

BRUTE FORCES HAFTHOR'S LEGION



THE FOLLOWING IS THE FIRST PART of *Brute Forces*, a series focusing on warrior guilds that can be dropped into a campaign with minimal preparation. Much like its sister series *Collegia Magia*, each article in the series offers benefits to member PCs, and tools for the GM to incorporate the faction into the campaign. This

installment features Hafthor's Legion, disciplined mercenaries dedicated to brotherhood!

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INTRODUCTION

Efficiency in operation, honor in life, glory in war. Hafthor's Legion is an expansive mercenary force with outposts in cities across the land. They take pride in their diverse yet disciplined soldiers, which range from scouts, frontline soldiers, and individually contracted warriors. The Legion offers only the best. Perfection is Hafthor's guiding philosophy, and through it his Legion surges with unity and pride.

All members of Hafthor's Legion receive standard equipment, including leather armor, battleaxe, and a shield. As they advance in rank, their uniform becomes more ornate, including plumed helms, capes, and medals of service. Given their spirit of excellence, the choice between offence and defense is a false distinction. The Legion's tactic is mastery of the shield and axe to disable and crush their enemies. Each Legionnaire is a singular tide of iron. In unity they need not ask whether they are the unbreakable wall or the unstoppable force. Alone, they are invincible. Together, they are Legion.

CLASS RELATIONSHIPS

- ▶ **Barbarian.** The Legion values discipline upon all things, and scowls upon undisciplined members. Barbarians that can follow their primal instincts but still obey orders are feared and respected.
- ▶ **Fighter.** Patrons look to the Legion for diversity of skill and rigor, and prize fighters of distinction. Such war-geniuses are at home on the battlefield and on commissioned quests.
- ▶ **Monk.** The fighting styles and philosophical practices of the Legion put most monks at odds. Martial artists unphased by selling

Rumors

1. General Hafthor built the Legion from the ground up! (False)
2. In days of yore, the Legion had a grand fortress as its headquarters. (True)
3. The blood of the Legion is thicker than the water of the womb. (Common expression.)
4. The General is so strong, I can't think of anyone to replace him once he retires. (True)
5. Legion is power! If you receive a badge of honor, its power is upon you. (True)
6. Outposts are designed to brainwash children into becoming frontline fodder. (False)
7. General Hafthor is a loner type, a lifelong bachelor. (False; widower.)
8. Our fallen brothers watch over us in glory and pride, protecting us. (True)



their skill for coin fight dirty with handaxe and fist, defying Legion protocol.

- ▶ **Noble.*** Though Legionnaire training can be grueling, second-sons of famous families who make it through can find riches in the Legion's leadership. Bleeding-hearts may even find work as medics.
- ▶ **Paladin.** Paladins within the Legion hold high oaths of unity and brotherhood. They are excellent candidates for patrons seeking a singular, impressive soldier.
- ▶ **Ranger.** The Legion welcomes rangers into their ranks as scouts, tacticians, and assassins. Even the darkest loner can find acceptance at the Legion's campfires.

* A. Nova, originally in "Chessmasters and Commanders: The Noble Class," updated in A Touch of Class, EN World ENsider, <https://www.patreon.com/posts/touch-of-class-11594111>

Open Game Content

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BACKGROUND EXPANSION

Members of Hafthor's Legion can take the following trait options, replacing the normal trait from your background. Additionally, you can replace one proficiency granted by your background with an optional proficiency below.

Optional Proficiencies: shields, battleaxe, leatherworker's tools, smith's tools

OPTIONAL IDEALS

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Brotherhood.** No price is too high to protect my brothers-in-arms. (Any)
- 2 **Discipline.** Conquer yourself, and you've already won the war. (Lawful)
- 3 **Dominion.** The world belongs to the mighty. (Evil)
- 4 **Enterprise.** My axe arm puts food on my table and coin in my wallet. (Neutral)
- 5 **Revelry.** Work hard, play harder! (Chaotic)
- 6 **Unity.** All people are my brothers, regardless their homeland or station. (Good)

OPTIONAL BONDS

d6 Bond

- 1 The Legion took me in as a youth and trained me. The Legion is everything good in my life.
- 2 The centuries distrust my preference to take solo missions.
- 3 I always celebrate a successful mission with a round of ale. First one's on me, brothers!
- 4 Fort Captain Thayla always nags me for my "lack of discipline." How do I one-up her?
- 5 I find comfort in the simplicity and integrity of Legion's code of conduct.
- 6 General Hafthor once saved my hide. It was like watching a force of nature—a god walking the earth.



NEW FEATS

Linebreaker

Prerequisite: Proficiency with shields and battleaxes

Your front-line fighting style grants you the techniques for using momentum to break enemy offenses. To use a technique, you must be wielding both a shield and a battleaxe. The save DC for these techniques is equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier. Your linebreaker techniques are:

- **Battlecry:** As an action, you can make a Charisma (Intimidation) check, which is opposed by either a Charisma (Intimidation) check or a Wisdom saving throw made by a hostile humanoid within 60 feet. If you succeed, you gain number of temporary hit points equal to the difference between the rolls. If you fail, or if there is no creature to oppose the check, you gain no temporary hit points and cannot use this technique again until you complete a long rest or a short rest.
- **Axe-beard Disarm:** When you hit a creature with a battleaxe attack and you have 10 feet of movement or less movement remaining, you can use a bonus action to halt your movement. If you do, the creature must make a Constitution saving throw against your linebreaker technique DC. If the creature fails, it drops a held item of your choice. The item falls to its feet.
- **Overrun:** When you hit a creature with a battleaxe attack and you have 10 feet of movement or less remaining, and the creature you hit is Medium-sized or smaller, you can use a bonus action to halt your movement. If you do, the creature must make a Dexterity saving throw against your linebreaker technique DC. If the creature fails, you and the creature switch positions.

Regalia of the Legion

You find, are gifted, or miraculously possess a signature regalia—a magic item befitting your rank within Hafthor’s Legion.

When you obtain this feat, you obtain one such regalia: either a shield, a handaxe, a battleaxe, a helm, a set of armor, a cape, or a medal. Its flavor determined by your Game Master. This item is bound to you; it becomes a mundane item in the hands of anyone but you. You treat your signature regalia item with the same reverence you would a holy book or symbol, and if you cast spells you are able to use it as an arcane or divine focus. At 10th and 15th level, you obtain another regalia from this list.

While one or more regalia are on your person, you receive their benefits. The benefits increase as you receive more regalia from this feat.

- ▶ **1 or more:** You gain proficiency with Wisdom saving throws. If you are already proficient, you instead double your proficiency bonus on Wisdom saves.
- ▶ **1 or more: Formation.** While you are adjacent to two or more friendly creatures, you can each perform the Help action as a bonus action.
- ▶ **2 or more: Requisition.** Once per week, you can charge the Legion with a task. This task can be a combination of goods and services worth up to 100 gp times your character level, such as labor, borrowing an item, or using a facility. To Requisition you must communicate with the Legion, such as while resting at a Legion encampment or by sending a letter. The use of Requisition does not guarantee the Legion’s success in a given task.
- ▶ **3: Conjure the Legion.** You can cast *conjure woodland beings*, except that instead of fey it conjures humanoids. These humanoids are actually deceased members of the Legion who serve on as celestial spirits. Once you use this feature, you can’t do so again until the dawn of the next day.

Regalia Help

Regalia of the Legion is a variation of the Signature Regalia feat presented in “A Present for Every Class: Warriors.”* For GM advice on implementing Regalia of the Legion, refer to the Restricting Access sidebar in that article.

* Mike Myler, “A Present for Every Class: Warrior,” EN World EN5ider <https://www.patreon.com/posts/present-for-7478080>

SIGNIFICANT NPCs

General Hafthor, Whip of the Legion (Lawful Neutral)

A war-scarred veteran with long, gray-gold locks and beard, decked in complete Legion regalia. He lives with the Legion’s main camp, which roams the lands, always engaged with a mission.

- ▶ **Trait:** Intense gaze. His rare words are wise and unyielding.
- ▶ **Ideal:** Excellence. “Losses are inevitable. Training must be strict and uniform.”
- ▶ **Bond:** For his own strength of mind, he can never admit how he sees legionnaires—as his own children.
- ▶ **Flaw:** He sees emotionality as pure weakness.

Fort Captain Thayla, Lumberjack of the Living (Lawful Good)

This dwarf with dark complexion, golden eyes, and cropped hair wields a wicked bearded axe. She maintains a local Legion fort, and is a point of contact for patrons, job-seekers, and nearby Legionnaires.

- ▶ **Trait:** Her enthusiasm for war inspires courage in allies and dread in enemies.
- ▶ **Ideal:** Victory. “We tread every path that leads to glory.”
- ▶ **Bond:** She spends her free time singing and playing with village children.
- ▶ **Flaw:** Once crossed, she considers her offenders’ words as empty as the wind.

PLOT HOOKS

The GM can use player-characters involved with the Legion as a hook for any number of quests, most especially mercenary work. This may drag the party to fields of battle and conquest, or on special missions at the behest of a contract. Quests may even involve treasure hunts and missions to recover lost Legion regalia. You can also use the following prompts to involve the entire party and connect the Legion to the campaign world.

Low-Level: The Medal of Thaseus

The Legion directs the PCs to capture Fort Rustvald and reclaim the fabled Medal of Thaseus. If the PCs are members of the Legion, this is their final initiation. If this is the PCs' first encounter with the Legion, Fort Captain Thayla approaches the PCs because the faction that holds Fort Rustvald is the party's known adversary—and former patron of the Legion. Fort Rustvald lays at the foot of a mountain, and its basement adjoins to a cave system. The Medal is in the possession of the bandit captain in charge—or whomever your campaign's major villain installed.

Mid-Level: Chopping Block

An unfortunate interaction between the Legion and a nearby kingdom (or adversary faction) puts Legion outposts in danger. When the opposed faction sends troops to oust nearby Legion outposts, the Legion and the major villain each send the party letters to ask for aid in diplomacy—or battle. The party may attempt to broker peace, defend the outposts, or join in the outposts' destruction. Perhaps the players must let the battle rage in the background, and rush in to neutralize the major villain.

High-Level: Hire Hafthor

Mighty characters in need of an army can win the Legion to their side by earning Hafthor's devotion. Hafthor seeks sufficient divination magic to determine one worthy of becoming the next General. The would-be heir must then prove their might against Hafthor in solo combat. For one who grants Hafthor his heir, he would annul any contract and even besiege the gates of hell.

A BRIEF HISTORY

The Legion's history is subtle but ancient. With a careful reading of military lore and an eye toward pictograms in ancient ruins, one might conclude that the Legion has existed for generations immemorial. One binding characteristic is not racial predominance but racial inclusivity; even in the hands of elves and dwarves, the Legion's creed was brotherhood that embraces and transcends race. Some depictions envision warriors specializing in spears, others with shortwords. All were shield-bearers who merge unity and aggression for uncontested victory.

When Hafthor was a boy, he joined the Legion as blacksmith's apprentice. As he grew it gave him joy to support the Legionnaires with tailored equipment, so he naturally joined the ranks as soon as permitted. Because he was long-trusted, he was put in charge of his batch of recruits. When enemy forces pinned a veteran Legion squad in a fort, Hafthor gathered the recruits and cut an opening for the veterans to escape.

On Hafthor's illustrious career to the Legion's top rank, he expanded his forces by establishing manageable outposts in nearly every town they visited. Some say he is on the lookout for a Legionnaire he can trust to lead once he is gone.

