

# Vox Borealis

Supplemental Newsletter for  
the Kingdom of Ealdormere

## The War College issue: Combat & Camaraderie

July 2025, Anno Societatis LV



Lego Ealdormeran Army by The Honourable Lady Gwendolyn of Aldburg, Photo by Mistress Augusta Weyfare

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QUARTERLY BOARD MEETINGS <https://www.sca.org/board-meetings/>

- Mid Quarter Conference calls: May 27, 2025 & June 23, 2025
- July 12 & 13, 2025 (virtual);
- October 18 & 19, 2025 (hybrid)

[Click here to register to attend the meeting virtually via Zoom.](#)

All meetings start at 10:00 am unless otherwise noted. Attendees are asked to wear modern clothing to Board meetings. Agenda submissions by the first of the month of meeting.

Board Meetings





## From The Kingdom Chronicler

Greetings to the Good Citizens of Ealdormere,

Welcome to the War College Issue of Vox Borealis: Combat & Camaraderie Fighting and fellowship are building blocks of a great event! Thank you to all our contributors who generously shared their battlefield expertise for this issue of the Vox:

Viscount Mordain Blackcloak  
Sir Varakii Varenko Idanovich  
Master Xandra Rozina Xiberras Galea

Special thank you to Earl Rattanicus for his work as event steward.

Let's go play!

Cheerfully in Service,  
Duchess Kaylah, Kingdom Chronicler



## From The Sponsor of War College 2025

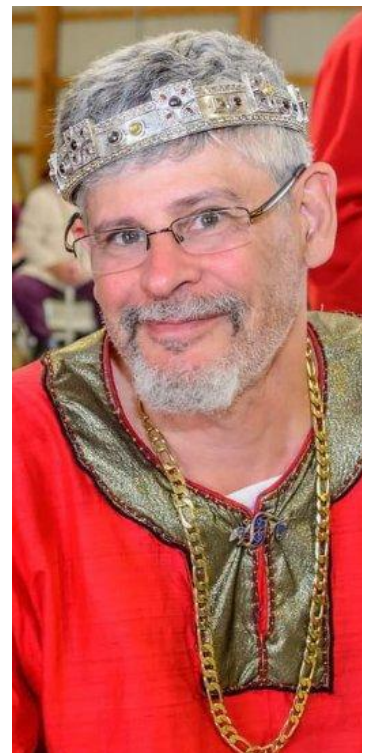
Greetings to Ealdormere,

Recently we resurrected the Ealdormere War College. The War College was created by Master Hector of the Black Height in the early 90s. Hector passed the leadership to me in '95 and it ran for several years thereafter.

It was a way to provide a common basis for the tactics we use at Pennsic as we don't muster enough fighters at any other event. Eventually it's time was over and we haven't run one for over a decade at this point, but some of us thought it would be worth running again.

Thanks to Earl Rattanicus for doing the work in getting a site and autocrating the event.

Viscount Sir Mordain



# Viscount Mordain's Class : The Column

## The Ealdormere Column:

This is a formation we often used in field battles before we fell away from the practice. It consists of a column four fighters wide with each row being made up of two pairs of fighters. The leader is in front of the column and it is their job to choose the pace of the column, and the direction.

The purpose is to maneuver the column into the best position to attack the enemy, ideally hitting a flank. Once contact is made each pair of fighters heads to expand the line from the point of impact until the whole column is engaged.

Ideally the enemy is crushed and we reform on the banner and a new target is chosen. Indeed that occasionally happened. However if a good target was chosen we have at least mangled an enemy unit and we often caused an outsized impact compared to our numbers.

Mordain



The Column of Marcus Aurelius, completed 193 CE to honour victories in the Marcomannic Wars.

The reliefs on the column, which spirals upwards, show Roman soldiers marching, engaging in battle and performing other military activities. And yes, the Column does depict troop movement in a column. The photo above shows troops moving across a bridge.

reference website: Ancient Rome Live <https://ancientromelive.org/column-of-marcus-aurelius/>  
Photo from: <https://www.walksinrome.com/column-of-marcus-aurelius-rome.html>

# Duchess Kaylah's Battlefield Pictionary

The majority of attendees at this War College had extensive battlefield experience and command experience. But there's still a few folks who are newer. These are ones we'd love to teach!

Rather than try the patience of those who are already familiar with Ealdormerian battle commands by providing lengthy didactic explanations, I thought it would be more fun to present the concepts in Pictionary form, then encourage those who are unfamiliar with the answers to find a buddy to ask for more detailed information. This is a teaching technique called "jigsawing".

Interestingly, it worked. Several newer fighters sought out trusted older fighters and had illuminating conversations.

Topic: Combatants Choice of Action

## **Ironman:**

Combatants who participate in both armoured and fencing combat.

Clearly, a group with FOMO.

At Pennsic: to earn Battlefield Ironman status one must  
"fight 'em all and fence 'em all".

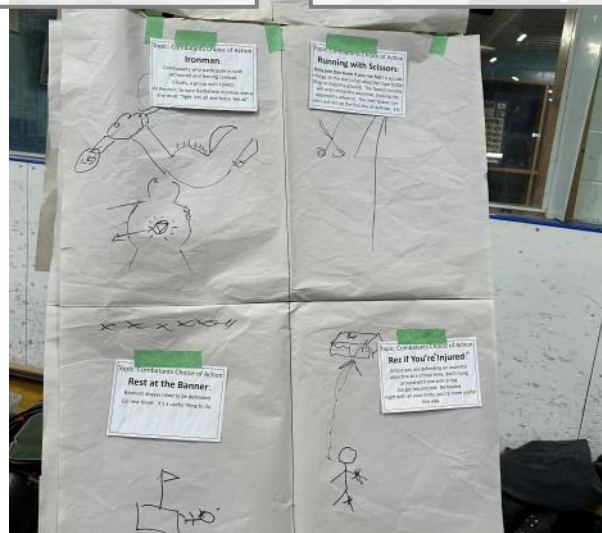
Topic: Combatants Choice of Action

## **Running with Scissors:**

**Only join this team if you run fast!**

A suicide charge at the start of an objective type battle (flag or majority ground).

The fastest runners will over-shoot the objective, slowing the opponents advance. The next fastest runners will set up the first line of defense, the next will reinforce, etc.



Topic: Combatants Choice of Action

## **Rest at the Banner:**

Banners always need to be defended.  
Go rest there. It's a useful thing to do.

Topic: Combatants Choice of Action

## **Rez if You're Injured:**

Unless you are defending an essential objective at a critical time, don't hang around with one arm or leg.

Go get resurrected. Be healed.

Fight with all your limbs.

You're more useful this way.

# Duchess Kaylah's Battlefield Pictionary

Topic: Battle Plans

## Horns of the Bull:

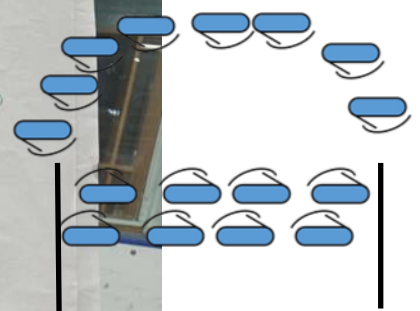
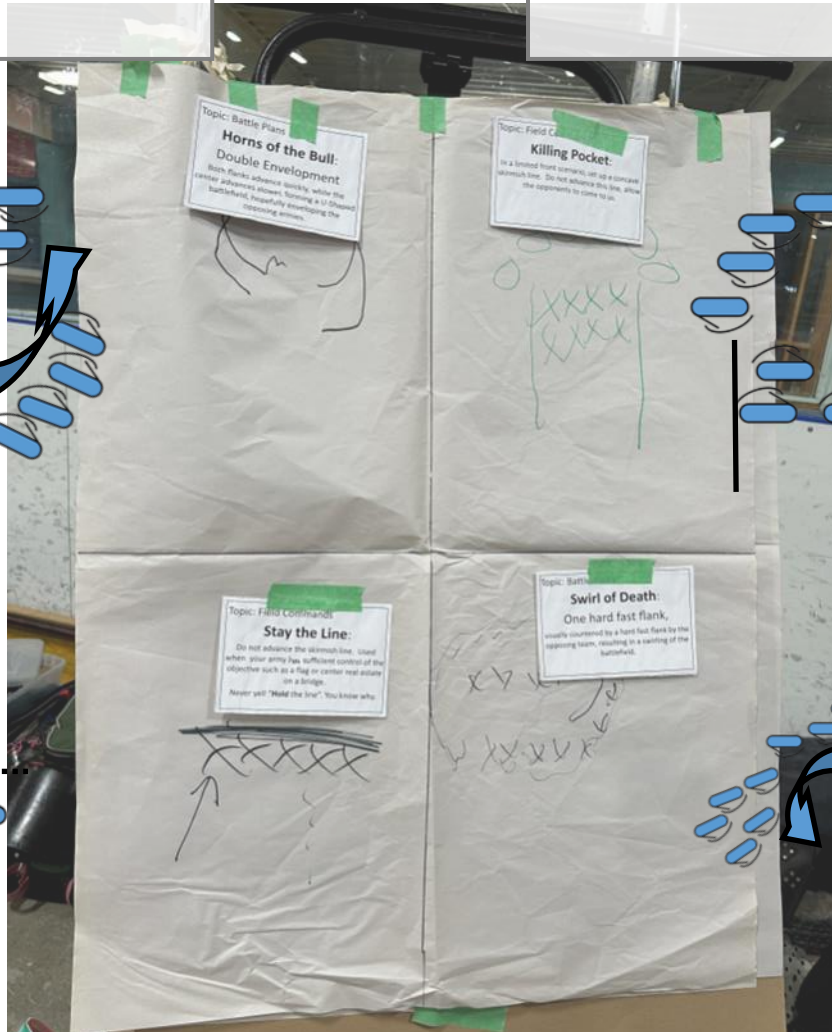
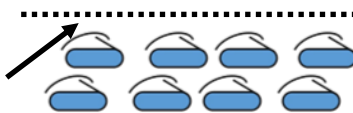
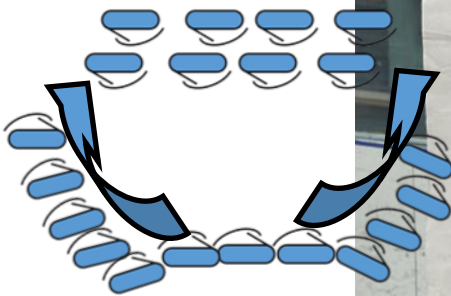
Double Envelopment

Both flanks advance quickly, while the center advances slower, forming a U-Shaped battlefield, hopefully enveloping the opposing armies.

Topic: Field Commands

## Killing Pocket:

In a limited front scenario, set up a concave skirmish line. Do not advance this line, allow the opponents to come to us.



Topic: Field Commands

## Stay the Line:

Do not advance the skirmish line. Used when your army has sufficient control of the objective such as a flag or center real estate on a bridge. Never yell "**Hold** the line". You know why.

Topic: Battle Plans

## Swirl of Death:

One hard fast flank, usually countered by a hard fast flank by the opposing team, resulting in a swirling of the battlefield.

# Sir Varenko's Bridge Battles

On the Bridge:

1. Understand the ranges, leverage them for advantage  
if no range weapons, close to where you can get parity

2. Moving people can be as important as killing them

- Lateral clearance!
- stopping columns
- knees range of threat
- look for assists more than kills

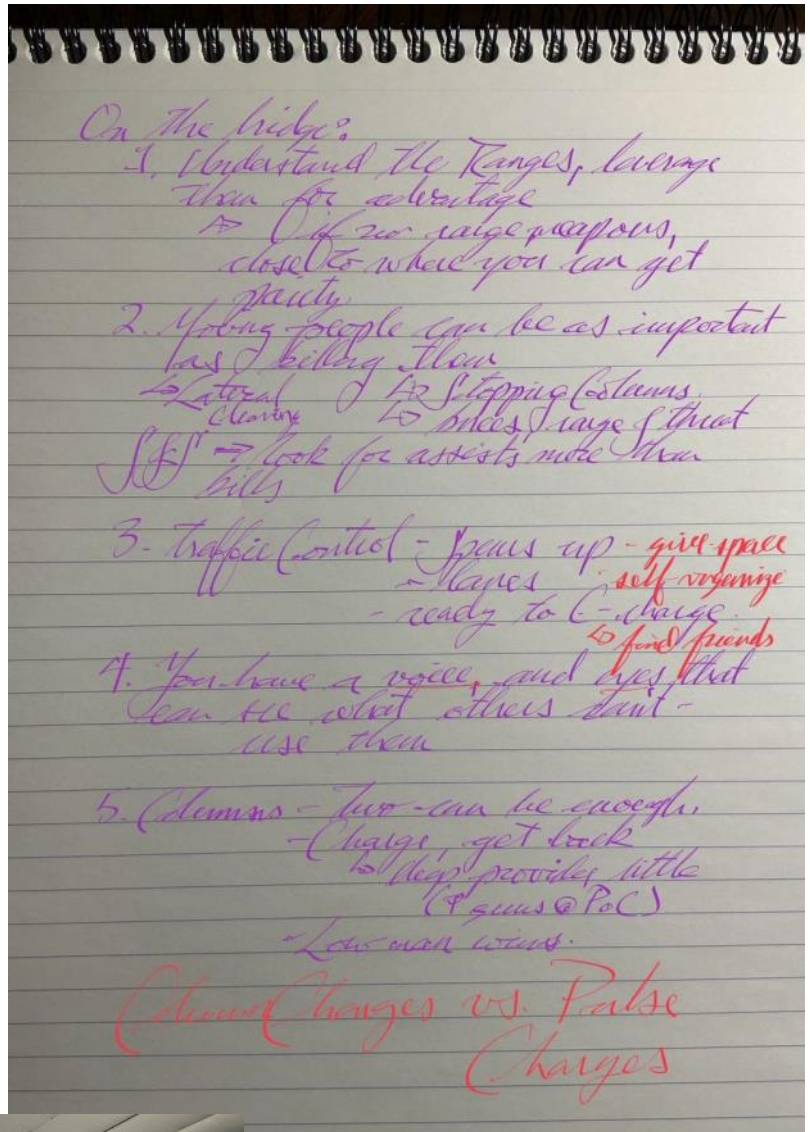
3. Traffic Control - spears up  
-lanes -  
-ready to charge

- give space!
- self organize
- find friends

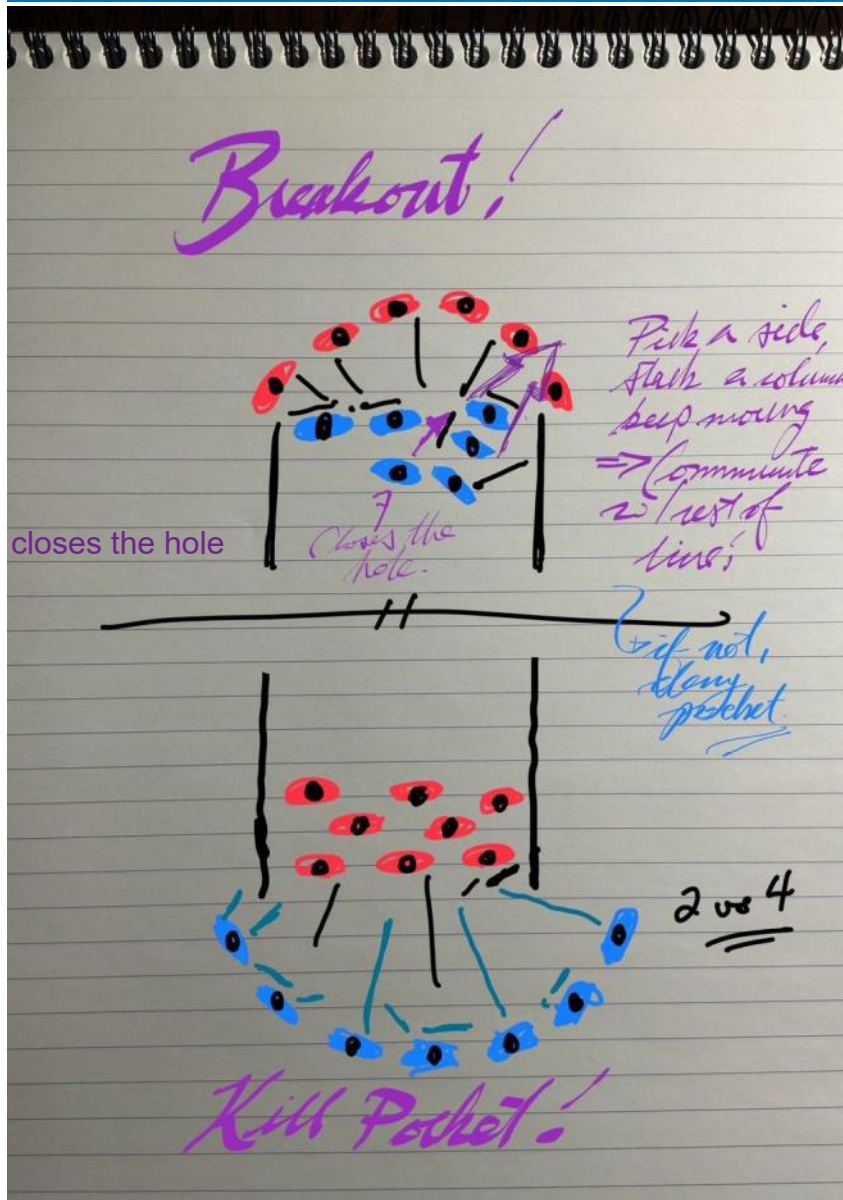
4. You have a voice and yes, that can see what other can't  
- use them

5. Columns - two can be enough  
-charge get back  
-low man wins

Column charges vs. Pulse Charges



# Sir Varenko's Bridge Battles



Breakout!

Pick a side,  
Stack a column  
Keep moving  
-communicate with the rest o the line!

If not, deny pocket

Kill Pocket!



# Sir Varenko's Bridge Battles

## Bridge Class Notes:

### Discuss Victory Conditions of Plan

- 3 Conditions- kill pocket
- on the bridge
- Breakouts

Inverse  
condition

- Plans: -take midpoint + 1 step
- take whole bridge

Gen has  
the plan!

Rules: Pushed off = Dead  
Victory conditions vary

Total "guns" does not matter as  
much as "guns" at point of  
contact

Gang up on people  
- team sport

this has implications for weapons  
ranges

Spears can engage where  
swords can't & vice-versa

Killing pocket- discuss shape, range  
& why it works

-jobs

Breakouts & how to kill them

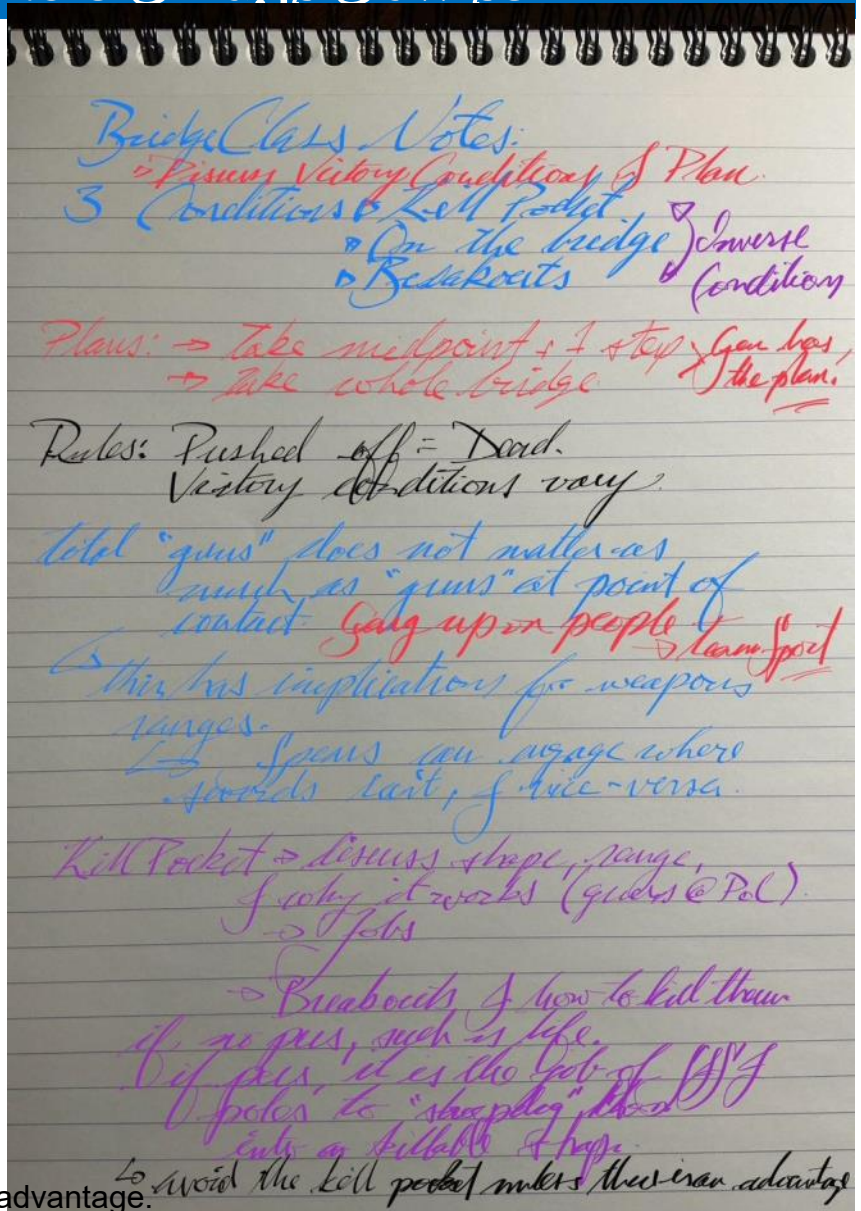
If no poles, reach is life.

if poles, it is the job of  
poles to "sheepdog" them  
into a killable shape.

Avoid the kill pocket makers there is an advantage.



Sir Varenko  
wins 1<sup>st</sup> place  
Best Handwriting  
in the Kingdom,  
plus bonus points for  
multi-coloured pens.



# You're Gonna Die. And That's OK.

11am-noon on the Rapier Field

Fencing Class Title: Compare & Contrast Melee Life Scenarios : Life Choices

Instructor Duchess Kaylah

Class Description: You're gonna die. And that's ok.

This is a live melee exercise in comparative melees. How do you feel, existentially, about your existence with one life, 3 lives or unlimited resurrection. How do the life conditions impact strategy?

The Action: After dividing into teams, we will fight 3 sets of melees.

First set will be single life. We'll do this 3x, because it's so fast.

Second set will be 2 resurrections, which is 3 lives. We'll do this twice.

Final set will be unlimited resurrections for a time limit to be determined by the number of participants.

After the fighting, there will be a very brief existential discussion. All participants are encouraged to continue to meditate upon the various life scenarios at their own pace. Talk with your carpool buddies on the way home, enjoy a beverage in the evening and think about it.

This exercise worked out well. It was quite fascinating to participate and see how the tactics changed on as lives went from very valuable (1 life) to 3 changes, to an endlessly renewable resource.

Thank you to Duke Roak and to TTL Jadvorr for leading the respective melee teams.

Kaylah

# Master Rigel's "How to Watch a Fight"



The class was a workshop in how to watch a fight, focused on fencing. Hopefully this type of workshop is helpful not only to fencers, to help figure out their opponents, but also to spectators, who want to understand what's going on in a fight.

We started with some thought experiments and discussion of theory, about a single fencer. For example, the first question when you line up against a fencer should be "what do I see"... what weapons do they have? Are they left handed or right handed? Are they standing dominant foot forward?

The answers to these questions begin to tell you a little bit about what you will need to defend against.

For example, a fencer with sword and dagger standing with the sword side forward has a very dangerous weapon quite close to you, but the dagger isn't as much of a danger for a primary attack.



These sorts of things are also interesting and useful for a spectator to note. They tell you a little bit ahead of time of what is \*likely\* to happen. Sometimes the answers aren't very obvious, such as with someone who brings out a case of rapiers.

We also discussed watching your opponent to see if they give you an evident sense of timing. For example, bobbing their sword to a beat. They will be more ready to attack a specific points in that cadence. You can use this to your advantage and attack them in syncopation to their beat, thus gaining yourself a few milliseconds of advantage.

From there, the workshop moved on to practicing the lessons learned, and everyone took turns fencing against other people while the rest of the crowd watched. Both the observers and the combatants were asked about what happened, because in this way we can start to build up our skills in watching a fight, and in being aware of what is happening in a fight that we're a part of.

Rozi



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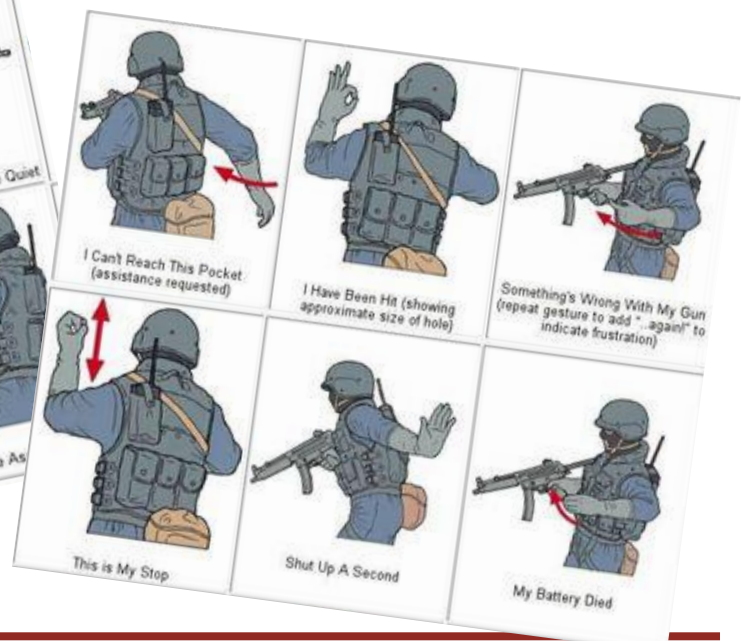
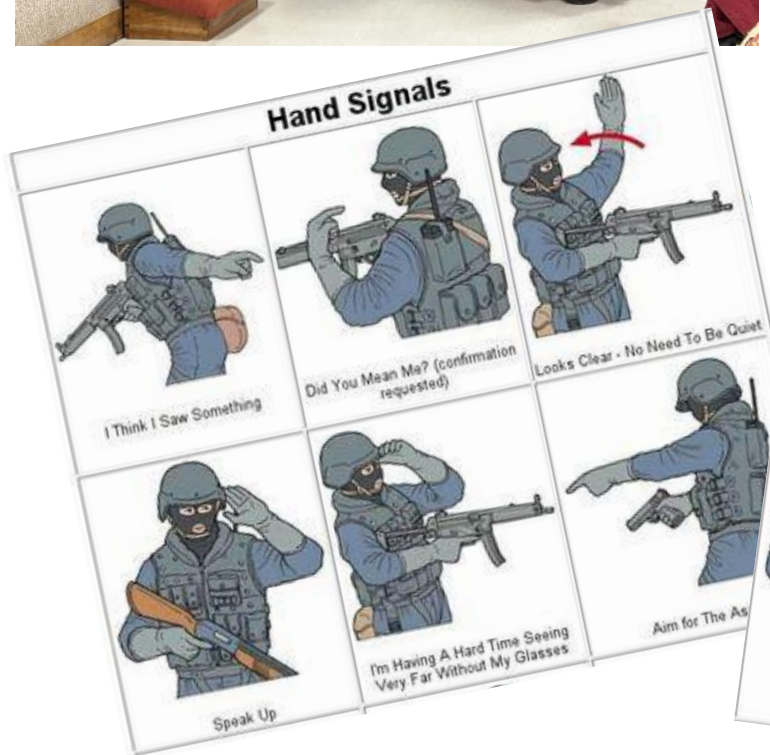
Feast: Duchess Domhnaill Galbraith and Baron Corwyn Galbraith

All sorts of helpful things: Sir Brand Thorwaldsen, Countess Isabel Atwyll, Master Berend van der Eych

Thank you to the marshals for the day without whom we couldn't have played!



Earl Marsal:  
Viscountess Sir Elizabeth Mortimer



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Tactical hand signals, originally from Airsoft (2003), now on Pintrest, Chris Marlin

## The Vox Borealis Supplemental Newsletter for the Kingdom of Ealdormere



*Boilerplate: A few things we're required to say...*

This is the July 2025 AS 60 issue of The Vox Borealis, supplementing The Tidings, the official newsletter of the Kingdom of Ealdormere. Ealdormere is a branch of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc., . The Vox Borealis is published as a service to their membership. This newsletter is available online at <http://enewsletter.sca.org/>

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