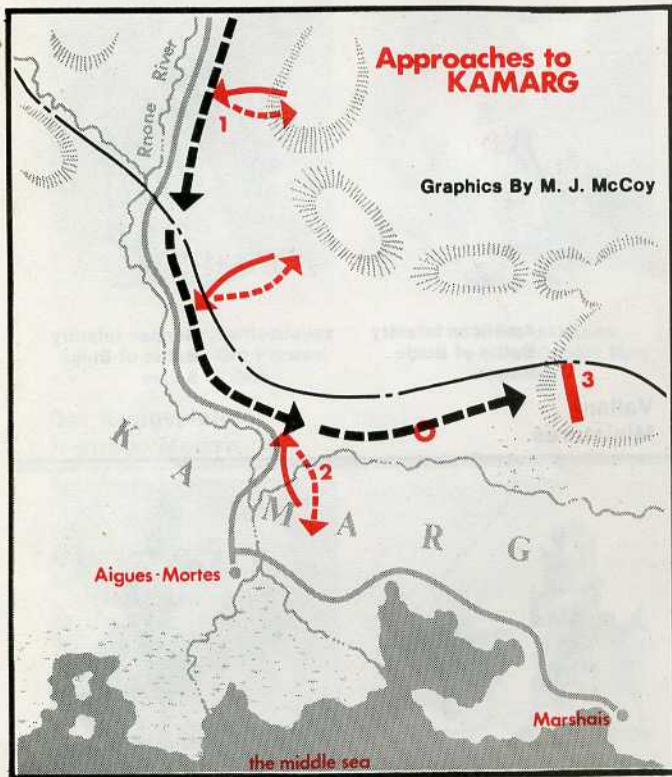


Battles For The Runestaff

BY B. ALLAN BYFIELD



Michael Moorcock's *Runestaff* series is set in the backward Europe of the far future. Only the insane island of Granbretan preserves and advances the sciences. With this advantage, it quickly conquers most of Europe. Only Dorian Hawkmoon, Duke of Koln, and his friends of the Kamarg resist them. These groups meet in two major conflicts, the Battle of the Kamarg and the Battle of Londra.

But, before detailing these battles, some suggestions for the raising of the two armies should be made. Both sides are armed chiefly with medieval weapons, the sword, ax and bow. As a result, it is easy to raise Hawkmoon's allies, for they are mainly knights, men at arms and a few commoners.

At the Battle of Londra, however, the Legion of the Dawn supports the Kamarg. Its uniform consists of cuirasses, loincloths, wooden greaves, lances and knotted clubs, perhaps like the Aztec sword. The trappings, as well as the skin of the Legion's members, is ruddy. The Legion is entirely infantry. Romans or Greeks are the best figures to use for it.

The Granbretan army presents more problems. Most of its armor is normal, but the helmets are shaped into grotesque animal masks. These masks correspond to the regiments or Orders — there are the Wolves, Hounds, Vulture, and so on.

There are several ways to represent the masks. First, they may be painted directly on to the helmets of 35mm knights. This solution has the advantage of allowing all Orders Moorcock names to be represented. Otherwise, other solutions give more satisfying results with less effort. Samurai figures give good effects, but by far the best solution is to buy animal models. With patience and glue, the animal heads can be joined to the trunks of knights. If working with plastic, costs can be kept down by making plaster casts of the resulting figures. Lightly oiled and filled with liquid plastic, these casts produce figures with little loss of detail.

A final alternative is to forget about the masks altogether and simply label the bases of Granbretan figures. By doing this, however, the mood so much a part of fantasy wargaming is lost.

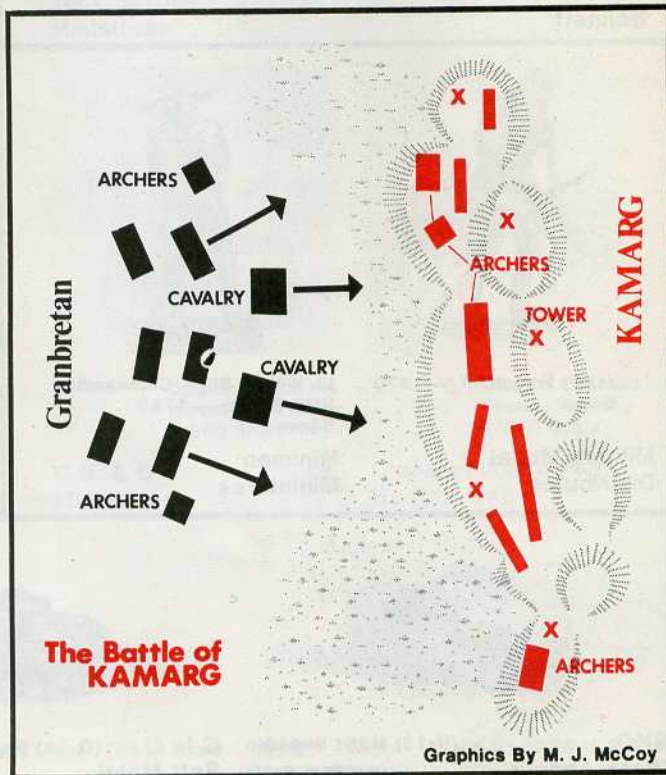
The war machines of both sides are easier to make. Some are merely catapults or ballistas. Others, more sophisticated, can be made from WWI field-pieces. Since, at the time of the story, machines are decorated in a Gothic style, the field-pieces should be repainted. Further alterations might include snipping the shield into some other shape or gluing a bead on the barrel mouth. A very few on either side also carry flame-lances, or throwers. These are the only advanced hand-weapons, so any of the loose guns most model companies sell may represent them.

THE BATTLE OF THE KAMARG² — This battle occurs early in the story. Hawkmoon has sought shelter in the Kamarg, a small state at the Rhone's mouth. The Kamarg is ruled by Count Brass. An old mercenary and diplomat, Count Brass's knowledge rivals Granbretan's.

The Kamarg's force consists of about 3,000 knights and men at arms supported by powerful artillery. Its artillery includes flame-cannons, and guns that fire shells which release paralyzing gas and a hallucinogenic vapor which causes its inhalers to fight among themselves. Air-cover consists of men armed with flame-lances, riding giant flamingos.

The Kamarg stands southeast of the Rhone in the Cevennes foothills. Here, infantry is strung across the ridges between towers. These towers contain the heaviest artillery, and may be rapidly rotated underground to weather missile barrages. Below the hills is swampy lowland.

The Granbretans, about 50,000 strong, are about 3/5 infantry. They are lead by Baron Meladius of the Wolves, who seeks revenge on Hawkmoon and Count Brass and to marry Yisselda,



Count Brass's daughter. Besides the Wolves, the other Orders include the Vultures, Cats, Flies, Mantises and Hounds. Its artillery, mostly flame-cannons and catapults, is less in number than the Kamarg's. In the air, Granbretan is supported by ornithopters. Although equal in number to the Kamarg's flamingoes, these machines, mounted with flame-lances, are hard to handle and explode when overheated.

Pushing through enemy territory to reach the Kamarg, Meladius advances south on the east Rhone bank, moving supplies downriver in barges. He is harassed by 200 guerillas. Raiding by night, by day hiding with their mounts in caves, these guerillas inflict heavy losses — perhaps 5,000 — while losing 70. Finally, they divert the Rhone by destroying an old bridge. This leaves the Granbretan barges stranded. Meladius attempts to refloat them, but fails. The barges are abandoned after several days, and Granbretan presses on to meet the Kamarg's main force. This campaign lasts about ten days.

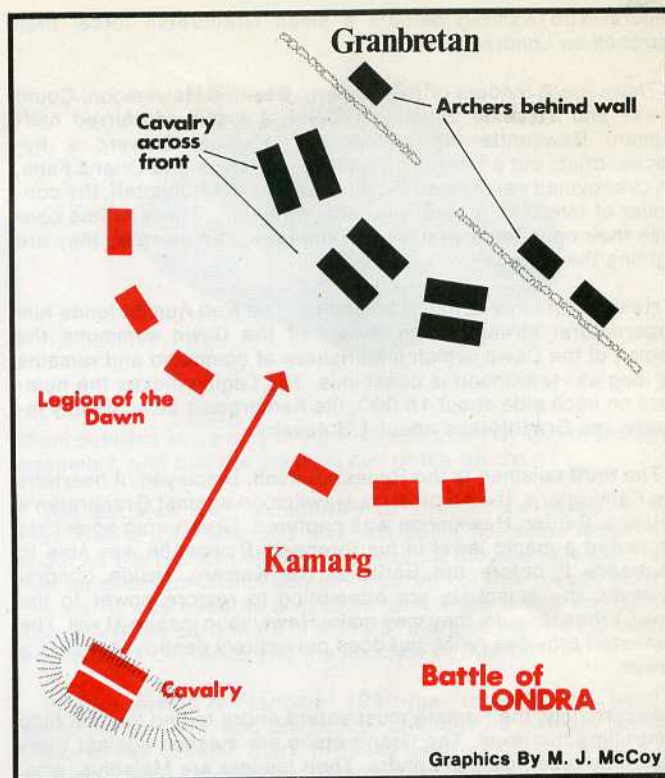
There is a brief parley before the battle. Then the Granbretans, cavalry first, infantry second, advances. Kamargian artillery inflicts heavy losses on the Granbretans as they cross the Swamp. Kamargian archers further devastate them as the Granbretans move uphill. When the lines meet, Granbretan must have less than 15,000 remaining, for the smaller Kamarg line holds. After several standards are lost, Granbretan retreats.

In the air, Kamarg wins a Pyrrhic victory. Largely due to maneuverability, this success saves the towers from aerial attack, but otherwise has little effect.

Position and morale plainly play major roles in the Battle of the Kamarg. Fighting in familiar territory, the Kamargians chose a strong defensive position. Granbretan was not only forced into a frontal attack against artillery which clearly commanded the field, but to advance through swamp, then uphill, as well. The guerillas were operating successfully as well; the stranding of the Granbretan barges being an important stroke, as it reduced the opponent's range of operations.

Partly because of Meladius's wish for revenge, partly because of Granbretan's standard direct strategies, the Granbretan army operated with less than maximum effect. No steps were taken to deal with the guerillas, whose activity would greatly affect morale. In the battle, losses were probably increased by the tendency of the Orders to move as a group, distinct from the rest. While effective for defense in hand to hand combat, this tactic is the worst possible when advancing against artillery. Also, once the Granbretan lines were broken and the Orders mingled, confusion was bound to result.

Granbretan could not continue fighting more than a few days, since it carried its own supplies and it is scarcely possible for



50,000 to forage in unfamiliar marshland. Still, an attempt to reduce the towers before the advance might have been made. If the towers could be reduced, the majority of Kamargian artillery would be lost, and the advance would be less costly. Plainly the defeat in the air increased Granbretan casualties. But, as there are few alternatives to the frontal attack, heavy casualties were inevitable.

This battle may be fought as a campaign. If not, the effect of the guerillas on Granbretan morale, numbers and supplies should be predetermined. The war in the air, while it need not be actually fought, should also be determined. The Kamarg may be considered victorious if over half the Granbretan standards are captured or if the Granbretans are decimated. Granbretan must break the Kamarg position or destroy the entire Kamargian force.

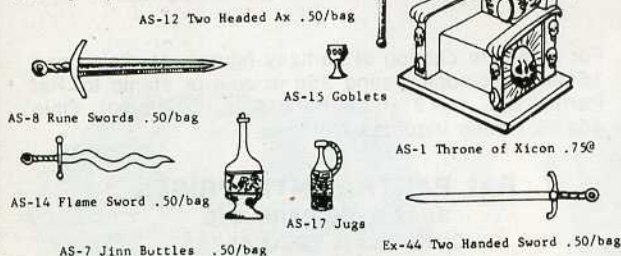
THE BATTLE OF LONDRA³ — This conflict is the climax of the last book. Between it and the Battle of the Kamarg, the Kamargians have been besieged. Only a shift into another dimension has saved them. Granbretan science has forced them back into their original world. Before the Kamarg can be attacked again, however, Granbretan is plunged into civil war. Meladius, out of favor with Granbretan's King Huon, revolts. Much of the army is recalled from Europe. Taking advantage of the situation, the Kamarg marches with 500 cavalry. Crossing France, about 1500 peasants are recruited. By the time the Kamarg lands in Granbretan, Meladius has made himself ruler of Granbretan. The civil war, however, has greatly reduced Granbretan's army, and the necessity to quickly reoccupy Europe doubtlessly left few in

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Londra. The Kamarg defeats a small Granbretan force, then marches on Londra.

There are 7 leaders of the Kamarg. Besides Hawkmoon, Count Brass and Yisselda, there is Oldahn, a small, red-furred half-human; Bowgentle the philosopher; Hulliam D'Averc a hypochondriac, but a famous architect and warrior and Orland Fank, an Orkneyman carrying an ax. Fank serves the Runestaff, the controller of fate. The others wear shining helms. These helms confuse their opponents who, seeing the reflection, imagine they are fighting themselves.

Hawkmoon himself has 3 talismans. The Red Aumlet lends him supernatural strength. The Sword of the Dawn summons the Legion of the Dawn, which materializes at command and remains as long as Hawkmoon is conscious. The Legion makes the numbers on each side about 15,000, the Kamargians being mostly infantry, the Granbretans about 1/3 cavalry.

The third talisman is the Runestaff itself. Displayed, it heartens the Kamargians. It also protects Hawkmoon against Granbretan's science. Earlier, Hawkmoon was captured. Granbretan scientists implanted a magic jewel in his forehead. Bowgentle was able to neutralize it before the Battle of the Kamarg. Inside Londra, however, the scientists are attempting to restore power to the jewel. When they do, they may make Hawkmoon insane at will. The Runestaff provides relief, but does not entirely destroy the jewel's power.

Accordingly, the Kamarg must enter Londra to find the machine controlling the jewel. The Granbretans are massed against them before the open gate of Londra. Their leaders are Meladius, who, as well as being commander-in-chief, directly commands the Wolves and Vultures, Adaz Promp of the Hounds, Mygel Holst of the Goats, Saka Gerden of the Bulls, and the unidentified leader of the pigs. Flame-cannons support them from the wall.

The Kamarg charges directly for the gate. The battle is largely a free-for-all that ends with the death of the Granbretan leaders and the retreat of their forces. The Kamarg is victorious, although only Hawkmoon, Yisselda and Orland Fank survive. The Granbretan empire is dispersed, and Flana, the one sane member of the Granbretan nobility, ascends the throne. Orland Fank takes the Runestaff and departs.

Few major errors were committed by either side. Again, however, morale is important. In the Battle of Londra, morale centers on the leaders. The Kamargians can sustain the loss of all their leaders except Hawkmoon, but their presence should increase morale. Hawkmoon, of course, with the Runestaff and the Legion, is the Kamarg's main strength. The Granbretans' effectiveness, on the other hand, should be reduced by about two thirds when an Order's leader dies. Since Meladius is a new ruler, his loss should

not affect any except those Orders he personally commands. The presence of the Granbretans leaders should not increase the efficiency of the Orders. Individual figures should represent the leaders on both sides.

Between turns, the Granbretan player may try to activate the jewel by shaking two die. The results are accumulative. When 100 is shaken, the machine controlling the jewel is turned on, at 130, Hawkmoon may be rendered unconscious (making the Legion disappear) for one turn, at 140, for two turns, and at 145 for three turns. At 150, he may be rendered insane. The Kamarg player may roll one die to determine what effect the Runestaff has on the machine. What the Kamarg player rolls should be subtracted from what the Granbretan rolls. Another two may be subtracted from the Granbretan role if Bowgentle, who knows the working of the jewel, is alive and near Hawkmoon.

The Kamarg must enter Londra to win, the Granbretans destroy the Kamarg forces.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Books are:
THE JEWEL IN THE SKULL (Mayflower Books, London, 1969)
THE MAD GOD'S AUMLET (Mayflower Books, London, 1972)
THE SWORD OF THE DAWN (Mayflower Books, London, 1969)
THE RUNESTAFF (Mayflower Books, London, 1973)
2. The Battle of the Kamarg occurs in the chapter entitled "The Battle of the Kamarg" in THE JEWEL IN THE SKULL.
3. The Battle of Londra occurs in the chapters entitled "The Gates of Londra" and "The Final Fight" in THE RUNESTAFF.



1121
(English Bowman)



E 1101
(Danish Axman)

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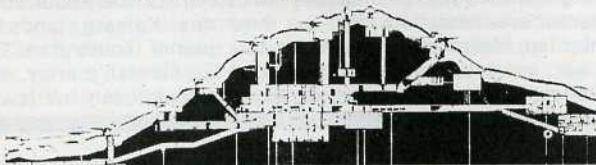
1101	Danish Axman	1200	Mongol Horse Archer
1111	Norman Spearman	1201	Mongol Medium Cavalry
1121	English Bowman	1205	Mongol Heavy Cavalry
1129	English Man at Arms	1210	Mongol Infantry
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