

*Ye Ole Page
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CHAPTER I
FORT PMACTOOB

After eight hundred years of silence, war banged on the front door of an Empire's peace. The deadbolts of prosperity, security, and hope were rather loose, buckling, ready to give way to the noisy and ferocious knocking of their deadly neighbors. The Orcs had returned.

Peace won by so much violence and force so long ago was ready to pack its bags and depart.

Never in the Empire's history was there so desperate a need for its Navy. The need was so great that the Empress devoted every resource in her control to the cause. Every resource, including her *Military* recruiters. The general public believed the conventional wisdom on recruiters: "They'll sell you the world, and that's all you'll get—dirt," "You'll find your fortune in the military! They won't tell you where to look though..." And as much as someone would love to exculpate the recruiters, that these Imperial recruiters were shining examples of truth, light and morality...someone can't, and they aren't.

Faced with the prospect of certain and painful death at the hands of Orcs, one tends to do what one can to save one's skin. The Empress set high quotas for sailors, soldiers and pilots to be recruited, with all due haste and no waste which is what every recruiter set to do, which led to the following conversation between two young lovers one star-filled night.

Lamont and Mimi were sitting on a hill overlooking their village, their eyes locked. He took her hands in his. "I have decided to join the Imperial Navy and that's final!"

"Am I to have no say in my love's life? You'll surely die! Have you not listened to minstrels' songs? The traders and merchants and their stories? I

can't bear the thought of some Orc...some Orc..." Mimi broke down, and tears began rolling freely from their original territory, bound for bigger and better things, cheeks! Only to discover a bitter truth: cheeks give way to ground.

Lamont looked to Mimi. Her pink gown was speckled with tears that had given up all hope and jumped. "Don't cry, my love. I will not perish. I'm far too clever for that, and the recruiter said that there was little to no danger a sailor would face, in fact, the recruiter said that there has never been a safer time to join the military!"

"And you believed him?" asked Mimi, "Lamont, you are so gullible! If he told you the world was flat, you'd probably never go swimming at the beach again for swimming off the edge!"

"I'm going to be an Intelligence Courier. It's one of the safest jobs out there, Mimi! I transport classified Imperial documents, that's it! No fighting, nothing. I'm rather disappointed actually. I wanted an adventure."

"You fool! Classified documents, eh? And how much do you think the enemy would like to get a hold of you?"

Lamont paused, then frowned. "Probably...quite a bit."

Mimi nodded with that confident smile a woman gets when she's bested a man at anything. "Correct. And what do you suppose the enemy would do to someone carrying classified information?"

Lamont gulped. "Tickle them and give them a coach fare home. Look, Mimi, I've made up my mind and that's final. I have to do this, and I need your support."

With tears still gliding to their doom, she looked to Lamont, took her hands from his and stood. "You're selfish, Lamont, only thinking of yourself. I need more than that. You go, join the Navy, that's fine, but know that I won't be waiting here for you when you get back—if you ever do." And with that, Mimi ran off, her speckled pink gown trailing behind her. Lamont stood and watched her go.

A voice from the other side of the hill called up. "Hey Lamont? You up there kanoodling or something?" It was Eetrick. "Yeah, we heard Mimi's voice up there." And Stopher, too. Eetrick and Stopher were Lamont's best friends from school, and had an uncanny talent for showing up at the wrong time. Lamont tried to compose himself since, after all, one cannot have one's friends see one's emotions.

Eetrick and Stopher topped the hill. "Ah good! You're not making out!" said Eetrick, laughing.

Stopher quickly saw past Lamont's façade of happiness. "What's wrong, Lamont?" Ever since Lamont saved Stopher from an 80—pound sandbag about to hit him in the head in their school theatre, Stopher had been a devoted friend. Lamont looked his friends in the eyes.

“Fellas, I’ve decided to join the Navy, and Mimi has left me because of it.”

Eetrick said, “That stinks, Monty! You must feel terrible! Probably want to throw yourself off a bridge or something...” Stopher elbowed Eetrick in the ribs. “...course you look like you’re taking it well...”

Stopher laid a hand on Lamont’s shoulder. “It’ll be OK, she’s just emotional. I heard the Orcs made their official proclamation of hostilities, no war declaration yet though, they’ve invaded the North territories and are occupying them with a pretty sizeable force.”

Lamont shook his head. “The whole thing stinks! I wish I could just end it all tomorrow—no war, and the Empress will need no sailors.”

Eetrick said, “Won’t need, Monty.”

“Huh?”

“Won’t need sailors. You said will need no.” Eetrick again received an elbow to the ribcage.

“Well, if you’re heading to certain death, we have a lot to do tonight!” Stopher said with a grin.

The three, having been friends all through four years of secondary school, had found new and improved ways of having fun and making mischief, at others expense. The whole night became a flashback of memories for the three as they relived the last four years in depth. Doors were egged, horses were covered in strips of paper and no end of trouble was made, of course Mr. Smudgins was none to pleased finding two dozen forks stuck in his yard the following morning. All, was well.

In the morning, exhausted, the three parted ways in the town square. Lamont went home and found Gerg, his father, in the kitchen making breakfast.

“Glad your mother ain’t alive for this day.”

Lamont smiled, “Yeah, she’d be bawling her eyes out...” Lamont noticed his father holding back tears. “I’m right proud of you son, not easy what your about to do. Now, eat up, Navy food couldn’t keep a maggot alive and you’ve got a long sail ahead of you.”

Not wanting to be late for the ship, Lamont inhaled his breakfast quickly and went about packing a small knapsack. Upon arrival at the Imperial Recruit Training Command, they made you ship back whatever you brought with you, to include your civilian clothes, once you had been issued a uniform of course. He and Gerg didn’t speak the rest of the morning, both not wanting to break down in front of the other.

It was a quick carriage ride to the docks and many sons and daughters were saying their goodbyes. Lamont looked to Gerg and held out his hand for a shake. Gerg could hold it no longer and tears began to make their escape from his eyes, commencing nose dives from his cheeks to the earth below. He took Lamont in his arms, gave him a Gerg-sized hug, the same

enveloping embrace that had comforted Lamont so many times before.

Lamont turned around one more time at the gangway. "I love ya, Dad."

"I love you son, you be careful out there and watch out for BORFULLS"

"What are those dad?"

"Bad Orcs Full of...Stuff!"

The two laughed and with that, Lamont boarded the ship for his trip to boot camp.

The sail took him from the mainland to the island where Imperial Navy held its basic training. The Navy lovingly referred to the island as "The Fort" or with as much love as one has for a splinter in one's left toe. For the recruits attending, the Fort, it was referred to as "Grand Mistakes" on account of it being near several grand lakes. During the sail, Lamont thought back to his last three weeks of freedom; graduation from trade school, Ectrick and Stopher, Mimi and Gerg. Lamont's childhood seemed to all melt together to a blurry memory, as his last three weeks, an especially quick blur, compared to his dreamed filled future of Naval service. Gazing out at the horizon, Lamont saw an endless sea, a sea that posed an endless number of options. No roads to follow out here, only courses to fame and fortune, not limited by boundaries, a life only the Imperial Navy could offer.

Lamont has sailed before, but only once, and that was a short trip to his Grandfather's house, another blurry memory to his past. This voyage seemed somehow different, the ship was much the same as Lamont had previously experienced, but the sails seemed fuller, the decks a little more bold and Gerg was not there at his side, this was Lamont's first journey by himself, and the thrill of it excited him.

Lamont was nervous none the less though, because he didn't know what to expect. After talking to the recruiter, Lamont and he went to I.M.P.S. the Imperial Military Processing Station. After completing the battery of physicals the youth of the Empire must endure prior to service, Lamont was given several choices for jobs he might be interested in. He had signed up getting the job, or rate as it is called, of I.C. or Intelligence Courier, mainly because all he did prior to enlisting was act on stage, and the only thing he knew about Couriers, seeing as though their job is classified, was that they get up in front of people and talk.

To pass the time on the long voyage, Lamont wrote in his journal. He kept this all through his time in the Navy for the dull moments that sometimes go along with military service, which is very convenient as it served as the main source for this story. Though he uses terms that are now long forgotten, or which may seem simple, we've done our best to remain faithful to his words, or as best as we can make out, as he was apparently left-handed which didn't help his penmanship, much like giving a man with three opposable thumbs on his left hand a pen and telling him to, "Go at it."

It was a two day sail from the mainland to the fort, which was relative, much like telling a child it is a two hour horse ride to the dentist, magically those two hours fly by. Pmactob was on an island, the Navy stated this was for the protection of the recruits, of course what soul-less enemy would want to attack a recruit camp is beyond rational comprehension. With the sheer number of teenagers, it just wouldn't be fair to the invader. Thus the rumor was that the location was to keep the recruits from escaping.

Two nights after they set sail, the lookout shouted, "Fort Pmactob off starboard bow!" A sailor came out on deck as all the recruits were ushered, weary-eyed and ragged, onto the top deck. The moon still high, bathed the ship and pier in an eerie blue light as the ocean scented breeze brought a slight chill to those present. Now on deck was a sailor in Imperial uniform who had not previously been about. He stood tall and commanded attention and respect. "I'm Mucky Muck Bellfo. You are about to begin training to become a member of the most powerful Navy in the world, the Empress's Navy! Now, stand at attention!" the recruits aboard stood at attention, holding their knapsacks at their sides. The Mucky Muck continued, "When I say now, you will all hold your bag in your left hand and on the count of three, drop them to the deck. NOW!!!" Lamont and all the others switched hands and after three seconds dropped them to the deck. One of the guys to the right of Lamont, a few heads down, chuckled.

The Mucky Muck went and stood two inches from the giggler's nose. "YOU THINK I'M FUNNY RECRUIT?"

The recruit replied, "No sir!"

The Mucky Muck shouted, "SIR?! YOU SEE GOLD ON MY SHOULDER'S SON?!"

The recruit with a trembling voice replied, "No!"

The Mucky Muck shouted, "MUCKY MUCK! THE FIRST AND LAST WORDS OUT OF YOUR PORTAL OF PERMISSION WILL BE MUCKY MUCK, DO YOU ALL UNDERSTAND?"

Everyone as loud as they could, shouted, "MUCKY MUCK, YES MUCKY MUCK!"

He paced on the deck, looking each of the recruits up and down, "You're about to begin two months of training. For those of you with the guts to finish, you will have the start of a great, glorious career. Those of you who are cowards and desire to leave, we ain't stopping you. Just raise your hand and we'll send you back to Mommy! UNDERSTAND?!"

Everyone replied, "MUCKY MUCK, YES MUCKY MUCK."

The ship was guided to the dock. Other recruits in uniform waited on the dock with what Lamont would later find out was a First Rate Bantam Officer—a red rope hanging around his shoulder in charge of them. These particular Bantam Officers, or "Red ropes" as the recruits called them, were

spawned from the seeds of demons, reared by the red Dragons of Kalebenough and drank the blood of dead recruits for dinner, just ask any recruit. He barked orders, "Recruit Taekle, prepare to receive bow line!" The recruit replied, "First Rate, prepared, First Rate!" Sailors on board Lamont's boat had prepared lines and were standing alongside the ship. The First Rate shouted to the sailor on board, "Heave bow line!" The line was thrown down to Recruit Taekle.

In the moon light everything looked like silvery shadows darting around on the ends of lines. Methodically and with great organization, all the lines were thrown down and the boat was moored to the dock. The journey had concluded and with it the end of Lamont's adolescence. There was a magical transformation that takes place inside a recruit once their ship arrives, some feel it, some don't. Inside a small tie to childhood and innocence is cut and with those strands, a new rope is formed that binds them to man and womanhood, of course some ropes are stronger than others, as evident by the recruit to Lamont's left beginning to cry. A gang plank was brought to the ship and the Mucky Muck on board shouted, "GET OFF MY BOAT AND START TRAINING! YOUR LIFE AS SAILORS STARTS NOW!"

Everyone on board began to rush off and line up on the dock much like Penguins jumping into a boiling pot of water to avoid a Polar Bear. Another Second Rate red rope stood in front of all of the new recruits. Roughly eighty or more young men and women of various races, were lined up along the dock. Some were men, some women, elves, dwarfs, and some glared at each other, mainly the elves and dwarves. The common theme for them all was that of a universal feeling of impending doom, just ask a recruit, they'd tell you. The red rope began shouting orders: "Begin marching! Straighten that line, you want to be sailors or not! Prepare for a long night you Pukes, this is where the fun starts, for the next two months, you belong to me, you are mine! Don't question me or my orders and these weeks will pass by quickly, your training is up to you!"

It seemed as if everyone was on his or her own step, so the red rope shouted, "LEFT RIGHT LEFT RIGHT LEFT RIGHT! ONE TWO THREE FOUR ONE TWO THREE FOUR!" He walked down the line and was about to stop next to Lamont, but stopped at the person behind him. "You there, what's your name recruit?" He answered, "Second Rate, Recruit Gainst, Second rate." The red rope nodded. "Very well, Gainst, call cadence. FORWARD MARCH!!!" The procession of eighty or more began to march forward as Gainst called out, "Left, your left, your left right left, left, left, left right left."

The rest of the night was filled with disorientation, darkness, and shouting red ropes. Lamont wondered much as a knight in the mouth of a Dragon wonders, "What have I gotten myself into! I should have gone to a university."

Sometime around daybreak, after the recruits had gotten their hair shaved off, new working uniforms, and a seabag full of new clothes, Lamont, with dark circles under his eyes, saw the rising sun. "I made it through the night." he thought. The group of recruits had now been organized into a division and after a night of marching and shouting orders, they were led to the mess halls. The military restaurant, or *mess hall*, as it is called, is so named for the group of people or "Mess" that eat there, or as the cooks would say, for what is left behind after a military dinner.

Lamont's new working uniform consisted of blue canvas pants with the back laced up, and a shirt with flowing sleeves. His shoes were black leather and a shiny brass buckle to secure them. A black leather belt, and a tri cornered hat.

The division got to the mess hall and stood in a line single file as the red rope went in to get some tables. The division walked in single file and went past the servers, fellow recruits. Upon receiving their portions, they all sat down and no one was allowed to speak. The huge Mess hall was filled with other recruits, maybe five other divisions and even with four-hundred recruits in the hall, it was as the cliché states, "Silent as the grave" so named after all the recruits that had died in Bootcamp, just ask any of the recruits, they'd tell you. The silence came from the rule of no talking during meals.

After the meal, Lamont's division got up and in single file, marched past the kitchen, showing their trays through a slot to the back cleaning section. Once lined up outside in five rows, the red rope came out and said, "Good morning, Division 3-90!"

The division replied, "Good morning, Second Rate!" The red rope smiled and asked, "And how are we this Fine Imperial Navy day?" The division replied, "Outstanding Second Rate." He smiled again, "I bet after that long night, and good meal your ready to see our barracks and hit your rack, right?"

Some in the division smiled. "Yes, Second rate!" Lamont grew suspicious; he was smiling too much for a red rope.

"Sorry to disappoint you, but you only sleep between taps and reveille. Since your so tired and need to wake up, DROP!" The division groaned and got in a push-up position, the red rope began barking, "Down, up, down, up, down, up."

It was another day Lamont wished he had gone to a university.

Roughly fifty or sixty push-ups later, the division got to its feet and marched to their barracks, attractively named EIF 64 Reppoh. Everyone claimed a rack, or bed as it were, and then stood by their respective rack-sides.

The room, called a compartment, was long enough to fit forty racks on a side. The racks were stacked two tall and in between the racks where closets divided into three sections, each subdivided with two shelves and two drawers. Lamont snagged a bottom rack and everyone put their recently acquired

seabags on their new naked racks. The blocks of lead cleverly disguised as mattresses taunted the weary-eyed recruits.

The red rope came in and everyone snapped to attention. "I'm tired too, but we begin our training today, unless you bugs want to stay here longer?" The division replied, "No, Second Rate!" The red rope shouted, "Then file outside and get ready for class!"

Lamont's division was located on the second floor and as he was running down two flights of stairs towards the front assembly area, or grinder as the recruits called it due to the red ropes grinding their divisions into submission there, his mind drifted back to earlier times: making out with Mimi, papering horses with Eetrick and Stopher, and of course his father sitting by the fire smoking on his old clay pipe. Lamont wondered if it would be so bad to leave and go back home. He shook his head at the thought and decided firmly, no he would not leave.

Imperial sailors are trained in the art of seamanship, and all the push-ups, shouting and every past moment both significant and not, led up to Lamont standing there, just another face in the division, forbidden from grinning or frowning. Exhausted, face covered in sweat, he stood in Fort Pmactooob, ready to become a true sailor.

Lamont's first class was on rank recognition. They all sat in desks facing a podium; armed with a huge piece of white slate and charcoal pencils for writing. The classroom was very wide and very tall, dimly lit but for the windows and a few oil lamps. The recruit rumor for this was to make the room as dark as possible thus make it hard to stay awake after marching all day, working all night, and continually being shouted at and made to do push-ups. The floors were a dark granite tile, again, not helping the atmosphere of alertness.

As the instructor walked in, everyone stood at attention while one of the recruits, designated as Recruit Mucky Muck (RMM), said "Attention on deck! Good morning Second Rate, Division 3-90 present, accounted for, ready to receive training."

The instructor was slightly older, and the remaining hair he did have, seemed to be retiring before him. Under his balding head rode a pair of spectacles atop his chubby nose and the rest of his form was quite plump.

He nodded. "Very well, be seated." Everyone sat down. "Your first class is Rank Recognition. It is vitally important that you properly identify all persons, for your career may depend on it. We will discuss enlisted first." At this point, the instructor noticed someone dozing off in front, walked over, and slammed his fist down on the recruit's desk. "I know all of you have been up all night, but this training is to test you and push you. You may be in battle when you only get a few precious hours of sleep a night, so you must learn to function properly. If you see a shipmate dozing off, nudge him awake. I don't

want to send any of you to your First Rate with a bad report.”

He continued, “Now, one line on the sleeve is a recruit, a cross is an apprentice and a cross with an extra bridge is a seaman. One sail upon that mast is a Third Rate, two sails—a Second, and three sails—a First Rate. Now onto the most important, and mind you well all of these. Mucky Mucks run this Navy, as such you don’t want to agitate them and nothing does that quicker than messing up the rank which they have worked so hard to earn. A gold ship with three sails is a Mucky Muck, the same but with the topsail silver is a Senior Mucky Muck and lastly but most importantly, the same but with a silver penant atop the silver sail is a Master Mucky Muck. This last one is the most vital. As the highest ranking enlisted, they have more power than an Imperial Grand Admiral. The chain of command goes a little something like this, The Gods and Goddesses, the Empress, the Master Mucky Muck, and all the poor fools that get in their way.” The class laughed.

After another hour of Officer, Elven ranks and Dwarven Admiralty members, the instructor was ready to release the class. “All right, this concludes your first section. Muster outside and wait for your First Rate.”

Everyone went outside and got in order according to height, Lamont toward the back. One of the recruits was saying, “Geesh, can that guy ramble on or what, I was dying in there!” Another said to him, “Shhhhhh you idiot, you wanna get us dropped again?”

The recruit said back, “I’ve read stupid fantasy books that were more exciting than all that rubbish! A first rate is three sails...”

“Do they look like this?” The recruit spun around to see a First Rate red rope standing over him. The recruit gulped. “DROP!” The recruit got down and began doing push-ups. Another recruit chuckled; and the red rope walked over. “You think it’s funny to see a shipmate get punished? Join him, recruit!”

The two were on the ground doing push-ups for all they were worth, as the red rope said, “I’m First Rate Aletin. I’ll be working with Second Rate Canston to get you ready for the fleet.” He looked to the two recruits, whose push-ups had slowed as the drips of sweat hit the ground. “That’s good, recruits, to your feet.”

They got up and the First Rate got in the front and began to march them off to the fort’s batteries for their next class, *Cannoneering 862*. The fort’s batteries kept to the décor of the rest of the fort, that being drab and rundown, accented by cracks, moss and chunks of wall that had long since abandoned their friends in search of excitement and adventure, on the ground. Upon arrival, a stout Dwarf, covered from head to toe in black soot stood with a ramrod by one of the twenty cannons pointed over the wall toward the sea.

“Welcom’ Laddies, this be Cannoneering 862. I’m Edward Sootbeard the IV, Dwarven Cannoner First Rate, and it is me honor to introduce ye, to the

finest and mightiest weapons in her Empress' control, Dwarven cannon."

Shortly after the first Empress Nicole Constance accepted the alliance of the Elves, the Dwarves not to be outdone by their rivals, offered their allegiance and most importantly, their black powder and cannon to the Empire. Now all Imperial cannon classes, both 862 and *Advanced Cannon Tactics for Maximum Damage 911* are taught by Dwarves. "You'll each be gett'n a try at touch'n these off but first soom basics: no one, and I mean NO ONE will light off these puppies without my order, second, you will put only the instructed amount of powder in the barrel, else you blow us all up! Now, first twenty, to your cannon. Take your wet sponge rod from the bucket and ram the barrel, now repeat with the dry sponge. Next twenty, you be the powder monkeys, retrieve one, and ONLY one bag of powder from the aft locker, take to a cannon. Cannoneers, ram your bag down the barrel. Now, take one piece of cloth from your left side of cannon and ram down barrel, next insert your standered 12 pound shot. Stand at attention at the aft of your cannon when complete."

The first twenty upon finishing loading, moved to the aft of their cannons and stood at attention. "Tied to the cascabel of your cannon, that be the knobby thing at the end, you notice a nail looking object, that be your prick. Insert the prick through the touch hole. Good, now, retrieve one fuse from the barrel on your left. Insert into touch hole. Second twenty, retrieve for the cannoneers their matches, located in the starboard aft supply locker, smartly now! Distribute to a cannoneer. Now, so help me, if any of you so much as looks at that match without my say so I'll through you from this firing line so fast you think I'd shot you from a cannon! On my mark, I will say ready to my left, ready to my right, ready on the cannon deck, you will then light your matches, then, and ONLY then will you touch-off your fuses. Non-firing recruits, brace your ears. Ready to my left? Ready to my right, ready on the cannon deck. Light matches!"

Up to this point Lamont had been pretty reserved about the process, but now, at the prospect of lighting his cannon of, he grinned and slowly lowered his match to the fuse, the two kissed and the sparks of the fuse took that passion down the firing hole. Within moments, twenty cannon let lose belches of smoke and fire, hurtling those 12 pound balls through the air, splashes could be seen in the sea a quarter of a mile off. The next group stepped up to the cannon. Eighty pounds of gunpowder and eighty-four soot covered faces later, the class was led to the pier for *Sailing 101*.

Following *Sailing 101* at which Lamont learned he had a knack for tacking back and forth, the division took a break for lunch then resumed with a final evening class on uniforms. The division then marched off to dinner, then back to the compartment to make their racks and store their new uniforms.

The hours turned to days, and the days to weeks until the recruits no

longer kept track of how long they had been there. It was on one of these particular days that the class marched to school as they had done countless times before.

Dwarven Specialty Rates:

DWARNAVMAN 1842-6V (*Dwarf Naval Manual number 1842 Section 6 Change V*)

OT—*Oral Technician*—Dwarf whose verbal shouting and swearing can engage malfunctioning equipment.

AT—*Ale Technician*—Tastes Ale fuel supply to ensure proper flavor and combustibility. If Technician remains standing after approximately one and a half barrels, fuel **WILL** be discarded.

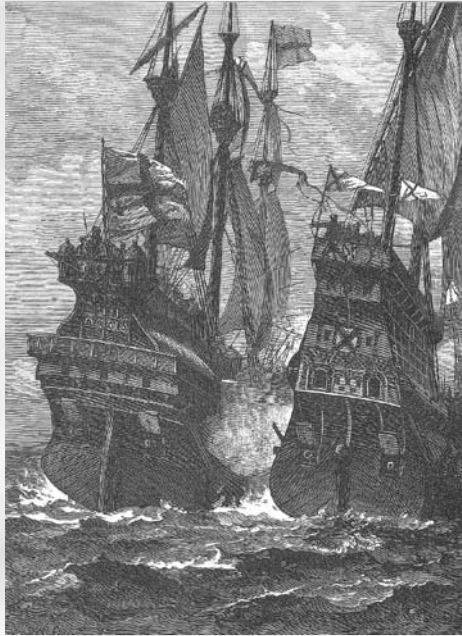
BGM—*Beard Master Groomer*—Dwarf who has mastered the art and precision of Beard grooming as well as familiar with all history associated there with and is competent in decoration of beards.

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HISTORICAL ITEMS OF NAVAL NOTE

As torn out of Fort Pmactoob's Training Manual

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HES JUMPING TOAD EXCHANGES BROADSIDES WITH THE INDIVIDUALIST
FLAGSHIP LONER DURING THE FORTH YEAR OF THE UNIFICATION WARS.

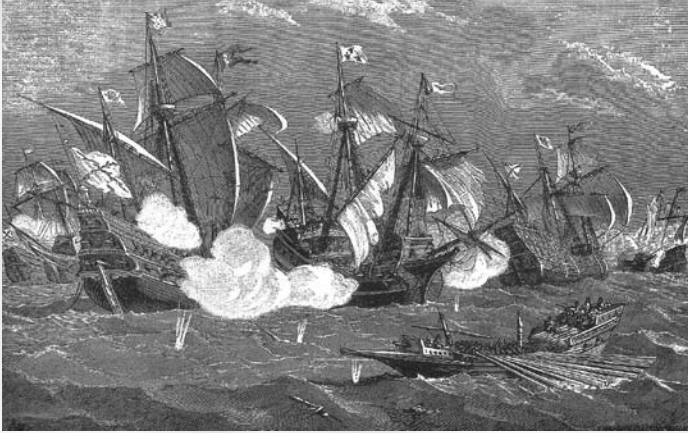
The highest casualty rate of any single engagement in Imperial Naval history, occurred during the fourth year of the Unification Wars. The HES *Jumping Toad* and the Individualist flag ship *Loner* clashed in a fierce broadsides exchange that led to a boarding party exchange. By the third hour both ships had sustained losses of 75% of their crew. When asked to surrender, the *Loner's* captain replied, "We have not yet begun to die!" Following this demoralizing statement to the crew, the ship hoisted their colors and the *Toad* took the *Loner* as prize. Looking back on his fateful remark, the Captain replied, "If only I had said something different..."

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HISTORICAL ITEMS OF NAVAL NOTE

As torn out of Fort Pmactob's Training Manual

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FIRST BATTLE OF THE UNIFICATION WAR AT MAGULA MUCK INLET

Following the sixth failed Unity conference, Empress Nicole Constance unleashed her new Naval fury with devastating efficiency. The first task of the Imperial Navy, following its creation, was to dominate the territorial waters of all Individualist Empires and Kingdoms. This task resulted in the 8 year Unification Wars. Sparked by five Imperial scout ships, the initial battle lasted just two hours resulting in no clear winner and the new understanding that Unification under Imperial rule was going to be a bloody and long conquest, one that would rage and ravage the known seas and waterways for eight years.

