

Supporting the Rebels

Summer 383YE

Overview

This represents out-of-character information. You can use it freely to create stories of your character's experiences in Asavea, but please do not simply give it to other players to read until after the event.

The Asavean Archipelago lies far to the west of the Empire, and reaching it entails a long ocean voyage. Whether your forces travel by Imperial trading ship, or seek passage with an Asavean or Sarcophan ship – or were already in the Archipelago from the previous season the journey is equally uneventful.

Your journey to the Asavean Archipelago has not gone unmarked; agents of the Assembly of Vigilance have certainly included your name on the list of captains fighting in Asavea this season.

Insurrection

The climate in Asavea is closest to the warmest parts of the Brass Coast. As the Empire swelters in the Summer heat, temperatures in the far west soar to almost unendurable levels. Imperial visitors - especially those from Wintermark and Varushka - are often unprepared for the oppressive heat. There are stories of soldiers from those nations collapsing on duty, or suffering from sunburn strong enough to cause serious damage. Only the lowest rank of slaves toil beneath the noonday sun; the idea of actually fighting under such conditions is almost inconceivable.

The rebellion have managed to turn one legion – the *Shield of the North* - to their side. Now renamed the *Defenders of Marracoss*, the army is lead by the popular and charismatic General Valo. With most of the previous officer corps still in place (and any dissension ruthlessly purged in the early days of the rebellion), the army maintains a high level of discipline.

The rebels have also raised a second somewhat rag-tag force – the *Pride of Aracossa* – made up of sympathisers and rebels equipped with weapons and armour forged in secret over the last year or so, donated by their Sumaah allies, or sold to them at an eye-watering price by Imperial war profiteers.

Imperial mercenaries are made welcome but the enthusiastic greeting of previous months is conspicuously absent. Just shy of twenty Imperial captains fight alongside the rebels, including a single band of Imperial Orcs. The remainder are mostly from the Marches and the League, but with a smattering of other nations including small contingents from Urizen and Wintermark.

Not only Imperial mercenaries fight with the Marracossan rebels of course. Among the rebel troops are obvious units of Sumaah soldiers. They wear pale mantles, and adorn their helmets with white feathers, but there is no mistaking that these are skilled professional warriors on par with the best the Empire has to offer. Their attitude is grim; from the way they talk among themselves it is clear that they believe that the rebel position is extremely precarious. Still, for the most part the soldiers expect that if they die fighting the tyrants of Asavea, their passage through the Labyrinth will be swift indeed.

Still, they support the Marracossan army with zeal and martial skill. Most of these warbands are lead by priests from the House of Pride, and many of the soldiers bear virtuous anointing or hallowed items. Slightly grudgingly, they offer a scattering of anointing for Imperial mercenaries.

The Sumaah have worked hard to get the rebels to embrace the Way, and to free any of their slaves prepared to take up arms against the rebels. Comasigne is advised by a Praster of the House of Pride named Gamura.

There are also plenty of Imperial vessels visiting the docks – selling Imperial-made weapons and armour at a significant mark-up. This practice raises several eyebrows among the Sumaah soldiers fighting in Marracossa – the Sumaah it appears have been actively supporting the rebels for some time with shipments of mithril and other supplies expecting very little in return. Combined with the rumours of a major



force of Imperial mercenaries supporting the Nemorians, this adds to the tension between the Sumaah and the Imperials.

Dissent

The Marracossan rebels are desperate. Last season their forces fought a fighting retreat, driven back by the Nemorians until they were forced to take refuge within the fortress Maragladia itself. Two armies loyal to the Plenum – the Arrow of the Deeps, and the Trident of Storms – now camp before the walls of the fortress, supported by the Spear of the Sea, a grand naval force under the command of a Nemorian admiral. A third army, the Star Fishers, are sweeping unopposed across the territory of Thantabar to the south-west.

The Marracossan rebel forces have been called back to defend the fortress – there is some grumbling that this means leaving Thantabar undefended as the price for ensuring the rebel leaders' stronghold is protected. The Marracossan soldiers are tired, some to the point of exhaustion, and while the armies are disciplined, there is some dissension in the ranks. It seems that a number of the officers have very different ideas about who should be in charge of the rebellion – favouring General Valo (the leader of the Defenders of Marracoss) over Terentia Comasigne.

They are not shy about talking about it in the wake of the order to abandon Thantabar and in the end there was almost a mutiny as the soldiers refused to leave the Star Fishers to conquer the region – especially when news came that the *Pride of Aracossa* and the enchanted walls of Maragladia have held the Arrow, the Trident, and the Spear of the Sea at bay.

Part of the reticence to abandon Thantabar no doubt comes from the rivalry between General Valo and his long-time rival General Vigia who leads the Starfishers, a woman renowned for her patience and her cruelty. Outside the Defenders of Maracoss there are muttering that Valo is more concerned about his rivalry than he is the victory of the rebels.

The rebel position is desperate but they are not completely defeated. Maragladia has never fallen to an enemy force, and there is still hope that if they can hold out for just a little longer, allies will come.

Rebels and Slaves

Most of the soldiers you are fighting alongside consider themselves *Marracossan*, not *Asaveans*. They spit the word “Nemorian” whenever they speak it. It refers to those who are servants of the Nemorian plenum. Those who can speak Imperial wax lyrical about the various oppressions they have laboured under as a satrapy of the Nemorians. This litany of crimes is sometimes hard to follow but it seems that since they were absorbed by the Republic two hundred years ago they have seen their gods subsumed into the Aavean pantheon, their wealth leached away toward Nemoria, their brightest and best seduced by positions in the Nemorian bureaucracy or armies, and their traditions abandoned in favour of more Nemorian ways.

Enough, they say, was enough. With the Defenders of Marracoss – the Shield of the North – returned to Marracoss on furlough after an engagement with barbarian forces, the opportunity came to liberate their home from the Aaveans. Terentia Comasigne is seen as a great hero as are the members of her inner circle – who include the former Asavean General of the Shield of the North, General Lysander Valo.

Many of the soldiers among the Defenders bear the black-and-red tattoos that mark them as veterans of at least one campaign against the enemies of Asavea. Many of the officers are former members of the priesthood of the Red God, although they downplay that connection as much as possible especially around Imperials and Sumaah. They claim that the Red God is just a Nemorian name for Karrakush of the Spears – the war god of their ancestors who fights with four deadly spears of fire, ice, lightning, and singing steel.

Morale is in decline. The soldiers know they must hold the Nemorians at bay until more allies arrive – but there are no clear ideas of who these allies actually are. Hope that a large force of Sumaah or Imperials will arrive are quickly dissolving as the reality of their situation becomes clearer.

There are still slaves in Marracoss. The Sumaah have made it clear that these slaves should be freed, but Terentia Comasigne is forced to move slowly. Some slaves – those already converted to the Way by years of quiet Sumaah interference – have taken up arms to fight the Asasveans but they have little attachment to Marracoss. Indeed, the Marracossan soldiers mutter darkly that many of the slaves are fighting only for as long as it takes for them to find passage on a ship bound for the Summah Republic.

Fort Maragladia

Imperial mercenaries gather at the fortress of Maragladia in the (former) satrapy of Marracoss. Built to protect northern Asavea from external threats, it is truly breathtaking in scale. An immense stone structure that covers an entire island, accessible by three mighty stone bridges and with a great sweeping white-granite seawall. It is a massive construction – a great fortress to challenge the Silent Sentinel or the Walls of Temeschwar. Worse, there is obviously an enchantment in place reinforcing the walls even further.

Massive obsidian-skinned giants patrol the walls – each easily as tall as three soldiers stood on one another's shoulders – each with a single burning eye, one horn and a massive barbed spear that glows like a campfire at night. They have apparently been called from the Summer realm with the assistance of Sumaah crystal mana, and will fight to protect the fortress.

The fortress protects the entire region, controlling access to the city of Arracossa, the capital of Marracoss and the place where the entire rebellion began.

Not long before the Spring Equinox, the Plenum forces attempted to storm Fort Maragladia. Nemorian siege engines supported by the ships of the Spear of the Sea attacked the docks and the quayside looking to take the seaward approach while the Arrow of the Deeps and the Trident of Storms attacked the walls.

The assault was a bloodbath. The soldiers were forced to fight first on the bridges and then to try and claim a gatehouse against a desperate force taking full advantage of their defensive position. The naval assault was blunted by a combination of the defences and the supernatural defenders and the Asavean navy is forced to pull back in disarray.

The Fall of Thantabar and the Siege of Maragladia

The Nemorian forces besiege Fort Maragladia. The approach by sea is blockaded by the Spear of the Sea, supported by both independent Asavean ship captains and a strong force of orc-crewed Grendel mercenary vessels. Several probing assaults are launched against the walls but they are handily repelled.

Meanwhile, news comes from Thantabar that the Defenders of Maracoss and the Star Fishers have clashed several times and the advantage is with the Star Fishers. General Vigia has called in a great force of southern Asavean captains to support her army, coupled with a powerful military enchantment raised over the army by one of the Nemorian schools of magical study. Thantabar falls. The remaining Defenders are caught between the hammer of the Star Fishers and the anvil of the ring of steel besieging Fort Maragladia.

The rebel army is forced to fight through the blockade to the safety of the Fort. Casualties have been extensive – the army is down to half strength – and as soon as the soldiers are within the Fort, General Valo is arrested on order of the Marracossan rebel council and thrown into prison.

The move proves extremely unpopular; Valo is a hero to the soldiers of his army. First one, then another of his subordinates refuses to take command of the army. Several commanders immediately resign their commission, others are thrown in jail. In the end Terentia Comasigne appoints one of the council – a Maracossan noble named Eron – to lead the Defenders.

Morale plummets even more. There are arguments and disagreements between the Defenders, the soldiers of the Shield of the North, and the garrison of Fort Maragladia. Terentia and the rest of the rebel council are run ragged keeping their forces together in the wake of General Valo's arrest.



Then, six weeks after the Spring Equinox, the armies of Nemoria launch their attack against Fort Maragladia. As before, the Arrow of the Deeps and the Trident of the South are supported by the naval forces of the Spear of the Sea – but now they are also supported by the Star Fishers, the *Sword of Asav*, the *Ire of the Kraken*, the *Blade of the Goddess*, and a mercenary army called the *Free City Company*. The latter army is heavily reinforced with siege engineers whose machines put those employed last season by the Nemorians to shame.

At sea, two more naval forces join the Spear of the Sea – the *Winter Star* under Praeceptorem Aulus Paulinus – and the *Thundering Deeps* under the command of the bloodthirsty draughir commander Praeceptorem Popea Juliani. The sailors and mariners of the Thundering Deeps bear an obvious enchantment – their ships operate with uncanny strategic synergy, their marines able to perform mighty leaps that allow them to easily jump from the decks of the Asavean warships to the quayside, clearing many of the defences, or throwing themselves murderously on the volcanic giants that protect the docks below the castle.

The Fall of Maragladia

More than thirty thousand Asavean soldiers storm Fort Maragladia from the landward side. They are supported by more than sixty Asavean warbands lead by independent captains and twenty or so bands of Imperial mercenaries. At the same time, around fifteen thousand warships launch a coastal assault with the aid of an estimated fifteen fleets of orc mercenaries and three times that many vessels commanded by independent Asavean captains.

Maragladia is defended by its garrison – somewhat depleted but still a significant force but supported by supernatural creatures conjured from the Summer realm; by the remaining Defenders of Maracoss; by the remaining soldiers of the Shield of the North; by Imperial mercenaries; and by twenty bands of Sumaah warriors.

The defenders fight valiantly – desperately – and they hold the walls against the overwhelming Plenum force for as long as they can. The docks fall first – the quayside conquered by the Asavean marine detachments and their orc allies – and then one of the main gatehouses collapses before the sustained assault of the siege engines brought by the Free City Company.

Fort Maragladia falls to the Plenum.

Terentia Comasigne herself dies fighting alongside her fellow rebels, pierced with javelins. Half of the remaining rebel leaders are either killed in the fighting or taken prisoner – include General Valo.

The tattered remnants of the *Pride of Aracossa* are forced to quit the Fort, retreating back toward the capital, to Aracossa. The shattered remains of the rebel council flee with them. The remaining Defenders of Maracoss surrender to the victorious Plenum forces.

Summary

- The rebel armies lost Thantabar and Maragladia. The Fort is now in Plenum hands.
- The Defenders of Maracoss surrendered to the victorious Plenum forces, while the shattered remnant of the Pride of Aracossa retreated to Aracossa.
- The territory of Maracoss is now back in Asavean hands; only the region of Aracoss is still controlled by the rebels.
- During the campaign, your troops will have engaged with the enemy and will have fought and killed Nemorian (Asavean) soldiers. You may also roleplay that your forces have fought and killed Imperial mercenary soldiers if you wish.

