation with your usual efficiency and levelheadedness.

Major Dunne

There is little doubt that Gunnbjorn was aware of the great number of trollkin refugees displaced from contested regions by the Cygnaran military. However, as far as I could discern, he had never been tasked with their removal himself. Why his commanding officer, Major Dunne, decided to redeploy Gunnbjorn and his company to Point Bourne to oversee the "evacuation" of this small kriel in the Thornwood is beyond me. Perhaps she wished to test his loyalty to the crown or more likely she believed the displaced trollkin would be more apt to comply peacefully if confronted with a trollkin officer.

The following letter from Colonel Bartholomew Martin, who was, coincidentally, Major Dunne's own commanding officer, illustrates his opinion on Gunnbjorn's resignation.

—G.K.

Date: Cinten 24th, 607 AR

From: Colonel Bartholomew Martin

To: Major Kaelin Dunne

Major,

I have received your report regarding the incident with Captain Gunnbjorn near Point Bourne. As you are aware, he sought to resign his commission. When his resignation was refused, he left the military, knowing doing so would be seen as an unlawful action, potentially imperiling his liberty. This is a deeply unsettling situation, as the Cygnaran Army is now deprived of one of its finest officers, an officer whose reputation is now besmirched. I do not condone or agree with Captain Gunnbjorn's decision to abandon his duty and his men, and I find such dereliction highly unbecoming of a man in Gunnbjorn's position. That said, it seems to me this was avoidable. I must question your decision to place him in charge of trollkin relocation efforts. All reports indicate something occurred during this operation that pushed Captain Gunnbjorn to highly uncharacteristic behavior. What transpired during this mission? I assure you it will be investigated and it is to your interests to provide me with a candid report.



I think it is undeniably right and proper that all soldiers of Cygnar choose their duty to the crown over all other obligations, be it to family, nation, or creed. However, it is important that we, as their superior officers, be keenly aware of situations where these obligations might jeopardize the strength and unity of our military. I think, in this, we failed with Captain Gunnbjorn. I eagerly await your detailed report.

Colonel Bartholomew Martin

One final note regarding Gunnbjorn's break with the Cygnaran military. While he was not allowed to lawfully resign, and his discharge is recorded as "dishonorable," there have been no attempts to incarcerate him. It is also clear that he appropriated some military equipment, including his bazooka, upon resigning his commission. However, there is no evidence that Cygnar sought to reclaim this equipment. At the time, they may have felt it was not worth the effort.

It may be that here again the influence of the warcaster Captain Jeremiah Kraye may have played a hand, or that of King Leto himself, who has generally advocated against persecuting the trollkin even in circumstances where they have clearly broken Cygnaran law. In this specific case, his heroic service record to his nation may have been a contributing factor. But I wonder if this attitude will persist in light of more recent conflicts.

—G.K.

After Gunnbjorn left the Cygnaran military there is little record of his activities or whereabouts. However, following a hunch, I went to Ceryl and visited the area of the city predominantly inhabited by trollkin. There I spoke with several elders who had been acquainted with Gunnbjorn's father. Most were less than eager to speak with a prying human, but I did find one old and wizened trollkin woman named Lassen who had known Gunnbjorn as a child and was willing to speak with me about him.

Lassen told me that Gunnbjorn had returned to Ceryl seeking his father. My guess is that he was in quite a state after what he must have seen as a grave betrayal by the Cygnaran military, the only family he had known for over a decade. Unfortunately, Ganthak, Gunnbjorn's father, had died years earlier, finally succumbing to the ravages of heavy drinking.

The elder trollkin Lissan went on to tell me that Gunnbjorn had visited her after learning his father had died. She called him "lost" and "wayward" when she spoke of him, and finally said she had convinced him to "leave behind the world of men and seek his true destiny in the krielis." I took this to mean he had gone into the wild to seek out Madrak Ironhide—in fact, I had no doubt of it, for all reports indicated it is exactly what he did.

I think it is important to note that Gunnbjorn's break with the Cygnaran military was undoubtedly the catalyst that led him back to Ceryl, back to his people, and eventually led him to assume a leadership role in the united krielis. I must admit, I do wonder what might have become of Gunnbjorn if Major Dunne had sent another officer to oversee the trollkin relocation near Point Bourne. Would the plight of the trollkin eventually have led him to seek out Madrak Ironhide anyway? Or might he still be a soldier of Cygnar?

—G.K.

Sometime in late 607 AR, Gunnbjorn sought out Madrak Ironhide in Crael Valley, which the trollkin chieftain had seized and fortified along with the refugees from the Gnarlis. Although there are no written records of this meeting, it is clear that Gunnbjorn experienced a kind of spiritual awakening shortly after. I am no expert in trollkin magic, but it is now obvious that Gunnbjorn can both command the strength and loyalty of full-blood trolls and focus his will into magic; whether they are Dhunian blessings or sorcerous spells I do not know. In this he is no different than many of the other great leaders of the krielis, and because of this innate talent, it is not surprising that he was immediately accepted into their ranks.

However, Gunnbjorn possessed something else of value to Madrak Ironhide. He had served for over a decade in the Cygnaran military and was adept at modern infantry tactics, knowledgeable about modern weaponry, and he was an effective and accomplished combat leader. Not surprisingly, Gunnbjorn radically altered the way the trollkin trained for war, as the following report from a CRS spy clearly illustrates.

—G.K.

Date: Doloven 24th, 607 AR

As was suspected, Captain Gunnbjorn has joined Madrak Ironhide in Crael Valley and appears to have assumed a leadership position among the refugees. I have gathered some intriguing intelligence on the former trencher captain. First, he has been witnessed in the company of the full-blood trolls that have been gathering around the refugee camp. Like Madrak Ironhide, Grissel Bloodsong, and Hoarluk Doomshaper, Gunnbjorn appears to have a powerful connection to these brutes, commanding their actions in battle and pushing them to greater heights of ferocity.

I also observed Gunnbjorn drilling large groups of trollkin warriors in military exercises that are common practice among the trenchers. There is little doubt that Gunnbjorn is passing on what he learned as a trencher captain to the refugees, molding them into a more effective fighting force. As was reported before, Madrak's forces already have access to a number of weapons provided to them by King Leto before they left the Glimmerwood. We also saw some evidence of more recently seized Cygnaran military hardware.

I wonder if intelligence reports such as the one above might have contributed to the attack on Crael Valley by Cygnar's Fourth Army. Certainly Gunnbjorn's involvement with the refugees and his training of their warriors add compelling evidence that Madrak Ironhide was preparing for additional violence.

—G.K.

In the last year, Gunnbjorn has been very active, and he now leads a large force of his people against the enemies of the united krielis. He has been present at nearly every major conflict in which the krielis took part, combining the ferocity and toughness of his trolls and trollkin with the hard-nosed tactics of a veteran trencher captain. This combination has proved to be a deadly and efficient mix, and Gunnbjorn has emerged victorious against more numerous enemies on several occasions.

Gunnbjorn was not present when the Fourth Army attacked Crael Valley, and from what I could gather, he was away in Mercir recruiting trollkin from the scattered krielis there.

It is interesting to postulate what might have happened had Gunnbjorn been among the trollkin when Cygnar attacked. His knowledge of their infantry tactics would have certainly given the trollkin some small advantage. Whether this would have been enough to turn defeat into victory, however, is difficult to say.

One of Gunnbjorn's greatest achievements of late, while impressive, was rather fleeting. A number of recently erected krielistones—the great carved stones used by the trollkin to memorialize their mightiest deeds—have been found on the outskirts of Scarleforth Lake. As we know, the Skorne Army of the Western Reaches just recently reclaimed this area.

Obviously, I cannot simply ask the skorne for clarification on this matter, but the krielistones in the area provided all the information I required. I do not have a good grasp of trollkin runes, so I was forced to turn to an expert, in this case, Professor Viktor Pendrake of Corvis University.

—G.K.



Dear Professor Lyke,

It is always a pleasure to correspond with another academic, especially one who shares my interest in the fascinating runic language of the trollkin. I'm very curious as to how you acquired the krielstone rubbings you sent me, as they appear to come from the area around Scarleforth Lake, which I know is now swarming with skorne. You are quite a resourceful fellow to have acquired these. I won't pry, however. Every accomplished researcher has his resources, and it is enough that you chose to share these documents with me.

Now then, to your request. I can and have translated the runes on the two krielstones from which you took charcoal renderings. Here's what the first says:

GREAT GUNNBJORN LED MANY WARRIORS TO BATTLE
HE TOPPLED THE STONE WALLS OF THE ENEMY
HE SMOTE THEM WITH FIRE AND THUNDER
HIS WARRIORS HEWED THEIR FLESH
HIS TROLLS FEASTED ON THEIR BONES

As you can clearly see, this first passage is about the trollkin warlock Gunnbjorn. This was obviously transcribed very recently, as Gunnbjorn has not been a member of the united kriels for long. I am aware the trollkin had recently seized this lake for themselves, but were unable to hold it. The text on the next stone gives us a bit more information.

THE RED CHIEFTAIN WAS STRUCK DOWN
HE COULD NOT STAND BEFORE GUNNBJORN
WITH NONE TO LEAD THEM THE ENEMY FLED
GUNNBJORN WRATH FOLLOWED IN THEIR WAKE
THE STONE WALLS NOW BELONG TO THE KRIELS
THE FERTILE LAKE NOW BELONGS TO THE KRIELS

My guess is that Gunnbjorn slew a skorne military leader, a tyrant or dominar perhaps. It also described how he claimed a number of the skorne forts in the area. Certainly the kriels hoped to hold the lake, I know an associate who was involved in these attacks and might know more. I should mention this region was historically home to a number of significant kriels, and until the arrival of the skorne was the home of Grissel Bloodsong, as one notable example.

Given the timing of recent events and how quickly the skorne have returned to that region, this krielstone carving must be extremely fresh.

Certainly its carving implies the optimistic hope Gunnbjorn would hold that area indefinitely, with the stones as a means of immortalizing this victory. We don't have many examples of such recent boasts, making these inscriptions quite useful from an academic standpoint. I will hazard the recent skorne victories coincide with Archdomina Makeda's return from the east, something I could have warned the kriels was likely, had they asked.

I hope this information finds you well, and please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further assistance.

—Pendrake

Pendrake's letter is certainly intriguing, and I have little reason to doubt the accuracy of his translations. The fact that Gunnbjorn was able to take a number of skorne forts and slay their commander clearly illustrates his abilities as a military leader. Additionally, this type of warfare—protracted siege—is not one for which the trollkin are well known. This is another indicator that Gunnbjorn is training his warriors in the fighting techniques he learned within the trenchers. It would certainly be useful to learn more of the battles that transpired on the skorne army's return, but I was not able to secure an eyewitness at this time.

—G.K.

Gunnbjorn's current whereabouts and activities are unclear, although I am certain he survived the skorne reoccupation of the Scarleforth. I have little doubt he will continue to be a vitally important member of the united kriels and will rally more trollkin—perhaps even those who live within Cygnar's cities—to the cause.

Gunnbjorn is using what he learned in the trenchers to train the warriors of the united kriels. In this it appears he has been quite successful, and there is marked evidence that trollkin under his command are behaving more like a modern military force than a loose tribal band.

I believe Cygnar has made a grave and costly mistake with their handling of Gunnbjorn. They have most certainly robbed themselves of a talented military leader and strengthened Madrak Ironhide and the united kriels in the process.

In short, Gunnbjorn may not lead the trollkin to war against Cygnar, but he might be instrumental in shaping them into a fighting force that cannot be ignored.

—G.K.

