Unicorn Troop

Summary

The Unicorn Troop is a specialized, elite cavalry unit attached to the King's Life Guard in Dael Riata. It is composed of sentient unicorns and fairy-blooded human riders from the Sioltach clan, sharing a unique mental bond that facilitates magical and tactical coordination.

Description

Physiology and Fairy Blood

The human troopers are all volunteers from the Sioltach clan. They possess “fairy blood” from an ancient pact with the Fae, visible as distinctive gold flecks in their irises. This lineage is required to ride a unicorn, as the creatures will only accept riders they trust through a mental bond. This fairy blood also grants the riders limited magical abilities, such as a keener eye for reality and the power to influence how others perceive them.

Unicorns are sentient beings capable of reading human minds and channelling magic. They are adept at controlling their own visibility and physical tangibility at will, though they can be surprised by ambush if not focused.

Combat and Equipment

In battle, unicorns utilize granite hooves and horns capable of cutting through leather and flesh. They can project a force field to deflect arrows, though this is ineffective against iron-armored infantry. Notably, unicorns cannot wear or touch iron; consequently, the troop uses leather armour reinforced with bronze, while weapons like lances and swords utilize “fairy points” [4, 5]. To mortals, this equipment appears and functions like iron, but it does not cause the detrimental effects iron has on faerie beings.

The most effective counter to the Unicorn Troop is a dense unit of iron-armoured infantry equipped with pole-arms.

Organization and Leadership

The troop's hierarchy is unique:

- **Captain:** The Captain of the troop is always a unicorn, who holds the final authority on whether the unit fights.
- **Lieutenant:** The senior human rider is the Lieutenant, a role often filled by the heir to the Earldom of Duffjord.
- **Cornet:** This junior officer position is typically held by a nephew of the Earl or a younger son of

a noble family.

History

The troop was established following a pact between the Sioltach family and the Fae of the deep woods. Under the terms of the deal, the Sioltach protect the forest buffer for the faeries in exchange for the ability to ride unicorns.

The unit has historical limitations: it does not leave the boundaries of Dael Riata, nor does it travel to the islands, as unicorns dislike sea travel [8]. A sacred grove was planted near Caer Riata specifically for their use.

During the civil war of 754-5, the troop supported the late **Queen Caoimhe**, exploiting a rout of Murchadh infantry at the Battle of Drumfada Ridge. After the Queen's defeat, the troop dispersed to Sioltach lands until 759, when they pledged allegiance to **King Alasdair V** [11, 12]. Most recently, the troop served as the royal escort for the arrival of Lady Elizabeth Wallis in Dalreoch.

Relationships

People

- Alasdair V: The current Sovereign to whom the troop is pledged.
- Murdo Sioltach: Earl of Duffjord and primary patron of the troop's human members.
- Diarmid Murchadh: Succeeded to the Earldom of Uisdean; formerly served as the troop's Agitant.
- Iain Alpin: Knight Commander of the Life Guard, to which the troop is attached.

Places

- Dalreoch: Location of the troop's primary quarters and the King's Keep.
- Duffjordhead: Seat of House Sioltach and ancestral home of the riders.
- Caer Riata: Site of the troop's sacred grove.

Skyss - Story Background	Characters	Skyss - Places	Pantheons of the World	Other Background

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