

Volta – Fall of the Mighty

Castle Aberdeen has fallen to Daniel Redpath. Earl Artos Voltan has put out a call to arms to all those who would stand for Volta. We gather on the Sixth day of December, 608 ER, at Luft Castle.

The Drums of War sound in Volta once more. Will you hear their call?
The lines have been drawn. The battle declared. Will you stand and fight?

Out of Game Announcements

It is my pleasure to announce the 1-day Volta event at Camp Clara Barton for Saturday December 6, 2008. The cost for the event will be \$45 for the day to PC (free to NPC). Players are welcome to arrive at Camp Clara Barton any time after 8 AM. We will start the event at about 10 AM and end around 9 PM with event clean-up occurring between 9 PM and 10 PM. Also note that the price of a New Player Pack is currently \$40 and this includes a 1-year NERO membership, a NERO rulebook, and one free event. Finally, while there is no additional fee for payments received at door, such payments must be made in cash. Please feel free to contact me at aelbirt@nac.net with any questions or specific storylines that your character would like to pursue. The staff and I are looking forward to entertaining you!

Best,

Adam Elbirt
Epic Adventures/NERO Boston
aelbirt@nac.net

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December 6, 2008 Event Information

1. All players may turn in up to 50 goblin stamps for 200 production points.
2. Please email Adam Elbirt at aelbirt@nac.net no later than September 10, 2008, with requests for new player equipment and production.
3. Please see Adam Elbirt when arriving at Camp Harrington so that you can check in, pay for the event (if necessary), receive your tags and character card, and drop off any donations for goblin stamps. Character cards will be provided when checking in for characters in either the NERO Boston or International databases. If your character is in another database, please bring your character card.
4. The event takes place at Luft Castle in Cathym and all in attendance are enjoying the hospitality of Lord Theon Dayne, Baron of Cathym.
5. NERO Playtests in Use:
 - NERO Formal Cantrips v4.1
 - Base 5 Damage/Healing v1.2
 - One Handed Block v1
 - Critical Parry Modification v1
 - Critical Slay/Assassinate Modification v1
 - Stop Thrust v1
 - Meditate v1.1
 - Additional Spells (Volume 1) v1
 - Magic Item Slots v2.0 (5 Item Slots)
 - Resurrection Modification v1.1
 - Racial Skills v1
 - Harmonics v14
 - Archery Aura v1
 - Base 5 Alchemy/Harmonics v1.2
 - Blade Fury v1
 - Carrier Attacks v1.1
 - Damage Types v1.1
 - Formal Magic Logistics v1.1
 - Master Craftsmen v1.0
 - Modified Detect Magic Spell v1
 - New Character Rebuild v1.1
 - Return <type> v1.2
 - New Player Deaths v1
 - Physical Attacks v1
 - Spell Crossover v1
 - Staff Thrust v1.0
 - Storage Locker v1.0
 - Limited Reset v1.0
 - Magic Skills Playtest
 - Magic Spells Volume 2
 - Smithing Playtest

Getting to Camp Clara Barton

From Boston: Take the Mass Pike West to the AUBURN exit (#10).

**After the tollbooths, take the ramp on the right marked Route 12 South. Follow Route 12 South through three sets of traffic lights. Bear left at the fourth set of lights (by Wal-Mart and Cumberland Farms).

++ Proceed 1.2 miles. You will pass St. Ann's Church on your left. Shortly after St. Ann's, CLARA BARTON ROAD will be on your right. Turn right onto Clara Barton Road and proceed .7 miles. The George and Marie Chabot Health and Education Center parking lot will be on your right (approximately 1 hour from Boston with no traffic).

From Springfield and West: Take Mass Pike East to the AUBURN exit (#10), and follow directions above, from the asterisk (**) (approximately 50 minutes from Springfield with no traffic).

From Hartford: Take Route 84 East into Massachusetts. Take exit for Route 20 East (Worcester). Proceed on Route 20 through eight traffic lights (you will be on Route 20 for about 10.5 miles). At the ninth light, (next to a Shell gas station) turn right onto Route 56 South. Bear right onto ENNIS RD. At the first stop sign, turn left. The George and Marie Chabot Health and Education Center is on your left (approximately 1 hour from Hartford with no traffic).

From New York City: Take Route 95 North to Route 91 North to Route 84 East. Follow directions from Hartford.

From Westchester/Putnam County Area: Take Route 684 North to Route 84 East. Follow directions from Hartford (approximately 2.5 to 3 hours from NYC area with no traffic).

From Worcester: Take Route 290 West to Route 20 West (the first exit after the Mass Pike). Take Route 20 through four traffic lights. At the fifth light, take a left onto Route 12 South (by Wal-Mart and Cumberland Farms). Follow directions from Boston, beginning with the plus signs (++) (approximately 20 minutes from Worcester with no traffic).

From Providence: Take Route 146 North. Take exit marked Central Turnpike. At the end of the ramp, turn left. Proceed for approximately 10 minutes crossing over Route 395 to Oxford Center. At the first traffic light, take a right. This is Route 12 North; proceed for approximately 3 miles. Take a left onto CLARA BARTON ROAD (watch for the sign for Clara Barton Birthplace and North Oxford Carpet Mills). Proceed 0.7 miles to the top of the hill. The Health and Education Center will be on your right (approximately 50 minutes from Providence with no traffic).

News of the War Against Daniel Redpath

**Castle Inverness,
September 24, 608**

Friends,
I bear glad tidings to all!

I have served on the Wall at Castle Inverness as Guildmaster for ten years, and seen more than my share of battle there these last five years. It seemed the siege laid upon us by the villains of the north has at last turned aside.

Last night, the constant, probing attacks of the Undead flagged, and those of us who stood watch feared that they massed their forces for a great strike. We waited, clutching our weapons for a blow that would never fall. As the light of day crept across the skies, we saw a sight that made the miserable night worth it: the killing fields that had made up our world this long last year, empty of the enemy. Gone, every one.

Our scholars sent word to Castle Amberdeen, to find their situation much the same.

We had weathered the storm, fellow Voltans! Victory in the North! Victory for Volta!

Guildmaster Donnal MacReady, Castle Inverness

Castle Narvik
September 27, 608

To the People of Volta;

I write now of a curious gathering, one some in the North may be aware of, but I was not. My name is Glen Teig, and I am from a small town just northeast of Unity. Upon my completion of the introductory courses at the Great Library, I was granted leave to serve the Dutchy.

I was newly assigned to Castle Narvik, as an assistant to the Guildmistress there. Being my first time so close to the Wall, I was unfamiliar with the holidays and conventions of the North. I expected to find the roads there vast, untraveled expanses. Instead, I found the roads crowded.

There seemed to be a mass exodus from the scattered dwellings along the path of the wall. Whole families of young adults joined in the caravans, greeting each other with wide smiles and firm hugs. I heard many names passed back and forth, and met a number of them myself. Of their number two names stood out as most numerous: Redpath and Grenditch.

Abel Redpath was a blacksmith. Zachariah Grenditch, a weaver. Yet, amongst their possessions, I saw neither hammer nor basket. Instead, they bore weapons and armor, spellbook and shield. I asked if they went to war, and they jovially agreed that they did.

"Against whom?" I asked.

"Evil," Abel Redpath said simply. "We war against evil."

Another answered differently. "I'm not going to war," he said. "I'm just going for a long walk along a very old path."

As we neared Castle Narvik, it became clear that I traveled amongst the various members of a large family tree. Cousin greeted cousin, and brothers that had not seen each other over the course of a year met again with happy greetings.

Amongst their number were some few that were clearly not of the blood. One such was Quisanthus Illitari, an elven swordsman. I asked after his business in the north. He answered, "Oh, I'm with this lot of ruffians. Twenty years ago, I was traveling in the north, from Castle Aberdeen to Luft. I was beset by a party of undead. They were huge, hulking things, revenants, if I recall correctly, led by death knight. They struck me down almost immediately. I would have finished my journey as a spirit, if Orizon Redpath and his kin hadn't happened upon me. They rushed the undead, destroying them in the span of seconds, and lifted me to my feet. They walked me the rest of the way to Luft, and never asked a thing in return.

"I owe them my life," he continued, looking with a smile over the men and women around him. "I've walked the Path with them every October since."

My journey to the North was very safe, but quite exciting. People from as far away as Dinsdale were amongst the travelers and more seemed to join us at every crossroads.

There were hundreds of us, all bound for Castle Narvik.

More when I arrive.

By my hand,
Glen Teig

**Castle Narvik,
September 30, 608**

We arrived at Castle Narvik to find the great gates wide open. We walked inside, the sentries there greeting many of the travelers by name. The colors of the Watch, black on black, were prominently displayed.

There was a great feast set out, and the newcomers wasted no time setting to, smiling and laughing with those already present. I was lost in the crowd, but luckily the Guildmistress recognized me and pulled me aside.

"What's going on?" I asked her.

"A family gathering, of a sort," she answered, "Castle Narvik is generally very crowded in the beginning of October. "

"Whose family?" I said, wondering what sort of family tree had such far-reaching roots.

The Guildmistress pointed to the wall over the courtyard, at a silent figure standing watch over the party. He stood still, but seemed to bristle with suppressed energy, as if at any moment he would explode into a maelstrom of violence. He wore black, and held in his hands a sword that seemed to made of living wood.

"General Alexander Grenditch," she said, in nearly a whisper.

"What's he doing?"

"Standing vigil," she replied. "He will stand there for three days, watching his kin. When the sun rises on the first day of October, he will start to walk. He will not stop until he has reached the far side of Volta."

"Why?" I asked, fascinated.

"Because," a man's voice came from behind me. "as long as there has been a Volta to walk, a Grenditch has walked it."

I turned to find myself facing a man of the Watch dressed in black, but wearing the chain of command. "Tristan Eastwyck," he said, by way of introduction.

I stumbled out my own name, somewhat shocked to find myself speaking with a member of the Eastwyck line.

"They'll enjoy themselves tonight," he said, gesturing at the throng around him. "Then, they will ready themselves. Then, they will walk." He smiled almost wistfully. "Half of me wishes

I could go with them.”

“And the other half, sir?”

He laughed. “The other half is worried we won’t be able to hold without Alexander here.” On that bittersweet note, he turned from our conversation with a polite nod, and I found myself once again alone amongst the black-clad defenders of Volta. I turned my gaze back to the silent figure of Alexander Grenditch, searching his face for some flicker of emotion, some sign of what he thought about during his vigil.

The man was like stone. I could see not even a flicker of emotion, of pride in his family, or of tenderness for his kin.

He simply watched, and waited, until it was time for him to walk.

By my hand,
Glen Teig

**Castle Narvik,
October 1, 608**

I was awake before the sun rose on the first day of October. I had been unable to sleep in the night. Visions of Alexander Grenditch and his silent vigil haunted my sleep, and I found myself walking out to gaze on him where he stood. At one point, in the darkest night, had I finally seen some glimmer of emotion on his face? Some glimmer of sadness, as he glanced to his right hand side and saw it empty? No. Surely not. Surely some trick of the torchlight, some illusion of the night. The man stood, and he waited.

The sun rose and the Courtyard of Castle Narvik was dead silent. Row upon row of man, woman, and even those I would call children, clad head to toe in black, stood in reverent silence. Each one, ready for war. Each one, silent and resolute. Each one, armored in steel, courage, and tradition. They stood and they waited.

As the first beam of sunlight stretched across Grenditch's brow, he started to move. There was no preamble, no thought before action. The sun struck him, and in that moment, he began to Walk. The gathered others had long since made way for him. He walked without word, without noise. He took, slow, measured steps. He did not run. He did not simply travel. He walked, and there was power in his steps.

Each man he passed fell in behind him. There was no jockeying for position, no rash action. They flowed behind him like a river of black and steel, matching his pace, matching his poise, mirroring his silence.

They left Castle Narvik, and the place seemed eerily empty and abandoned. I moved to the battlements to watch their progress, watching them move with a strange longing in my heart which I could not name.

Others from the castle stood with me, watching. For nearly two hours we watched them, until they seemed like small children in the distance.

Then, something changed.

I was not aware of what it was at first, but the soldiers near me knew well what was happening, and I was shocked to hear the harsh rasp of swords being drawn. Distantly, someone in one of the towers cried out an alarm.

Finally, my mind pieced together what my eyes had already seen. The Walkers had been attacked. I could not make out details at so great a distance, but the attackers seemed to step from the trees themselves. I saw no colors at first, no uniform to distinguish the attackers. But then, suddenly, a banner.

An angry growl emerged from the soldiers around me. "Whose colors are those?" I asked.

"Daniel Redpath," he growled, spitting.

I am no poet, to tell it well. I am no bard, to do their glory justice. There was little enough poetry in what I saw from that wall. But glory? Glory there was in abundance.

Three forces did come against them. One from the North, legions of the undead, ignoring the scalding light of the sun. One from the West, Barbarians clothed in the skins of wolves, howling their rage and defiance. One from the South, men and women clothed in bear skins, led by a large Bear that was not wholly of this place, but who seemed to walk with one foot in other realms.

No force came to their Eastern flank. No force was needed. They were not going to retreat.

Their numbers were staggering. We had seen no signs of such forces, in our journey to Narvik. We had seen no places where such a force could even have hidden, yet here they were. Where they had come from, no one along the wall had any idea, but death walked with them.

Blood was spilled. Rivers. Oceans. Blood flowed so thickly that we could no longer see the ground that they fought on. It was as if they fought on a field of blood.

Barbarians fell. The undead fell. And the Walkers fell. In droves, they fell. Some were healed, some faded from sight, their Walk having ended.

Amongst the walkers, two stood out. One, a black-clad man I had seen earlier, marked as a slayer of Vampires. He held nearly a whole flank himself, darting from enemy to enemy. He moved like a dancer, slaughtering those who threatened his friends and family.

The other was Alexander Grenditch. He was unstoppable, taking blow after blow, shrugging off spell and arrow. He destroyed the enemies around him, protected the allies nearest him, then he would take a step and begin again.

Yet I despaired. Not being a military man, I knew little of tactics. Yet two things were abundantly clear, even to me. First, that they were so badly outnumbered that there was no hope. Second, that all the Walkers would die.

Then, there was sudden proof that even in the darkest night, good will triumph over evil. The force to the West broke ranks, turning to the South. A fight broke out between the two forces, and in moments those to the South and West were fighting two enemies: the Walkers, and each other.

In that moment, the Vampire Slayer pushed, obliterating the line of undead to the North. Grenditch moved West, battering aside the Wolf Nation there. The battle changed, and the forces to the North, already weakened by daylight, pulled back under the onslaught. The Great Bear moved amongst the fighting Barbarians, by his very presence inspiring peace amongst the Bear Tribe. They stood, suddenly not fighting, and many of their number fell to

the retaliation of the Wolf Nation before the Great Bear beat them back. The Bear removed his forces to see to them, and all that stood in the way of the Walkers was the Wolf Nation.

The Walkers did not break stride. The Wolf Nation broke ranks, disappearing into the wood.

The Walkers moved to the West.

I have seen little of the world, friends. I am not a great traveler or adventurer. There are many things I do not understand, that I do not know.

But I know courage, friends. I know Voltan courage, because I have seen it.

It walks on a path dyed red with blood.

By my hand,
Glen Teig

**Castle Luft,
October 10th, 608**

Let it be known to all that I am Gudrun Whitedeer, Guildmistress of the Healer's Guild at the Castle of Luft in the Barony of Cathym in the Kingdom of Volta. I present here the accounts by my hand from those who have resurrected in my Circle in these past weeks of darkness, as well as my own experiences. Let all who read them know that they are true to the best of my knowledge, and let him who would call me a liar meet me when times are less dire.

I am Gudrun Whitedeer, and I have served Castle Luft as Guildmistress for the last five years of my life.

On the night October the 10th 608, a Friday, the Walkers of the Red Path arrived at our gates, harried fearsomely by forces of undead and men in furs and skins, apparently of the Wolf Nation.

I had been woken by my apprentice Ratha a few hours earlier to attend to spirits in my circle, and she was among those who ran to the battlements to see what approached. She carried the word back to me about our strange enemy, lead by a black unicorn and a creature that seemed at once man and yet somehow clothed in the spirit of a bear. They were clearly visible among the scattered Wolf Nation forces and sickening sweep of undead, she said. A black unicorn, barded and armored for war.

The spirits for which I was woken turned out to be Carr Redpath and Danby Grenditch, two of the perhaps two hundred Walkers outside our gates. I had seen the Walkers before that time and know well what they do; my brother-in-law is a Grenditch. They began what became a familiar pattern as the night went on; Carr kissed my hand in thanks and called for a polearm as he ran toward our gate, Danby right on his heels.

I saw more, so many more as the night went on; some faces were familiar to me by dawn as they fell over and over again. Their broken bodies littered the field in the moonlight that shone through scudding clouds, and still they came to me, resurrected, and ran back to the fight. We garbed them in black as their bodies became whole again, and armed them, begged them to take a little food or water if they would not take rest, and watched their eyes light with a fire that could be neither named nor denied. They would fight again, stand and fall beside their companions, but fight, fight on until they fought no more.

At dawn the Walkers splashed up against our gates like a shadow, clad in black and blood. The cleanest of them was caked with filth, and yet they cried out in strident voices over the clash of dying, haranguing each other to greater acts of boldness, calling faith and solidarity, and courage, courage, courage.

When we tried to open our gates we were cursed for fools by the glorious wretches below; they told us they would hold or die, and that we must protect the castle. So our gates

remained shut, and we watched them. Ratha ran back and forth as if she were three women, helping me resurrect the spirits that came to us in an unending stream and carrying tales to me back from the walls. None of the Redpaths and Grenditches and their allies that passed through my circle so much as paused on his way back to the gates, but with all the reserves of healers I could muster called in, by that morning only four of us remained on our feet to resurrect the fallen. I looked up once to find that my hall was a mausoleum of spirits, the ghostly forms of the dead packed around us till we could hardly see past them to the living. Perhaps it was how slowly we could bring them back that made their last push possible.

The sun rose as it always does, and with it the Walkers of the Red Path seemed renewed. My healers and I, exhausted, sent a large group of the resurrected out together before returning to the few stragglers still waiting, and when Ratha reappeared she told me that the Walkers had crushed their foes and were walking on toward Castle Aberdeen. When I stared at her in astonishment, she told me that she didn't know where they had found the strength. Their blood warmed with the sunlight, perhaps, they dug in and refused to give ground. Before long, they were gaining it. Momentum, in such a battle is the force of all forces, and once those magnificent fools got it on their side, there was no stopping them. They rode over the enemy with boots caked in blood and mud, unturned from their Path. They moved off toward Aberdeen, unopposed. The black unicorn and the man who was mostly a bear had disappeared from the field.

All glory to those who Walk the Red Path! May they always rise to fight again!

By my Hand,
Gudren Whitedeer

**Tallon's Hold,
October 13th, 608**

To Dara Treespeaker
Cascadia
Duchy of Cathym
County of Northgaard
Duchy of Volta
Kingdom of Evendarr

My friend, we are taken.

Knowing you has been the honor of my life, and I hope one day our children will run and play together. But if they do not, this is what happened.

On October the 13th 608, the Lord Baron Theon Dayne, supported by his forces and T'Shok's band struck out from Tallon's Hold to respond to the cry for help in the North. The Lord Baron had hardly passed from our walls when the ship rose from the Lake. Grandfathers and great grandfathers ran shouting, "Ironhide!"

We were swarmed at once by ghouls in Cathym's colors and spectral warriors who wore colors I have not seen in our lands. Some wore red and gold, some wore grey and black. It seemed that they would take the capitol, and the man who led them wore the face of my great uncle Ian, whose portrait hangs in the gallery.

We are overrun.

Baron Dayne turned back to Tallon's Hold, but has been unable to retake control. Baron Dayne is camped outside his own walls, laying siege to his own capital city.

We are surrounded by undead. They have not attacked those who do not attack them. Uncle Ian has ordered that we go on laying stores for the winter. It seems that all those who would rise against him have been put out of the walls, one way or another.

The Household looks to me for hope and guidance, and I will continue in the way to which we are accustomed until the siege breaks.

I do not know what will happen here.

I send this letter and the child who carries it into your keeping, my friend. May both arrive safely.

I am yours in service and affection,

Thordis Gerling

Head of Household for Tallon's Hold
Duchy of Cathym

County of Northgaard
Kingdom of Volta

**Castle Luft,
October 15th, 608**

Let it be known to all that I am Gudrun Whitedeer, Guildmistress of the Healer's Guild at the Castle of Luft in the Barony of Cathym in the Kingdom of Volta. I present here the accounts by my hand from those who have resurrected in my Circle in these past weeks of darkness, as well as my own experiences. Let all who read them know that they are true to the best of my knowledge, and let him who would call me a liar meet me when times are less dire.

I am Gudrun Whitedeer, and I have served Castle Luft as Guildmistress for the last five years of my life.

On the 15th of October, 608, a Wednesday, the last of the Walkers of the Red Path were no longer in sight of the farthest vision from the highest tower of Castle Luft. When we looked in the direction into which they had disappeared, we saw a white sky streaked with slate that seemed to be coming to meet them. The weather grew unseasonably cold, and all were grateful that harvest comes early to Cathym and no crops were lost.

Some few days later, a spirit appeared in my circle as the first howling snow of the season fell from the sky. It was a young man, a boy really, who said his name was Stack Grenditch. I wondered that his mother would let him Walk the Red Path so young, but he said that his parents were dead and that he'd gone with his older brothers. It was either convince them to let him go, or be left with a gaggle of girl cousins. He turned up his nose at that prospect in a very boyish fashion.

Stack had frozen to death in the night while Walking. He was young enough to convince to stay by the fire and wait until another Walker returned to us to resurrect. He only had to wait two days.

Quimby Redpath appeared in my circle on the 18th. A wound suffered in battle had festered and his body had to work too hard to keep him warm. I got a more cohesive story from him, a youth of twenty-and-some-odd years.

Quimby told us that the winter was beyond telling. Men had to be careful to crack the ice off the scarves they used to veil their faces or they could suffocate without even realizing. Men had gone snow blind, and others had been lost in the swirling whiteness until they were forced to tether themselves to one another so they would not go astray. They wore cold, heavy helmets that restricted their vision further because the snow became ice at times, sharp enough to erase skin from chins and cheeks. They dug themselves into the snow at night by threes and fours to keep from freezing.

And once Stack had fallen asleep with the trailing end of Quimby's belt held loosely in his fist, as if the older man might escape without him, Quimby told me that there was

something in the storm.

"It's not natural, missus," he told me soberly. "But we don't expect it to be natural while we're on the Path. Whatever's out there... it's other."

I asked Quimby if the thing he was talking about was the woman that Stack said he'd seen. He shrugged it off.

"I ain't seen no woman, or nothing like one, out in the snows. I'd be inclined to believe the boy, if his sense ain't playing tricks on him. He survived out front of this Castle same as the rest of us. No, the thing that's out there is a monster. It tears men apart. It took my friend Amjad right out of my hands. He was one of the only Sarr Walking with us, and I haven't seen him since."

I asked Quimby what it looked like. He said he hadn't gotten a good look, but that he'd seen a werewolf before and this creature was like that but white. He said he hadn't seen teeth or claws, but that just made it scarier somehow. He said that it was like the storm had come alive to take them, one by one.

I asked Stack about his woman again in the morning when he woke. He had nothing new to tell me. She was very beautiful, and he'd only glimpsed her before she was gone, swirling away with the snow.

I am inclined to believe that these are two different creatures. I have heard of this snow woman even from some caught in the storms around Luft, which are nothing to what the Walkers are enduring from what I can tell.

We wrapped Stack well with furs and the two of them went out of our gates to catch up with their companions.

A day or two later another Walker came to my circle and cleared up some of the mystery.

"It was the Wendigo," Sorley Grenditch said. "I've heard of it before, and that's what Mr. Martin called it when he and Cousin Alex jumped on it. Of course, they don't jump without us jumping too... which is why I'm here." Sorley had a game grin. He told us that he'd seen the Wendigo fall under the assault by the man with the Vampire Hunter mark and "Cousin Alex" before a final flailing claw from the beast had sent him down into darkness.

We fed Sorley and sent him on his way. The weather has been quite seasonable for the past few days.

All glory to Volta! May we all rise to fight again!

By my Hand,
Gudren Whitedeer

**Castle Inverness,
October 20th, 608**

Friends,

I write to you now with sad news. My heart is heavy. I struggle to make some sense of what has occurred, but the tragedy is so great that I shudder to think of it.

I have seen a troupe of spirits come to my circle these past three days. I have conscripted others with even rudimentary training to aid in the Resurrections. We work constantly, but there seems to end to the spirits. A heartbreaking number of them fail to return to the Volta that loves them. I fear their bodies may never be recovered.

The crux of the tragedy is this: Castle Aberdeen has fallen.

Here, the testimony of Private Larens Kelch, late of Aberdeen:

"We thought the world had gone mad. Some...thing....halfway between a tinker and a beggar was rattling about the north wall. We thought it harmless enough, but when we sent a squad to roust him, a dark figure with a glowing crystal sword rose from the moat and killed them all. We raised the alarm, but the north wall....it....it started to move. I swear it, on my name, it started to move! It stood, ripping itself from the ground, sloughing bricks and mortar like dead skin. We attacked it, but our blades were turned aside. It was stone! What could we do against stone! The very castle moved against us....and the thing that made it just laughed and laughed...."

Here, the testimony of Sergeant Tenwyn Kendall,

"I rallied the boys into the breach, trying to hold the stone thing off. Only, it didn't seem to be interested in fighting us. It was just opening the way. There was the thunder of hooves, as if a great warhorse was barreling upon us, but we saw nothing in the darkness. Then, a glint of silver, the jingle of barding, and the largest warhorse I have ever seen was amongst us, armored for war, and it struck me so hard I fell to the ground, stunned. I could only watch as it tore my boys apart...."

Here, the testimony of Lieutenant Karwyn Barnae,

"I was asleep when I heard the wall fall. I leapt to my feet, and hurried in the barracks, yelling for the men to get up, to get ready. I was too late. They were all slaughtered, to the man, in their beds where they had lain. Standing over the one nearest me was a dark elf, his sword still buried in the heart of a man I had trained with not eight hours before. He smiled at me, tilted his head to the side, and giggled at me. "Shhhh," he said. "You'll wake them..." I...I screamed...and they SAT UP. All of them, Undead. The dark elf knocked the blade from my hand, paralyzed me, and watched....watched....as my men ate me...."

Here, the testimony of Private Navar Douglas,

"We ran. They were everywhere, and our weapons didn't work against them, and we ran. Eight of us, we threw open the great doors and ran. Only there was a thing waiting at the edge of the light, a corpse, armed and armored, with eyes that glowed like torches. It stepped forward, and we saw that its face was covered with scars. "Stand," he said to us, almost pleading. "Stand and die like Voltans, don't make me kill you as you run." He slaughtered us. We never had a chance."

Finally, the testimony of Guildmaster Tallos Hendrick, Guildmaster of Castle Aberdeen,

"I was in the circle, trapped. I resurrected several defenders, but it took the invaders nearly no time to secure the circle, and trying to resurrect anyone would just doom them to further death. The Undead stood silently about the circle, watching me. They started gathering corpses into great piles in eerie silence, as if in preparation for something. They arranged the corpses peculiarly, and I tried to fathom what further desecration they could be preparing. It was made abundantly clear when the new Lord of Castle Aberdeen arrived.

"He entered, smiling, the Liche Daniel Redpath. When he entered the room, there was an unsettling smell of sickness and plague upon the air. What few foodstuffs I had managed to set aside within the circle rotted at his approach. The corpses, which had been still a moment before stirred in his presence, as if he had animated them by his proximity alone.

"He walked to the arranged corpses without a word. Horrified, I realized what the undead's design had been; they had fashioned for their lord a throne. He sat, like a King, and received his vassals. A Knight of Undeath, which moved to stand at his right hand like a lap dog. A dark elf whose sword glowed with a sickly light. A hunch-backed thing, which lurched into the room.

The Liche nodded at the thing as it entered. "Repair the wall," he ordered. "Make it appear as if nothing is amiss. Send the Bear to me. We must make ready to receive guests. " A man, who was both Bear and Man entered then, and looked at me. "Humph," he said to me. "Bear Tribe. Little Tallos. I've been in your dreams." He growled at me, and I died."

The night has been long, but I know that those wiser than I should have this information, so I send it forth. I will rest, for a time, then start again. It seems the spirits of the dead are endless.

I fear for the coming days.

Guildmaster Donnal MacReady, Castle Inverness

**Castle Inverness,
October 22nd, 608**

Voltans,

I have resurrected the last of the waiting spirits. The stream of spirits has been stemmed, and I mourn those who have passed on to the lands beyond. At least they do not go alone, but in the company of many other Voltans. I honor them as best I can, but the living demand my attention now.

The Walkers came to Castle Aberdeen. Their numbers had dwindled, due to battle and the elements, and now they numbered less than eighty. The spirits that come to me speak of great hardship, of great toil, and a fight not only against the enemies that harried them, not only against the elements that threatened them, but also against the more insidious threat of despair.

They speak of Martin Redpath. They speak of Alexander Grenditch. They speak of Grenditch's stoic strength and determination. They speak of Martin's nobility. They speak of two men not sleeping so that others could. They speak of Martin carrying the body of a youth through ice and snow until he dissipated from his back. Of how he fell to his knees and screamed, only to be dragged to his feet by Grenditch.

They spoke of hope, when they came to stand before Castle Aberdeen. They wished to run forward, to plunge into the warmth and welcome of the castle. They spoke of Alexander Grenditch's measured, unflinching steps. They held themselves in check, and followed him.

As they approached, a trumpet sounded welcome. They did not know it was sounded on the lips of the dead. The colors of the watch were displayed openly. They did not know they were hung by the bloody hands of the murdered. Blood does not always show on black. The doors swung open to welcome them, opened by unseen hands. They were made welcome by the hands of Daniel Redpath.

He had set a feast for them, in the courtyard. They rushed upon it, overcome by the welcome sight of food.

It is unclear when they first discovered the trap. Some say it was when they bit into the food and found it plague ridden. Others speak of the stench of old blood and rotten corpses only barely masked by the scent of incense. Others speak of Redpath's laughter.

The trap was sprung. The doors were closed, and the last eighty Walkers were set upon from all sides in the courtyard of Castle Aberdeen.

They fought. Exhausted, cold, beaten and bloody, they fought. They speak of Redpath himself joining the fray. They speak of his lieutenants fighting with abandon, driven to bloodlust and frenzy by Redpath's will. They speak of entire sections of the wall rising and

joining the battle like great, hulking golems.

There seems to have been a moment of decision. Of commitment. No order was given, nor would any General have given it with any expectation of it being followed. Yet there appears to be a certain unity of purpose amongst those who Walk the Red Path. A moment of Unity, where they acted without thought or discussion, but with purpose.

As one, the Walkers turned on the betrayer Daniel Redpath. They ignored the lieutenants, though it meant a score of their lives. They piled on him, some ignoring their weapons, seeking only to weigh him down under the weight of their flesh, to crush him with the power of their blood. They threw themselves on his bloody, stolen alicorn. They grappled with his shield, encumbered his limbs. They cursed him with their breath, sought to blind him with their spilt blood.

He killed them in droves. He obliterated their spirits, shredding them like so much tissue paper. He waded through them as if they were grains of sand, flakes of snow.

But he slowed.

Grenditch and Martin attacked. Some say around, others say through the bodies of the others. They laid into him with a fury born of deep-seated rage and betrayal. Every loss they had suffered, every agonizing step they and their kin had taken, they gathered about them like armor.

They slew him. He fell.

Grenditch wrenched something from the corpse. The Lieutenants closed in, and Martin and Grenditch fled through one of the openings in the wall.

Eighty Walkers entered the courtyard of Castle Aberdeen.
Two departed.

In the name of the departed, who can no longer speak for themselves,

Guildmaster Donnal MacReady, Castle Inverness

**Castle Inverness,
October 31st, 608**

Voltans, Friends,

Castle Inverness seems lost and forlorn. Of those who have resurrected here, some fifteen Walkers remain. The others departed today to travel back to their homes, or their posts. The Walk ends on the last day of October, when the Walkers arrive at Castle Inverness.

That day is today.

A pall of sadness, of bitter loss hangs over our castle. People shuffle about, heads bowed. They remember only the screams and sobs of those who had resurrected here. They remember only the mourning for those who had attempted and failed to resurrect.

For the first time in as long as anyone can remember, Alexander Grenditch has not entered Castle Inverness on the last day of October. Already, scouts carry back reports of those who had besieged us moving back into the area. It is a dark day for Volta.

Yet there may be some glimmer of hope.

One scout, on the Western Wall, reports seeing a small band of people looking upon the Castle from a nearby hill.

They were distant, yet certain details stood out to him. He describes two men in black, so caked in blood that they were unrecognizable even as living being. Yet, he claims, one of them wielded a sword of living wood. They stood with a cloaked and hooded figure, who stood well back from the others. Several other men accompanied them, standing at a respectful distance from the two. They wore what looked like uniforms without any distinctive markings or insignia. Each one wore a black hat.

A fanciful dream? Wishful thinking?

Perhaps.

But I choose to believe that Alexander finished the walk. That those who fell, whose blood further soaked that bloody path, did not fall in vain. That Volta can recover from a blow so great as the loss of Castle Aberdeen. That the courage and dedication of those who Walk the Red Path will not perish from the face of Tyrre. That next year, the Red Path will be walked again.

But perhaps I am an old man who cannot see the reality of the events that I have reported here.

I leave it to you to decide.

By my hand,
Guildmaster Donnal MacReady, Castle Inverness