

Overview

The Havenscoast properly refers to the strip of land between the Noreth Mountains and the south-western coast of the Inner Sea, where it drains through the Bay of Bethar into the wide expanse of the Azure Sea. In this Gazetteer however, its also covers the regions on both sides of the mountains, as shown in the regional map on page 2.

The lowlands are fertile, with a mild temperate climate, aided by the warm currents from the southern seas pushing up along the coast towards the colder Inner Sea waters, where they clash in a crescendo of noise and foam upon the rocky promontories of the Straits of Lorass. The towns which cluster along the sea in rocky inlets and safe harbours are surrounded by rich farmlands, primarily grain bearing in the north, but in the south there are also grape and olive groves, and orchards of orange trees marching across the hills.

Away from the coastal region, the geography turns less hospitable. The Noreth mountains

cut the Havenscoast off from the western realms of the Kurdarin, broken only by Kelar's Gap, where the river Tir has carved a deep gorge splitting the range into two distinct sections. While not the highest or most forbidding, the mountains are nevertheless steep and jagged granite, broken by ravines and box canyons, so that comfortable passage through them is possible only via the few well-known passes and trails.

To the west and south of the mountains the terrain gives way to the grassy uplands of the Derghai plains; wide dry lands broken by the great lake Urtan, and roamed by fierce nomadic tribes of elves and centaurs. Ranging for hundreds of miles across the grasslands for most of the year, they cluster during the winter months in their only semi-permanent settlements on the shores of the lake. It is here that they will trade with other folk of the region, bartering their prize horses and livestock for manufactured goods.

In the north the mountains give way to a broken land, the Barrens. Long years ago, when the demon-infested realm of Gorak was

strong, this region was the battleground between the demonic hordes, who sought destruction and conquest as is their wont, and the armies of Imperial Kurdar seeking to keep them penned within their land of smoking mountains and reeking fens. The Demon Lords are long vanquished, but the blight remains across these lands, and fell monsters and tribes of humanoids still hold sway here. Strong castles and towers in the Noreth foothills, manned by the Knights of Watch, defend the lands of the Havenscoast from these threats.

As much as from its geography, the region derives its name from recent history. The politics of the Havenscoast are dominated by the Principality of Camlan. This city-state was originally an outpost of the kingdom of Lorondor as it attempted to expand its borders across the Bay of Bethar. The initial colonisation was swift, as its heavily armoured knights encountered little meaningful resistance from the rural hill tribes that inhabited the area.

The Havenscoast



The city of Camlan was founded around 200 years ago, and began to establish itself as a trading center, with both sea and overland trade routes meeting within its walls.

Some 75 years after the city's founding, a major war of succession broke out within the royal family of Lorondor. The youngest son, who was also the Lord Admiral of the realm, and commanded the Inner Sea fleet from the north-western port of Belan, grew tired of the civil war between his older siblings, the Crown Prince and sorceress sister. Taking the bulk of the fleet with him, he landed at the growing city of Camlan and declared independence from the crown of Lorondor. Many years of strife occurred, during which the region became a haven for many refugees from the civil war across the sea, hence the name!

Locale Descriptions

The Barrens

North of the Red River lies a bleak region of uplands, caught between the northern fringes of the Noreth Mountains and the fire-mountains of Gorak. Centuries of martial and arcane battle between the hordes of the Demon Lords and the legions of Kurdar have left the area broken and lifeless, and squabbled over by the tribes of humanoids that once made up the foot soldiers of the demonic forces. Orc tribes, ogre clans and packs of fell trolls are the most common dangers to the civilised lands of the Havenscoast. In recent times there has been little evidence of any concerted threat, although rumours of a giant two-headed troll gaining power in the north-west foothills have begun to emerge.

Battle Fens

This reeking expanse of putrid marsh land stretches for miles on either side of the Red

River where it dissects the Gap of Gorak. The scene of a titanic battle, where thousands upon thousands of men and dwarves and orcs and many other races fought and died, their blood washing away downstream to give the river its name; now the area is silent and haunted. The cataclysmic forces unleashed by the Kurdar War-priests to bring about the destruction of their abyssal foes left a permanent magical scar, creating fell undead creatures out of the fallen, and a dank noxious fog that seldom lifts. Many an evil necromancer has attempted to create a power-base in the fens, as practitioners of this dark sorcery find their rituals to be particularly potent here.

Bay of Bethar

The southern half of the Havenscoast lands lie along the Bay of Bethar, the wide sheltered bay that connects the Inner Sea, via the Lorass Straight, with Azure Sea. The major towns along this coast count themselves as 'free', subject to Camlan in name only, and are bustling commercial centres on the seafaring trade routes south to the Dhaibaran islands

and far Mwango, and even the long haul east to the cities of the Sundered Shore. Due to this strategic importance, Camlan has a full squadron of war galleys on continual patrol in the Bay, and it is not even unusual to spot the swift elven ships of Mirranor in the area.

Border Forest

On the fringes of the East March, and clustering on the lower slopes of the Noreth Mountains, the Border Forest is a wide darkwood of ill repute. Its proximity to the badlands and the ancient battlegrounds that border Gorak have turned it into a refuge for all manner of evil and dangerous creatures. Goblin tribes infest its southern and western fringes, but its heartlands are darker still. Evil treants and other forest creatures twisted by demonic influences abound, whilst in the eastern borders, where the trees march up into the hills, giant and vicious wyvern compete for territory and prey.

Atop a crag on the northern edge of the forest stands a lonely fortress, known far and wide as Flamesword Tower. This is the main base

of the mercenary lord Thrumain Haldar, leader of the 'Red Sword' mercenary company, whose well-trained troops can be found in the pay of many a Havenscoast lord.

Bradon

The self-styled 'second city' of Camlan is really only a town, with a population of 1100, and much smaller than the southern free-towns Scarnell and Mirin, but owes its importance to its strategic position straddling the river Tir. Bradon's bridge, guarded on the northern bank by a strong fortress, is the only crossing point between the sea and the far side of the Noreth mountains through Kelar's Gap. As such, the town is both a significant part of Camlan's defence, and a major waypoint on the Traders' Way, the caravan route across the plains to the Kurdarin realms. Camlan maintains a strong garrison here, including one of its heavy cavalry squadrons, and the senechal of Bridge Keep owes direct fealty to the Prince.

Camlan

The City of Camlan is both the largest city in the city-state of the same name, and the seat of its Prince. In name, his writ extends south to the Drenwood, north to the Red River and the beginning of the Barrens, and west through Kelar's Gap to the Lossor river. Typical of Havenscoast mentality however, most towns and villages of the region regard themselves as independent - except when the Prince's heavy cavalry pays a visit.

Camlan is primarily a Lorondin city, and exhibits the vibrant, aggressive and brash nature of that folk. Being a major Inner Sea port and the eastern terminus of the Traders' Way, folk of a myriad cultures and races can be found amongst the teeming throngs of its marketplaces and taverns. Human, dragonborn and elven merchants from all the far-flung Inner Sea lands, along with their attendant scribes and guards, rub shoulders with fair haired Lorondin townsfolk, dark hillsmen, Kurdarin travellers from the west, and of course the mongrel mixture of peoples that inhabit the underbelly of the city.

The city is split north to south by the river Cam where it widens into the Bight of Camlan, creating a series of sheltered bays which form a deep water harbour. The northern half of the city is dominated by the Prince's fortress palace and naval base, as well as the house and estates of the nobility and powerful merchant lords of Camlan. Across the few stone bridges accessing the south bank resides the bulk of the population, in somewhat less luxurious conditions. Folk in this part of town are more likely to regard the Brotherhood of Stealth, the influential thieves guild of Camlan, as a greater voice of authority than the official City Watch.

Corsair's Teeth

The name refers to a maze of islands and jagged submerged rocks which are scattered across the mouth of the inlet the cuts into the eastern peaks of the Fire Mountains of Gorak. At the northern end of the inlet lies the City of the Corsairs, a pirate haven of the blackest reputation, ruled by the self-styled Duke of Blood, rumoured to be a cambion of fearsome strength. The 'Teeth' form the first line of

defence for the city, as the secret of safe passage is closely guarded by the captains of the pirate fleet.

Derghai Plains

West and south of the Noreth mountains lies a vast expanse of grassland, broken in places by rugged rolling hills, and also a number of deep-water lakes, such as the great lake Urtan. Across these plains roam the Derghai tribes, loose bands of fierce wild elves and centaurs.

Whilst not completely hostile to the humans and other folk of the Havenscoast, the Derghai are a fairly closed people, and seldom welcome outsiders in their lands, or indeed seek out the company of others. There are of course exceptions to this, and small groups of traders or the odd young Derghai bladesman can be encountered in human lands. Clad in leggings and jerkins of worked leather, the elves favour long curved swords of fine metal, and are consummate horsemen and archers.

The Traders' Way crosses the northern fringes of the plains on its way from Kelar's Gap to

Westford, so it is not uncommon for bands of Derghai to be encountered by caravans on this route, especially in spring and autumn when the tribes are preparing for, or at the point of breaking from, their mass winter camps around the shores of Urtan. Impromptu markets spring up at these meeting points, as Derghai horses and cattle are highly prized, whilst the tribes crave manufactured goods of steel, glass and pottery.

The Drenwood

This forest clustered on the foothills of the Noreth mountains dominates the vale of Thyrdale, a rural region where many descendants of the original tribes of the Havenscoast still reside. In times past, barrows were raised for their dead chieftains atop the hills on the forest's border, and the woodlands were the centre of their Druidic religion.

All this changed some 200 years ago when an unknown dark power suddenly burst forth from the Barrows, ravaging the surrounding areas with an army of undead and other

unspeakable horrors from the Shadowfell. Eventually defeated with the aid of the newly settled Lorondin armies, and driven back into the Drenwood, the forces of Shadow were sealed back in their own world by the Circle of Talinfey a sacred henge raised by the Druids.

The great stone circle still stands, weathered and alone atop a grassy knoll in the very centre of the Drenwood, but the dark reputation of the forest has not improved over the centuries.

East March

The East March of Kurdar has always been a dangerous border region, right back to the days of the intermittent but seemingly endless conflict with the demonic realm of Gorak. In the days of empire, the towns of Thesh in the north and Randurn in the south were heavily fortified, and well garrisoned with imperial troops, whilst Kirthor Keep was the massive stronghold of the Warden of Gorak, Priest-Duke of the East March.

Hundreds of years later, the East March is still dangerous, but the town and armies of the border region have seen better days, with Kurdar's attention focused more on the political and mercantile wrangling between the small independent princedoms and duchies that were once merely satraps of the Imperial Throne. Randurn is still a vibrant caravan town on the Traders' Way, but Thesh is a faded provincial city living on past glories. It's position as a river port gives it a certain level of trade in stone and other raw materials from the mines at the headwaters of the Thesh river, but it is no longer the nearest centre of civilisation to the seat of an Imperial Duke! Kirthor Keep is still a formidable stronghold, but is only the base of a lowly Marcher Baron, who struggles to maintain even a garrison.

Forest of Bretheron

To the west of the Derghai plains lies the deep and mysterious Forest of Bretheron, an ancient woodland realm that few can claim to have explored. Legend has it that within the forest lies the ruins of the Eladrin city of Thelessan, cut off from the Feywild ages ago

by one of the mysterious worldfall events that alter the boundaries between worlds. The truth of that is known to none, as the fierce elves of Bretheron forbid anyone to travel within the groves of massive Brethil trees that are the heartland of the forest. Akin to the Derghai plains-elves, these sylvan tribes call themselves Falissirar, the 'Forlorn People'.

Gorak

The Demon Waste of Gorak is a land of fire and grinding stone and reeking fens, an image of the horrors of the Elemental Abyss imprinted on the world. For a thousand years, the Demon Lords of Gorak ruled here, periodically gathering armies of demons and giants and trolls and other fell creatures, and unleashing them on the surrounding lands. Against them the armies of empire, the legions of Kurdar and Samos, and the greatest mages and priests that these great civilisations could gather, were arrayed against forces of Chaos. Time and again the battles raged, and always the demonic threat was beaten back, often for generations at a time.

Eventually, 800 years ago, the Mage-Emperor of Samos and his Prime Magisters, by their arcane might assaulted the twisted fortress at the very heart of the demon realm, casting down the demon lord Higraynthol, and raising the Seal of Samos, forcing his hordes back into the Abyss.

Since then, the mountains and wastelands of Gorak have remained a blight on the land. The region is beset by frequent volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, whilst stinking marshland and lifeless plains make up the majority of the remaining terrain. Within this hellish land, the remnants of the demons and their erstwhile minions fight a continuous battle for supremacy. Currently, the fire giant king Asjarn is the dominant power in the mountainous region, whilst the dark arcanists of the Cabal of Higrayn hold sway from their ruinous tower in the central fens. To the east, the City of the Corsairs is the only semi-hospitable location to be found, if an iniquitous den of pirates can be described in such a way.

Knights' Keep

Knights' Keep stands in the borderlands of the Havenscoast, a strong bastion of military and divine power against the threat of the Barrens and the demon-wastes of Gorak. Built 180 years ago, soon after Lorondor first colonized the region, it is the headquarters of 'The Knights of Watch', a military order of Herodan, the Lorondin god of justice and valour. The primary purpose of the Watch is to guard the civilised lands to the south against incursions of the humanoid rabble, trolls, giants and worse that would occur regularly were it not for the vigilance of the Knights.

The Keep is situated on a rocky bluff high in the foothills of the Noreth mountains, and consists of two main keeps, one at the very top of the promontory, which holds the sacred temple and chapter house of the order, as well as the quarters of the most senior officers. The lower keep houses the main military strength of the Knights, its curtain wall encompassing everything needed for such an operation: barracks, stables, armouries, smithies, and tilled plots of land. A steep stone staircase,

fortified by walls and towers, provides access to the upper keep.

Although it has been attacked several times by large forces, the defensible location and military strength housed within it means that Knights' Keep has never been taken by an enemy. The Knights treat the Red River as the unofficial border of their territory, so their patrols range far and wide along its southern banks, northwards to the edges of the Battle Fens, and westwards to the town of Sarb.

Noreth Mountains

This mountain chain dominates the region, dividing it east to west from the Derghai plains in the south right to the Barrens in the north. Kelar's Gap, where the river Tir carves a deep ravine between Wayton on the western side, and the town of Bradon on the east, is the only trail through the mountains that allows the passage of drawn wagons and horse-borne traffic.

The southern half of the range is relatively free of significant threats to the Havenscoast,

and is rich in minor minerals such as tin and copper, as well as a excellent source of good quality building granite. The north peaks however, have long been too close to the dangerous borderlands of Gorak, and are infested with goblin tribes, hill giants, and other worse evils. Caravans and other travelers making their way through Wayton and Kelar's Gap must be alert to such dangers.

The Tower of Watch

North of the Red River, the Tower of Watch stands vigil from a rugged hilltop right on the edge of the Barrens. This tower is an outpost of the Knights of Watch, designed to give early warning of any growing threats from the Barrens and worse. As well as a strong component of heavy horse, the Knights' main strength, the tower is also the main base of the sub-branch of the order known only as 'the Eyes', which consists of specially trained scouts who take on dangerous missions deep into the Barrens, and even further into the fire mountains and wastes of Gorak.

Sarb

The small town of Sarb lies at the mouth of the rocky ravine through which the Red River tumbles out of the bleak Barrens and into the Inner Sea. As befits a border town of strategic importance, it is heavily fortified and has a strong garrison of crossbowmen, and a cavalry troop that patrols the surrounding rich farmlands against incursions.

The Knights of Watch maintain a small naval force here, which has had a number of engagements with Corsair ships along this coast as far as the Teeth.

Scarnell

This self-styled 'free port' is the largest town on the Havenscoast except of course for the City of Camlan, being home to almost eight thousand people. Along with its sister town Mirin further to the south, Scarnell is the only seat of power in the region able to ignore in most cases the rule of Camlan. The town has an excellent deep-water harbour, and sees significant amounts of trade and other

seafaring activity, mainly due to the decision of the Scarnell Trading Guild 20 years ago to waive all customs duties, and in fact to turn a blind eye to any nefarious activity carried out at the docks.

The 'Duke' of Scarnell was originally descended from Lorondin nobility, and owed personal fealty to the Prince of Camlan. Now however, this is an elected position chosen by and from the significant factions within the town, predominantly the five most powerful merchants of the Trading Guild, but also encompassing local landowners, and several notorious sea-captains.