

# Zebra Fort and the Stockade

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## History

Zebra Fort was built by dwarves and humans during Opili's Fortification phase, and was one of the main human settlements (alongside the Pavis Temple community, Mani's Fort, Angle Fort, and Opili's Fort). It successfully withstood nomad attacks for around three centuries, before eventually falling to trolls. Records from the troll-domination period are scarce, but historians believe that trolls used the fort as a base for raids on both human settlements and rivaling clans of their own race. After the Dragonewts' Dream, a combined force of dwarves and humans drove the trolls out and re-established it as a human settlement.

When Dorasar founded New Pavis, he brought his friend Olgkarth Arrow-eye who had a dream to re-establish the Zebra Riders in Prax. With Dorasar's help, Olgkarth and his housecarls climbed the walls of Zebra Fort one night and took control. Olgkarth became leader of the 'Zebra Tribe', and his family and kin prospered until the coming of the Lunars in 1610. They chose to fight the invaders, and lost, although many escaped into the Rubble. The weakened ruling family of the Zebra folk was driven out of the fort by the Lunar-sponsored bandit-leader Hargran the Dirty, who then proclaimed himself "King of Pavis". Hargran originally staffed the Fort not only with his own gang members, but recruited also a number of local and foreign mercenaries to bolster the numbers.

In the last two or three years particularly, Hargran seems to be changing his image. The more violent members of his former gang have been dismissed from service, and many of the new recruits are loyal Pavic mercenaries. Hargran is even approaching the Pavis Cult, seeking official Pavic acceptance. Around the fort, as this section of the Rubble gradually becomes safer, a small local community is arising, and Hargran long ago gave up his claim to kingship.

Some local historians speculate that Zebra Fort is built in the same spot as Joraz Kyrem's 'Zebra Castle'. These ideas have contributed to several rumors that there are great riches to be discovered under the fort.

## Location

Zebra Fort stands next to the eastern end of the Zebra Bridge, to which it controls access. The fort is easily reached by travelling through Manside from New Pavis, or by boat along the river. Although it is on the east bank of the Zola Fel, the fort and the surrounding 'Zebra Ruins' are considered to be part of Manside.

## **Appearance**

The fort is a well-built structure, and by far the most impressive in the Zebra Ruins. Like all remaining buildings in this area its stonework is striped in black and white, like a zebra. It has several sturdy towers and a well-protected corral at the rear. The ruins closest to the fort have been cleared to prevent attackers from using them as cover, but many of the larger buildings slightly further towards the river have been repaired and re-occupied in recent years.

## **The Fort Buildings**

Inside the fort, there are seven major buildings, and all of them are striped. Unlike the original structures in Zebra Ruins, most buildings inside the fort are painted stone from the North Quarry and are not built of the easily identifiable black and white marble. The exceptions include the outer walls, and the tower that the dwarves built to their own plan. This has led to the conclusion that only the walls and the tower are original buildings, and that other masons than the dwarves have built the rest. The difference in quality of construction gives credence to this theory.

## **The Walls**

The walls of the fort are over six meters in height, making them impressive to visitors. However, the entrance to the fort has at some point been replaced, with a structure that is probably not as reliable as the original gate. Hargran always has warriors manning the walls and gate.

### **1) The Zebra Bridge**

One of the few original features of the old city that is still standing, it is a tribute to dwarf workmanship. At the base of the bridge are two buildings, the smaller immediately next to the bridge, and the larger some meters away. The closest to the bridge is an original construction being of the same style as the bridge and virtually indestructible, while the larger one is much more recent. This larger gatehouse has an alarm bell that is used by the guards if there is an attack. Hargran has a squad of the Fort Guard stationed by the bridge at all times whose job is to keep it under surveillance and collect toll from its users. The toll has, since Hargran's take-over, been one silver per leg for each of those who cross (i.e. two silvers per man, and four per beast). Residents from Zebraside, and the areas of Manside closest to the other end of the bridge, come to the fort to visit the Tavern, for Pavis Ceremonies, and to engage the services of the Fort's craftspeople. Poor locals from across the river are exempt from the bridge toll, but must be registered with the PRG. (Anyone who can afford a zebra is not considered to be poor.) All local Pavis Cultists are also exempted from the toll if attending Pavis ceremonies at the Fort.

### **2) The Main Gates**

These gates mostly stand open during daylight, and are firmly closed at night.

### **3) Menial Quarters**

All the servants and staff at the fort are bunked here in relative squalor (although conditions here beat Badside, hands down, and are certainly an improvement on an average Manside residence). Probably the worst aspect of living in this building is the overcrowding caused by the creation of the fort's tavern.

### **4) The Guard Barracks**

A building very basically equipped. Apart from the "Blades" and the rest of the Guard, various skilled servants also dwell here.

### **5) The Tower**

The tallest structure in the fort is the tower, a three-story building just inside the entrance. The height makes it possible to scan the surrounding area in every direction from the roof. Hargran always keeps a lookout here.

The third story of the tower holds Hargran's scrupulously maintained quarters. These have only basic furnishings, and no decorations apart from some original murals, which depict scenes from ancient Pavis in fading colors. Morkro Smellgood and Nesca the Sleepy also have their rooms here. The second floor of the tower contains rooms for storage of religious items, and also the quarters of Birtel the Ragged and Azera Shorthair.

The ground floor harbors the Pavis shrine. It was lavishly renovated by Olgkath and his kin and is the most (some would say the only) beautiful room in the fort. The Pavis Priest Cyrilius Harmonius holds regular ceremonies here for the locals, the most prominent attendees being Hargran and Hubert the Short. Harmonius is a known Lunar ally, and as such is finding it difficult to obtain advancement through the inner hierarchy of his cult. Consequently he is taking full advantage of his responsibility for the zebra people, and trying to establish a respected 'parish' amongst the local Mansiders. Local Pavis worshippers tolerate him, although Initiates of Opili often travel all the way to Real City to worship, especially on major holy days.

In the basement is a currently inactive shrine of Opili. It is a large black and white marble block, inscribed with Opili's runes. The shrine still detects as highly magical and is said to once have had magical connections with the outer walls. Guards are always posted here, as stairs lead down to ancient underground chambers that are off-limits to regular personnel, and nearby is a blocked up arch said to connect to the secret dwarf tunnels.

#### 6) The Tavern

Hargran's latest addition to the fort is this tavern. He made the space here by moving the fort's servants and some of the storage into one building (3). The tavern has yet to be given a proper name and serves as a drinking locale for locals and the inhabitants of the fort. It also provides beds for visitors who can afford Hargran's inflated prices. Lately, the tavern has attracted attention from fortune hunters and adventurers preferring to sleep in the safety of the fort rather than in the Rubble, despite the high prices on food, drink and beds. Such outsiders who want to take advantage of this service must leave their weapons and armor at the gatehouse.

#### 7) Lunar Barracks

Whichever Lunar platoon has been assigned to Rubble patrol this Season is bunked here. It is the most well maintained building in the whole fort, as the soldiers can afford luxuries from New Pavis, and their officers refuse to live in squalor. Here is the spacious office of Zartax Goldenthread, Zartax's personal suite, and the fort's only meeting room. In this building also live various Lunar servants and comfort women, and the fort's holding cells are here in the basement.

#### 8) The Barracks of the Zebra Patrol

This building is another that is only basically equipped, and even the former bandits who used to work for Hargran are not treated to any luxuries. Only the officers have private rooms, and even they share with each other. Just inside the main door is the small office of Hubert the Short. Also housed here are various family members of the soldiers.

#### 9) The Stable

For security, the zebras are usually brought into the fort overnight, via a tunnel through the adjacent watchtower. It is a single-roomed building, giving some protection from the weather. The turf roof and its wooden supports give a feeling of natural shelter that soothes the zebras, which prefer open areas and are at unease inside buildings. The majority of the patrolmen based here ride the sterile cavalry zebra, although Hargran and a few of the officers each have an impressive war zebra reserved for personal use. Around fifty of these animals are stabled here at any one time.

#### 10) The Corral

The outdoor stables and corral allow the zebras to be exercised in safety. A solid palisade fence, and an exterior ditch, protects the corral.

The fort also has its own smithy, used for all sorts of metalwork and repairs. This building is situated in front of the stable, and Malan the Smith is in charge. Against the fort walls are also workshops for leather- and woodworking.

### **Beneath the Ground**

Under the fort exist several spacious areas. These were apparently originally built as storage facilities and as shelters for the residents of the fort and its surroundings during attacks. The shelters were also used as a last resort for retreating troops in case of invasion. Hargran apparently uses them mostly for storing food and equipment. The entry to the underground area is located in the tower, and these basements were once connected to the dwarf tunnels. This tunnel was blocked by the dwarves when trolls took over the fort long ago, and was re-opened in coordination with Olgarth's attack, to allow dwarf commandos to assist in the take-over. The tunnel was blocked again when the Lunars invaded. Hargran has the old entrance constantly guarded, wary of the connections between the dwarves and the former occupants.

### **The Surroundings**

The inhabited buildings outside the walls are mainly located between the fort and the river. Only a small number of reasonably intact houses stand close by, and these zebra-striped marble buildings are inhabited by the most prominent of the non-fort dwellers, such as the leaders of the militia in Zebra Ruins. Around 250 people live here, under the protection of the Fort.

### **The Inhabitants of Zebra Fort and the Ruins**

More than 300 people live inside Zebra Fort, although a significant number are out on patrols during the day, or working in the fields and vegetable patches near by. Inside the fort, the residents are divided more or less evenly between non-combatants and military personnel. Although the inhabitants of Zebra Fort often get lumped together, there are actually four main groups: Hargran and the surviving members of his old gang; more recent recruits from the local population; a mercenary group called the Silver Blades; and the Lunar platoon. (Each group, other than the Lunars, also contains members who have family residing at the fort.) All non-Lunar combatants work either in the Fort Guard, or amongst the Zebra Patrols.

The Pavis Royal Guard (PRG) is the collective official name of the non-Lunar forces under Hargran's command. It was originally a Lunar created force of local warriors that replaced the Zebra Cavalry (now known as the Pavis Survivors) who resisted the Lunar occupation. There are three branches, two of which (the Fort Guard, and the Zebra Patrols) are based at Zebra Fort. The third branch (the New Pavis watch) is usually seen as an independent entity and is rarely identified any more as being part of the PRG.

Senior Officers: 8

Fort Guard: 60 (25 of Hargran's original bandits/mercenaries, 20 original Silver Blades, 15 Pavic recruits)

Zebra Patrols: 88 (34 of Hargran's original bandits/mercenaries, 28 Lunar cavalrymen, 26 Pavic recruits)

Artisans: 9

Apprentices: 7

Servants: 36

Family members (inc. children): 87

### **Hargran the Dirty and his Comrades**

Hargran only considers four people in the fort to be totally trustworthy: Azera Shorthair, Birtel the Ragged, Morkro Smellgood and Nesca the Sleepy. They are the four surviving officers from his original gang, and are all combat veterans holding positions as officers in the Fort Guard. What they say goes, in regards to the PRG and non-military personnel in the fort. Only the Lunars and the Silver Blades are outside their direct control. They still socialize with other original gang members at the fort, but consider none of these to be their equals.

### Hargran the Dirty

Hargran is the current ruler of Zebra Fort, who proclaimed himself “King of Pavis” after the Lunars drove the former owners out of the fort and put him and his followers in control. He now regrets this rash action, which was inspired by Lunar promises that were never made good. The Lunars have only granted him the title of Fort Captain, and Lunar officers here only defer to him on paper. His enemies call him “the Dirty” due to this connection with the Lunars, and the perceived betrayal of his city. His background is mostly unknown, but he claims descent from Baragrat the Bold, who is said to be an ancient king of the Arrowsmith dynasty. He is a worshipper of Pavis, and recently has been attempting to gain the favor of the Cult’s Priests, through gifts and flattery.

Over the last few years, Hargran has become more reclusive towards strangers, and Morkro has conducted most meetings with visitors to the fort. According to stories told by those who have met him, Hargran looks troubled these days and his behavior can be somewhat absent-minded. Hargran is still an excellent fighter with his axe and shield, but rarely engages in any kind of combat these days, apart from the occasional sparring with some of his closest followers. Few people know that Hargran’s grandfather was the commander of Zebra Fort when Dorasar arrived, or that he was slain by Olgkarth.

#### **Hargran**

*Virtues:* Crafty 7w, Insightful 18, Intimidating 4w.

*Abilities:* Dodge Attack 4w, Masonry 16, Mythology of Pavis 2w, Orate 5w, Plant Lore 12, Ride Zebra 7w, Rubble Lore 5w, Speak New Pelorian 15, Speak Old Pavic 2w, Speak Trade 16.

*Combat:* Close Combat 18w (Bastard Sword<sup>5</sup>, Battle Axe<sup>4</sup>), Ranged Combat 14w<sup>2</sup> (Med. Crossbow)

*Magic:* **City Harmony** 9w.

*Relationships:* Initiate of Pavis 20.

*Equipment:* Chain armor with Shield <sup>4</sup>; Crystal (gives 12 AP once per day to any magical contest), Matrix on armband has 'Speed Missile 6w' Feat; Truestone with matrices for the Lunar feats: *Blast Enemy's Mind* 18 and *Divert Spell* 11w; Amulet bearing a matrix for the feat: *Flickering Blade* 14w.

### Azera Shorthair

Azera is a woman who keeps her hair closely cropped to her skull in order to appear more formidable. She is a Humakt initiate, and would probably qualify as a Sword if she tried. She, however, keeps very little contact with the temple in Pavis; apart from occasional required duties. Azera has a great appetite for men, but has no urge to commit towards anyone. Handsome male visitors easily make contact with Azera, and with smooth talk she might reveal secrets about Zebra Fort. However, if she suspects that she has been taken advantage of, she becomes furious and proves to be a formidable foe. She often trains with the militia in Zebra Ruins, and also coaches the “Vixens”, a local gang of teenage girls that she has sympathy for. Because of her great interest in men, and her involvement with the Vixens, she has a frosty relationship with the Yelornans. They see her as a bad example for the young women in Zebra Ruins. She rarely uses her shield in combat, preferring to rely on her blades and her dodge skill. She has a peculiar habit of singing in a low voice in combat, but she claims it helps her focusing. Humakt has forbidden her to drink alcohol.

#### **Azera Shorthair**

*Virtues:* Brave 6w, Insatiable 2w.

*Abilities:* Dodge 16w, First Aid 18w, Ride 2w<sup>2</sup>, Ride 8w, Running 4w, Sing 5w, Speak Sartarite 19, Speak Trade 17, Train Warriors 8w, Treat Poison 20.

*Combat:* Close Combat 17w (Bastard Sword<sup>5</sup>, Dagger<sup>2</sup>), Ranged Combat 14w (Dagger).

*Magic:* **Combat** 15w, **Death** 6w, **Honor** 20.

*Relationships:* Initiate of Humakt (Kargan) 18.

*Equipment:* Chain and Leather armor with Shield <sup>3</sup>.

*Gift/Geas:* Sense Assassin 17/Drink No Alcohol.

### Birtel the Ragged

Birtel is a man who appears to have come from Badside if judged by his clothing. Rumor holds it that he has never bought any clothes while living in the Pavis area and that he replaces his attire with garments from foes he kills on expeditions in the Rubble. He is a quiet man, possibly of Sartarite origin, who doesn't mix much with others apart from his friends in the "Old Gang". Because of his appearance, most inhabitants of the fort and its surroundings avoid him as well. He is an experienced combat veteran who often leads smaller scouting expeditions with soldiers from the PRG into the Rubble. He is infamous for his cruelty in combat, a trait that has put him in trouble concerning his cult membership in Humakt several times, though never quite enough to become excommunicated. Birtel's fighting technique is a two-sword combo.

#### **Birtel the Ragged**

*Virtues:* Cruel in Combat 17, Scruffy 16, Quiet 18.

*Abilities:* Hide 5w, Listen 12w, Ride 6w, Rubble Lore 2w, Scan for Danger 7w, Sneak 13w, Speak Sartarite 2w, Speak Trade 15, Swim 14, Track 15w.

*Combat:* Close Combat 19w (Broadsword with Shortsword^4), Ranged Combat 11w (Composite Bow, Dagger).

*Magic:* **Combat** 12w, **Death** 8w, **Honor** 3w.

*Relationships:* Initiate of Humakt (Kargan) 2w.

*Equipment:* Chain and Leather armor^2.

*Gift/Geas:* +5 to Combat/Use No Shield

### Morkro Smellgood

Morkro is a humorous guy, quick with a joke or a funny comment. He is 'friends' with almost everyone he meets, but still keeps a distance from those outside the "Old Gang". He is the type of guy you could talk to for hours and still never learn anything about. His nickname comes from a true story he occasionally tells, which involves an incident at an Uleria temple in his youth. His thin appearance belies a surprising strength that often makes his foes misjudge him in a fight. Morkro acts publicly as a Pavis cultist, but his primary allegiance is really to Lanbril, something that is not even known by the others in the "Old Gang". The information Morkro has access to in Pavis is very important to Hargran, and once even helped stop an assassination attempt.

#### **Morkro Smellgood**

*Virtues:* Jovial 19, Secretive 6w.

*Abilities:* Climb 16w, Dodge 14w, Evaluate Loot 17, Fast Talk 12w, Hide 5w, Nimblefingers 1w, Pavis Customs 19, Rubble Survival 5w, Running 8w, See Hidden 12w, Sneak 15w, Speak Esrolian 14, Speak Old Pavis 2w, Speak Thief Code 18, Speak Trade 17, Streetwise (New Pavis) 19.

*Combat:* Close Combat 13w (Broadsword, Dagger), Ranged Combat 16w (Dart)

*Magic:* **City Harmony** 17, **Concealment** 8w.

*Relationships:* Initiate of Pavis 15, Initiate of the Hidden One 3w.

*Equipment:* Leather Armor and Shield ^2; Plain silver ring with matrix for *Glamour* 3w; Linen gloves with inlaid silver threads that work as a potent matrix for a number of detection feats, all at 10w (Detect: Gems, Gold, Magic, Silver); three bottles of Blade Venom: POT 6w.

### Nesca the Sleepy

Nesca has gained his name from the sleepy look given by an old scar that hinders him from fully opening his eyes. He is very large, and was once a bison-riding Storm Bull initiate, but he left both the cult and his tribe many years ago. When in a fight, he still goes into typical Storm Bull battle fury, making him a formidable adversary. Under normal conditions, he is the total opposite of his fighting self. He is extremely helpful and often assists in the daily lives of the inhabitants in Zebra Ruins. Because of this, he is the most well liked person of the "Old Gang", among the civilians.

### **Nesca the Sleepy**

*Virtues:* Easy Going 18, Scarred 15.

*Abilities:* Animal Lore 17, Butchering 18, Peaceful Cut 3w, Ride 15w, Scan 10w, Speak Praxian 19, Speak Trade 13, Track 9w.

*Combat:* Close Combat 14w (Battle Axe, Bastard Sword).

*Magic:* **City Harmony** 16.

*Relationships:* Initiate of Pavis 15.

*Equipment:* Saddle with Haste Steed 15w feat; two 'Stones of Law' (specially enchanted Truestone which can each, once per season, harm any being tied to the Chaos Rune with 'Strike Chaos 10w2' on contact).

### **The Fort Guard**

There are two groups within the Fort Guard: the original bandits, and the Silver Blades. The "Blades" have not automatically accepted the former bandits of the Guard into their ranks, and both groups tend to act as separate units. The main duty of these groups is patrolling the Fort itself, and the immediate vicinity, and guarding expeditions across Manside. Occasionally, Hargran hires the Silver Blades to traders, and others, who can't find any other suitable protection service in the Pavis area. When travelling any distance from the Fort, the officers in both factions ride zebras.

#### The Silver Blades

A mercenary group of 35 experienced men and women of mixed origin and religious backgrounds. They stand under the leadership of Taborg who takes his orders directly from Hargran. Their name comes from the emblem all of them wear, a silver sword on a blue background. Originally consisting of less than twenty members, they arrived in Pavis in 1615. They were soon recruited by the Lunars to form the backbone of the Guard at Zebra Fort because of the perceived lack of discipline amongst Hargran's bandits. Since then, the original, and replacement, mercenaries all consider themselves "Silver Blades", even though many of their number are now locals.

### **Typical Silverblade**

*Virtues:* Dour 1w, Humorless 18.

*Abilities:* Dodge 8w, First Aid 6w, Ride 19, Run in Armor 18, Scan Terrain 3w, Speak Esrolian 1w, Speak New Pelorian 15, Speak Trade 18.

*Combat:* Close Combat 14w (Bastard Sword, Great Axe), Ranged Combat 7w (Composite Bow).

*Magic:* **Death** 2w, **Honor** 19, **Sword Combat** 6w.

*Relationships:* Initiate of Humakt (Hu) 2w.

*Equipment:* Chain and Leather with Shield ^3.

#### Taborg the Esrolian

Taborg has led the Silver Blades for more than ten years in several successful campaigns, and earned the respect of his "Blades" on the battlefield. In accordance with his name, he indeed comes from Esrolia, but neither shows any particular loyalty to his country, nor any open dislike towards the Lunars. This has led to speculations that he is actually an Esrolian outcast.

Taborg is a harsh looking, well-built middle-aged man. He favors physical expertise above mental and magical skills; something shared by his followers in various degrees. His attitude makes it easy for weapon masters to befriend him, while this is almost impossible for shamans, scholars and magicians. If the Rubble were not considered such a terrible posting, it is possible that the Lunars would not let an Esrolian (even an outcast) hold authority.

### **Taborg the Esrolian**

*Virtues:* Chiseled Features 3w, Grim 4w, Heavily Muscled 18.

*Abilities:* Dodge 16w, First Aid 16w, Listen 5w, Ride 2w, Rubble Survival 12, Run in Armor 2w, Treat Poison 6w, Scan for Danger 11w, Speak Esrolian 3w, Spk New Pelorian 17, Spk Trade 19.

*Combat:* Close Combat 2w2 (Bastard Sword, Great Axe), Ranged Combat 15w (Composite Bow).

*Magic:* **Death** 6w, **Honor** 3w, **Sword Combat** 15w.

*Relationships:* Initiate of Humakt (Hu) 6w.

*Equipment:* Chain and Plate ^5; Silver Sword Medallion with *Resist Magic* 5w feat.

### Typical Soldiers

The following statistics should be seen as guidelines to the levels of characteristics, skills and spells possessed by a typical soldier, not as a mould for all soldiers. Individual variations exist, and most soldiers are somewhere between the levels of the typical newbie and the typical veteran. All soldiers are listed as belonging to the cults of Opili although other cults are represented in the Guard. However, since Hubert the Short took command of the Cavalry, Pavis/Opili worship has almost become obligatory there, especially for new recruits. These stats combine both the Pavic foot and the few Pavic Zebra Patrol members.

#### **Sergeant**

*Virtues:* Dedicated 3w, Practical 5w.

*Abilities:* Bark Orders 7w, First Aid 2w, Hide in Cover 8w, Listen 4w, Ride Zebra 3w, Rubble Survival 11w, Scan Terrain 9w, Sneak 8w.

*Combat:* Close Combat 12w<sup>3</sup> (Spear, Sword), Ranged Combat 8w (Crossbow).

*Magic:* **City Harmony** 4w, **Defend the People** 9w.

*Relationships:* Initiate of Pavis (Opili) 6w.

*Equipment:* Chain and Leather Armor <sup>3</sup>.

#### **Veteran**

*Virtues:* Determined 1w, Loyal 19.

*Abilities:* Hide in Cover 5w, Listen 2w, Ride Zebra 1w, Rubble Survival 9w, Scan Terrain 7w, Sneak 6w.

*Combat:* Close Combat 9w<sup>3</sup> (Spear, Sword).

*Magic:* **City Harmony** 2w, **Defend the People** 5w.

*Relationships:* Initiate of Pavis (Opili) 4w.

*Equipment:* Chain and Leather Armor <sup>3</sup>.

#### **New Recruit**

*Virtues:* Eager 17, Loyal 15.

*Abilities:* Hide in Cover 2w, Listen 18, Ride Zebra 16, Rubble Survival 3w, Scan Terrain 2w, Sneak 20.

*Combat:* Close Combat 2w<sup>3</sup> (Spear).

*Magic:* **City Harmony** 17, **Defend the People** 18.

*Relationships:* Initiate of Pavis (Opili) 19.

*Equipment:* Leather Armor<sup>1</sup>.

### **The Zebra Cavalry**

The current commander of this force is Hubert the Short (a nickname he gained long before the arrival of Sor-Eel). Under him are four sub-commanders, leading squads of about fifteen warriors each. Unlike the Fort Guard, Hubert has forged both the new recruits and the former bandits under his charge into a single disciplined unit. Even so, the PRG cavalry still has a bad reputation, although this is slowly improving. They are still looked upon with hostile eyes by supporters of the former leading family of the Zebra folk. The recruitment of competent and civilized personnel, and the dismissal of the dregs goes on under the approving eyes of Hargran, and is part of his long-term plan to improve his reputation and increase his political power.

### Hubert the Short

Hubert is one of many from among the Zebra folk who have rejoined the PRG in the years following Hargran's taking command of the fort. He has proved himself to be a competent leader, and quickly climbed in rank. Hubert didn't much care for Hargran when he joined the PRG, but has slowly come to respect him as a competent leader and good diplomat (although he still mistrusts him as a Lunar appeaser).

Hubert is tough but fair, a man in his late thirties who demands good performance from all under his command. A person not living up to his standards is kicked out of his force fast. Hubert is also of generous and perceptive nature and gives the warriors who serve under him both time and



attention. His style of leadership has earned him the respect of his troops, who, if tested, would prove to be more loyal to him than to Hargran. This is something Hargran is well aware of, but doesn't worry much over, since he has judged Hubert to be an honest and loyal man who would never betray someone he has sworn allegiance to.

Hubert is a proud worshipper of Opili, and often promotes the idea that the Opili shrine beneath the tower should be reactivated. This has put him in conflict with Trusin dal-Martalton, who sees such a development as a threat to his own ambitions of proving to the Lunars that he has full control of the fort. (Sor-Eel has in any case left a secret standing order that the shrine should be kept inactive.)

### **Hubert the Short**

*Virtues:* Observant 8w, Practical 7w.

*Abilities:* Bark Orders 11w, First Aid 5w, Hide in Cover 12w, Listen 9w, Ride Zebra 5w, Rubble Survival 13w, Scan Terrain 12w, Sneak 9w, Speak Old Pavic 20, Speak Trade 16, Streetwise (New Pavis) 2w.

*Combat:* Close Combat 16w<sup>3</sup> (Lance, Spear, Sword), Ranged Combat 13w (Crossbow).

*Magic:* **City Harmony** 7w, **Defend the People** 12w.

*Relationships:* Initiate of Pavis (Opili) 10w.

*Equipment:* Chain and Plate Armor <sup>4</sup>.

### **The Lunars**

The Lunars use Zebra Fort as a base-camp for their patrols inside the Rubble, which was one of the conditions in the agreement with Hargran when they first helped him to power. They still ride horses, which their patrols obvious to identify from a distance.

A complement of thirty or so Lunar soldiers, divided into three patrols, lives at the fort at any given time. They are part of the regular Lunar army stationed in Pavis. Each group of soldiers has a corporal who commands them, and they will transfer out together with their squad when these duties are over. The rotation of forces makes the soldiers and their junior officers disengaged from the every-day life of the fort and they mostly keep to themselves when off duty. Only the commander and the sub-commander are stationed at Zebra Fort for any longer periods of time. The current patrols at the fort are Silver Shield Peltasts under the command of Cartania del-Myskarfanx (F), Quatzina Robrebbon (F), and Fangul Eiskolli (M).

### Zartax Goldenthread

Zartax is a junior Triarch, and the current commander of the Lunars stationed at Zebra Fort. He officially lives in one of the few decent apartments inside the fort, but is rarely seen there. He prefers to remain in the city of New Pavis and leaves most of his duties to his sub-commander Trusin. Zartax comes from a Kostaddi family, and regards his position in Prax as a cruel punishment for something his father was involved in. Basically, he wants to go home, and since that will not happen for several years yet, he tries to live the best life he can among the uncivilized barbarians of Prax, enjoying the relative comfort of New Pavis.

### Trusin dal-Martalton

Trusin is a centurion, and the sub-commander of the Lunar force here. He comes from Dobljan and is the commander-in-fact, except in some formal and ceremonial duties, which are still performed by Zartax. He is more ambitious than his commander and also reports in secret to Gim-Gim. Trusin does not think highly of his commander, due to Zartax's apparent lack of interest in his duties as senior officer. He also believes himself to be better suited for Zartax's position, and is secretly hoping for a promotion. He does not let this ambition show in his relations with Zartax. Meanwhile he is doing his best to show the Governor and other high-ranking officers that he commands an efficient force at the fort. A posting in the Rubble is usually not what the troops expect when they are transferred to Pavis, and Trusin is not well liked among the soldiers. Not realizing this situation, Trusin can't believe what kind of undisciplined and sloppy soldiers the army keeps sending him.

Trusin's relations with other notable characters in the fort are usually somewhat strained, especially so with Morkro, whom he cannot stand. Trusin also considers Hubert the Short a

troublemaker because of his open propagation of a reactivation of the Opili shrine. Trusin's social isolation makes him very suspicious of everything out of the ordinary at the fort, and visitors who catch him on a bad day can expect long and boring questionings, and numerous forms to fill in.

### **Trusin dal-Martalton**

*Virtues:* Ambitious 3w, Naïve 19.

*Abilities:* Command Unit 7w, Dodge 1w, Infantry Tactics 5w, Interrogate 18, Lunar Customs 10w, Orate 17, Rubble Survival 11, Speak New Pelorian 7w, Speak Pavic 15, Speak Trade 16.

*Combat:* Close Combat 9w<sup>3</sup> (Spear, Scimitar), Ranged Combat 7w<sup>3</sup> (Javelin)

*Magic:* **Silver Shield Hypaspist** 7w (Screaming Javelin, Dodge-the-Arrow, Gleaming Shield, Wait Unseen, Quick and Nimble)

*Relationships:* Devotee of Ipharia 6w.

*Equipment:* Well-Made Light Armor & Shield <sup>4</sup>, heirloom silver scimitar.

### **Other People**

The remaining population in Zebra Fort, and the surrounding ruins, are civilians. Those resident in the fort may hold recognized positions, like cooks, stable boys, metalworkers etc, although others are simple family members or farmers, who tend to work in the surrounding fields during the day. In his attempts to improve his reputation, Hargran is actively promoting resettlement of the Zebra Ruins. In exchange for an endurable tax, new residents are given the protection the fort offers, and free passage across Zebra Bridge. New arrivals do occasional odd jobs at the fort, but spend most of their time hunting, fishing, and cultivating small crops in the vicinity of their homes. The fort normally buys all surplus food produced.

#### Vantaper the tender

Vantaper is the stable master in Zebra Fort. He is responsible for the daily care of the PRG's cavalry zebras, and he has the exclusive say when the fort buys new animals. Vantaper is an Issaries initiate but also carries the big secret of being Illuminated. He has one Illumination question that he often slips into private conversations (skill Camouflage or Scan):

Q: "Is a zebra white with black stripes or black with white stripes?"

A: "In the eye of light, all souls are golden".

#### The Local Militia

The residents in the Zebra Ruins can muster around fifty warriors. They are trained and commanded by three former soldiers of the PRG, who served under Hubert the Short when he was still a sergeant. Their names are Grazer, Brinky Neversick, and Lazlo the Slow, all of them initiates of Opili.

Azera Shorthair occasionally helps in training the militia, giving special attention to the small band of teenage girls (age 13-16) who call themselves "the Vixens". The Vixens look up to Azera as a free and independent woman, capable of handling both men and dangers.

### **Politics in Zebra Fort**

#### The Yelornans

These warrior women, whose Temple is close by, sometimes practice defensive sweeps with the Cavalry Patrols or the Silver Blades, and also sometimes with the Zebra Ruins militia. They are not too happy with the attention Azera gets from the "Vixens", however. They also do not like the Lunar domination of the fort, but feel responsibility towards the civil population in Zebra Ruins. Their contacts with officials at the fort are strained at best, although they traditionally attend celebrations there on Pavis Holy Days. Morganeth the Priestess, and many others of her followers, are also Pavis Initiates. Cyrilius Harmonius nonetheless dislikes the Yelornans intensely, due to Morganeth's powerful personality often over-riding his wishes, and he has claimed they are a disruptive influence in Zebraside. He makes it no secret that he wants their temple to be closed down, but is not supported by any other Pavis Priest.

### Hargran's Ambitions

What Hargran wants with his position at Zebra Fort is not commonly known. It seems clear, however, that he is slowly building himself a power-base in the Rubble. Most people still see him as a common criminal who, with the help of the despicable Lunars, manages to hold on to a position of power he should not have. This is the attitude that Hargran has been trying to change in the last five years or so, and not totally without success (even the officials of the Real City at least acknowledge his envoys). Furthermore, for every year that passes, there are more and more people coming to live in the ruins surrounding the fort, who rely on Hargran to protect them from the raids of trolls, nomads, criminals and chaos.

### The Pavis Royal Guard

Hargran is also slowly reshaping the PRG stationed at the fort, into a more civilized organization, kicking the scum out and letting honest men in. To assist him with this task he handpicked Hubert as the commander of the Zebra cavalry, although most of Hargran's dealings with him are through his friends in the "Old Gang".

### The Lunars

The Lunar force at the fort is currently only a potential problem for Hargran. As long as they are here, for reasons of maintaining discipline (according to Lunar command), he rightfully believes that he will not appear threatening to the Lunar administration in New Pavis. Meanwhile, he can work on strengthening his position in the area without risking the involvement of the Lunars. The only cloud in his sky regarding the Lunar platoon is the ambitious and suspicious sub-commander Trusin dal-Martalton, who Hargran tries to keep in as good a mood as possible.

### The Pavis Cult

Hargran's real problems lie outside the internal politics of the fort. He still has not gained any larger amount of trust among the local leaders of the Real City, Mani's Fort or New Pavis. To help things along in that direction, he is currently thinking of reactivating the shrine of Opili at the fort. What makes such an action problematic is that this would not be appreciated by the Lunar administration, since they were the force behind closing the shrine in the first place. It would certainly attract unwanted attention from the Lunar leaders, and might even strengthen the position of Trusin among their ranks. But, Hargran is also aware of the Lunar plan to marry Pavis with the Red Goddess, which makes it hard for them to complain or act in this matter, since it would definitely anger the leaders of the Pavis cult. This is a typical example of the thin edge Hargran is balancing on whilst trying to please local leaders and not raise suspicion among the Lunars.

### The Pavis Survivors

Another problem is with the Pavis Survivors outlaw gang, and the former ruling family of Zebra Fort. Although they hardly constitute a military threat to the fort, they still have a lot of influence in the Rubble, and are the main reason why the tainted reputation of "Hargran the Dirty" is so hard to wash away.

### Sarken's Gang

Sarken, the current "owner" of the Old Mint, is more and more becoming a burden for Hargran's plans to gain sympathy among the population in Manside. Being associated with a relatively powerful criminal gang is not something that looks good in the eyes of honest people, i.e. the same people that Hargran eventually must win over to gain political legitimacy. Unfortunately, the Lunars still have their uses for Sarken, and insist that Hargran maintain relations. Lately, Sarken has become somewhat of an economic burden as well, after some very bad raids that cost him many zebras. Hargran has been forced to compensate for these, since they are an essential part of Sarken's operations.

### Financial Concerns

Economy is maybe Hargran's most acute problem. Direct sources of income are from taxes in

Zebra Ruins, the toll at Zebra Bridge, and the profit from the tavern. A larger income is the levy unwillingly paid to him by the breeders in Zebraside for every animal sold. The single largest source of income comes, however, from the Lunars. They pay Hargran money for the stationing of troops at the fort, and also for services performed by the Silver Blades (unofficially also by Sarken's gang). Sarken also pays Hargran a kind of interest on the money Hargran "invests" in his "organization". Altogether, the economy of the fort is in balance, but there is not enough profit to leave any room for investments that would increase Hargran's popularity. Since criminal activity would counteract his intention to gain popularity, this is no longer an option. Hargran is therefore currently looking for new and alternative sources of income, including considering re-opening the blocked doors to the deeper chambers beneath the Fort.

### **Rumors about Zebra Fort**

**Badside:** Hargran and Sarken are not cousins by blood. This is a misconception due to "cousins" being a slang expression in Badside meaning criminal associates.

**General:** Hargran is digging for treasures in the ruins of Zebra Castle, located under Zebra Fort.

**General:** Hargran wants the tavern in Zebra Fort to be called "the Zebra Inn", but everyone insists on calling it "the Tavern".

**General:** The economy of the fort is in such a sorry state that Hargran has run out of resources.

**Humakt temple and weapon-masters:** Some of the Humakti in Pavis are trying to get Birtel the Ragged excommunicated.

**Humakt temple and weapon-masters:** Birtel the Ragged uses Blade Venom.

**New Pavis:** Trusin dal-Martalton has problems with his drinking habits and can easily be bribed with a bottle of fine wine or liquor.

**New Pavis:** The toll at Zebra Bridge varies, and newcomers get over charged if they are not careful.

**New Pavis:** A small band of enterprising newtlings has opened a ferry service just north of the Puzzle Canal. Their fee is half that collected on Zebra Bridge, but they do not transport beasts. Hargran and his men raided them twice last season without success, and expeditions led by Hubert always fail even to find a trace of these wily criminals.

**The Real City (Real Inn):** The beer served at the tavern in Zebra Fort is thinned out with water, or (more abusively) llama urine.

**Zebra Fort:** Hargran aims to become the first Champion of Pavis since Balastor.

**Zebra Fort:** Birtel the Ragged and Azera Shorthair have been planning to raid a minor troll clan on the outskirts of Troll lands, but Hargran has forbidden them to go through with it.

**Zebra Fort:** The reason that Hargran does not agree to Birtel's and Azera's ideas for a troll raid is that he hopes to make the Fort a trading post for contact with a major troll clan.

**Zebra Fort:** Taborg the Esrolian is a social outcast from a minor noble family, and is regarded by other Esrolians as being of lower status than a beggar.

### **Zebra Stockade**

Still commonly known as Zebraside, these zebra corrals were given the extra protection of a stockade fence several years ago. This, accompanied by its surrounding ditch, and earth bank, has allowed the families of the non-outlawed Zebra folk to congregate in safety at last.

Cyrilius Harmonius, the Pavis Priest responsible for supervising relations with the Zebra Tribe, has been gradually increasing the defences here since being appointed to this position. Whilst it seems likely that these efforts are inspired by the desire to increase his own prestige and influence, they are certainly also helping the fortunes of the Zebra people. These days, around a hundred humans reside in shacks or tents inside the Stockade, looking after the zebras and cultivating their fields of crops to the south. Newtling neighbors still live in the gullies and reed beds alongside the Zola Fel, and trade fish for other goods, however the baboons have long ago moved south.

