



Hordes of Dragonspear

by William W. Connors

Dragonspear Castle. All who live within several hundred miles have heard the name and know its import. Once home to the proud and the brave, it stands now a ruin, cloaked behind a history of murder and diabolic plots. Few go there, for the only reward to be found is death.

Rumors abound that Dragonspear holds a portal to the sinister planes, but until now those have been unfounded. Following a great battle against orcs and trolls from the High Moor who had taken possession of the castle, a temple to ward against further evil was established. However, by the Time of Troubles, that temple and its energy had disappeared. Now, a horde of fiends and monsters has amassed at Dragonspear Castle, and is terrorizing the surrounding countryside.

The portal is active, and it is for certain. The army of Daggerford needs reinforcements! Is your party made of the stuff of heroes?

Hordes of Dragonspear can be played using either the BATTLESYSTEM™ miniatures rules, or the quick combat resolution system found in DMGR2, *The Castle Guide*. Alternatively, a few simple changes render the entire module playable without any special rules.

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Maelestor Rex, Black Dragon

AD	1d12	BW	1d12
AR	2	SP	6/3/1
Hits	10	MR	45%
ML	18		
MV	12, Fl 12 (C), Sw 12		

Maelestor Rex radiates an aura of awe that causes all enemies within 12" to make a morale check with a -4 penalty. His primary tactic at the start of a battle is to swoop across the enemy lines in an attempt to shatter the morale of the other side.

Baazka's Lieutenants, Cornugons

AD	1d10	BW	Nil
AR	4	SP	Special
Hits	5	MR	50%
ML	14		
MV	9, Fl 18 (C)		

Vrag, Vooka, and Vesarius are Baazka's assistants. Each of them commands one of his armies. In addition to the abilities described above, each of them can use the following powers once per battle: *lightning bolt*, *wall of fire*, and *teleport*. They can be hit only by +2 or better weapons.

Baazka, Pit Fiend

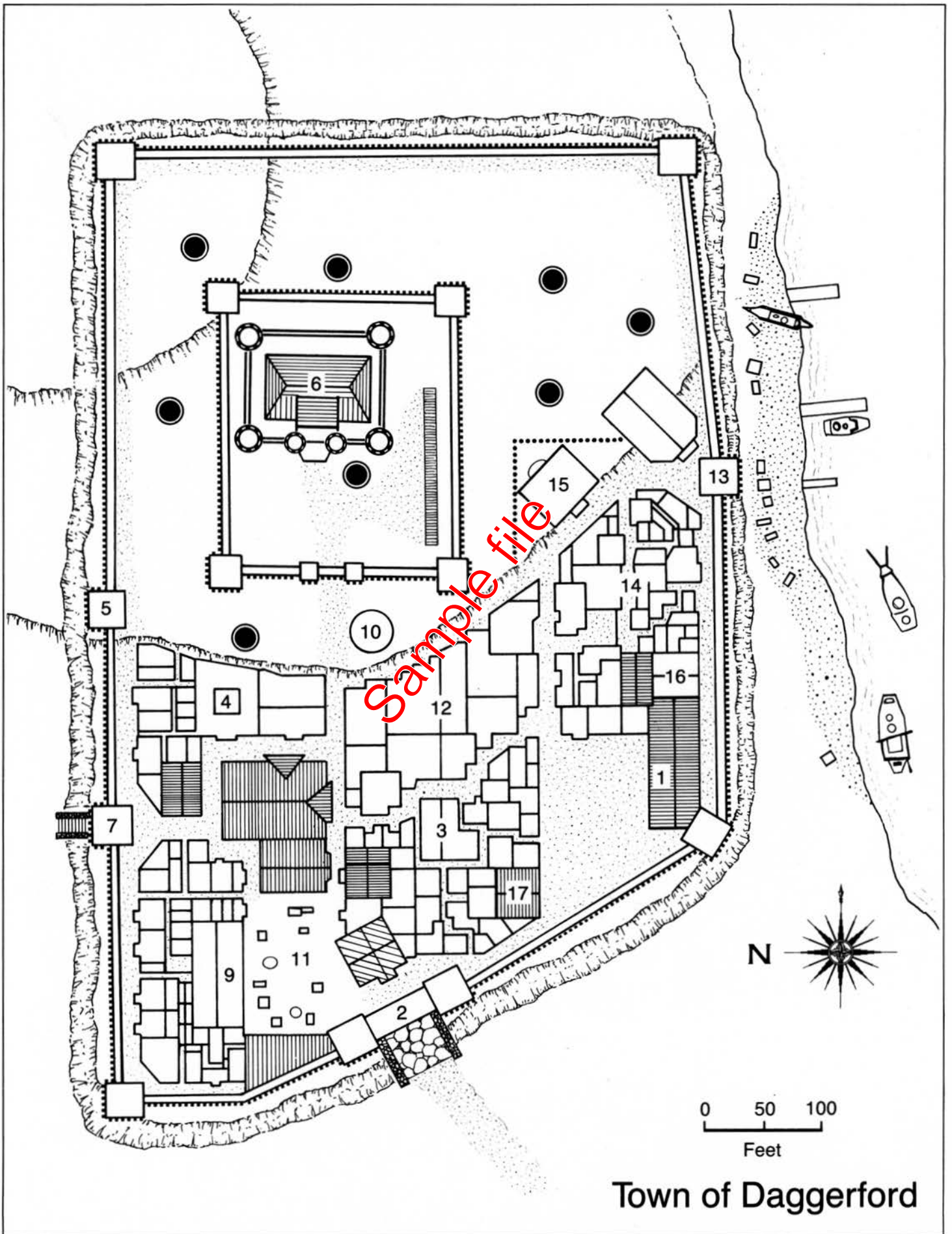
AD	1d12	BW	Nil
AR	2	SP	Special
Hits	6	MR	50%
CD	20	MV	15, Fl 24 (C)

Baazka is the absolute commander of the Hordes of Dragonspear. If he falls, all Dragonspear units make their morale checks with a -2 penalty. Baazka has many spell-like abilities and is able to use the following powers once per battle: *fireball*, *wall of fire*, and *teleport*. Baazka can be injured only by +3 or better weapons.

Barbazu

AD	1d8	BW	Nil
AR	6	SP	Special
Hits	3	MR	30%
ML	12		
MV	15		

In the event that the player characters are unusually tough, the DM might want to introduce a few of these fiends to make things more challenging. They can be hit only by +1 or better magical weapons and are able to use the following spells once per battle: *fear* and *teleport*.



Town of Daggerford



Official Game Adventure

HORDES OF DRAGONSPEAR

An Adventure for Characters of Levels 10-12

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Introduction

Mark my words, there is something dark there. Some evil force grows at the heart of that ruin. For now, it is content to dwell in the darkness for it fears the light of day. Soon, however, it will grow so powerful that not even the shadows can contain it.

*Dauravyn Redbeard
Keeper of The Way Inn*

All who live within several hundred miles have heard the name of Dragonspear Castle and know its import. Once home to the proud and brave, the castle is now a ruin cloaked behind a history of murder and diabolic plots. Few go there, for the only reward to be garnered is death.

Actually the problem is not Dragonspear itself. The old ruined castle, though rumored to have a portal to the sinister planes, is only a symbol for the evils that surge out of the wastes of the High Moors. Once, not too many years ago, the orcs and trolls of the High Moor ruled from that broken keep, rampaging throughout the area, cutting the Trade Way, and threatening the good people from Daggerford to Boarskyr Bridge.

The armies of Waterdeep and Baldur's Gate ended the reign of terror when they laid siege to the moldering fortress. By the time Piergeiron Paladinson's soldiers and Khelben Blackstaff's magic had shattered the castle gate and annihilated the occupants, the might of Dragonspear was broken. A temple was established to ward against further evil rising from the castle's cellars, where the gate to the planes was rumored to exist.

So things went for many years. By the Time of Troubles, the temple and its clergy had long since disappeared. Perhaps the priests had grown lax in their task or perhaps something darker happened—it seems of no consequence to this day for no further reports of evil have come from Dragonspear.

Still, one never knows.

Plot Synopsis

This adventure begins with the heroes at Daggerford when word comes of a great force of goblins and kobolds moving out of the Misty Forest. The local militia is setting out at once to counter this new threat to the Trade Way. When the militia's leader is injured, the PCs are called on to take charge of these green troops.

With the heroes in charge, the Army of Daggerford heads south. They come across the humanoids at the Way Inn. Here, they join with a group of mercenaries, battle the Marauders, and, with a little luck, defeat them. Much to their horror, they discover a cornugon (Vrag) at the head of the horde.

Leaving the massed forces behind in the care of their new leader, the PCs enter the Misty Forest. Here, they come across a wild elf living like a beast in the wilderness. He is quite insane. The heroes cure him and learn several things. First, they learn that his tribe was destroyed by an army of humanoids that came down from the High Moors. (He was the leader of his tribe and was taken prisoner. In chains, he was brought to Dragonspear Castle.) Second, they learn that the leader of the entire horde is a pit fiend who has based his troops in that same castle. Lastly, they learn that the dragon who serves this fiend is doing so under duress; one of the cornugons that heads the enemy has a magical hold over the reptile. If that hold were broken, the dragon would certainly abandon the cause that he currently fights for or even turn upon his "master."

With the aid of a druid who lives nearby, the heroes learn that the dragon must obey the cornugon Vesarius because of the enchanted spear that the latter crafted from the former's horn. The druid informs the heroes that the destruction of the spear will free the dragon from its mental servitude. The spear can be destroyed only by the acidic spittle of the



dragon itself. The spear is hidden at the heart of Dragonspear Castle, however, so recovering it will not be easy.

The elf points out that the route he used to escape the castle might allow the heroes access to it. He refuses to return there himself, but offers to start the PCs on their way and then go and spread word of the menace that looms. He will have all of the allies await word of the heroes' fate at the Way Inn. He warns them to be quick, though, for men have not the patience of elves and will long to move quickly against the enemy.

The elf leads the PCs to a narrow cavern that goes down into darkness. The PCs enter and find that it provides access to an underground river. This river flows southward but turns east briefly and passes directly under the castle. The elf is certain that the hordes don't know of its existence or his escape would not have been possible.

The PCs head down the river and soon reach the castle. They make their way into the catacombs beneath the main tower, fight some bad guys, and recover the spear. They escape via the river and return to the Way Inn.

Here they find that the dragon has attacked and destroyed the Inn. The army has moved south, hoping to strike a fatal blow to the enemy before the dragon returns to finish them. The heroes must hurry if they are to rejoin the allied army and save it from destruction by the Hordes of Dragonspear.

The heroes arrive as the big battle is in progress. The dragon is clearly a foe too powerful to be countered by the massed forces opposing the hordes. Things look dark indeed. The heroes join the battle and bring the spear into a position where the dragon can see it. With a roar, the beast dives at the weapon and lets loose a stream of acid at it. The spear is destroyed, and the dragon is freed of its influence.

The dragon, now able to do as it will, turns on its former master. The day is won and the heroes are . . . well, heroes.

Dungeon Master's Notes

Hordes of Dragonspear is a high-level adventure. It assumes that the heroes are generally of 10th- to 12th-level and five or six in number. If this is not the case, the DM will want to alter some of the encounters in this book to make it more appropriate.

At several points in this adventure, the stage is set for a grand battle. For readers who play the BATTLESYSTEM™ miniatures rules, complete game information is provided on the opposing forces. For those without the time or interest to resolve the battles in this manner, information is provided that allows the battles to be resolved with the mass combat system presented in *DMGR2: The Castle Guide*. Lastly, for people who don't want to resolve the battles at all, a brief synopsis of the probable outcome of the battle is provided.

The next few pages of this text detail the armies that have been gathered around Dragonspear Castle. First the hordes themselves are presented, and then the various forces allied against them.





The Hordes

Despite their chaotic name, the Hordes of Dragonspear have a fairly stable military structure. This is the direct result of the pit fiend Baazka who commands them. While the humanoid that he has brought together would, on their own, dissolve into a quarreling, bickering mass, the fear that they have of Baazka and his three cornugon lieutenants is enough to keep the Hordes in line.

This humanoid horde is composed of three distinct armies, each of which is commanded by a cornugon. Among these lieutenants there is a great deal of political rivalry and competition. As a rule, Baazka sends each of the units out on its own to accomplish a specific mission. Thus, the entire horde is seldom encountered at once.

The Marauders

Despite their ominous sounding name, the Marauders are the least of Baazka's units. It is commanded by Vrag, a cornugon who is far from happy with his assignment. He recognizes that his force is looked down upon by all the others. In an effort to prove himself to Baazka, Vrag often commits the Marauders to dangerous and glorious assaults. So far, he has been lucky. The Marauders have actually proven themselves to be a competent military unit. How much of this is skill, talent, or savagery and how much is fear of their leader is open to speculation.

The Marauders are composed of two forces. The first is an assembly of some 500 kobolds. Fighting under the banner of a particularly cruel and evil chieftain named Wolg, these troops are the lowest in the horde's hierarchy. If there is a suicidal or distasteful assignment to be taken, it's almost sure to fall to the kobolds.

The other element of the Marauders is a band of 500 goblins under the command of Pruj. A chieftain of great renown among the goblin folk, Pruj is unusually

brave for a member of this cowardly race. It is quite possible that he is mentally unstable and subject to delusions of grandeur.

The Blood Guard

The next unit in Baazka's army is the dangerous Blood Guard. This force is composed of 300 orcs and 200 hobgoblins. Although they are not nearly as numerous as the Marauders, the Blood Guard is the main force of the horde. Whenever there is an assault to be made or a village to be raided, it's a good bet that the Blood Guard will get the assignment. The commander of this force, the cornugon Vooka, is perhaps the most intelligent of Baazka's lieutenants. While he desires to impress Baazka as much as either of the other cornugons, he is determined to do it through his cunning and intelligence. He is a master of military strategy and has Baazka's ear on all matters of the campaign.

The orcs are under the command of Dahrgash. There is a great deal of infighting and bickering among the orcs, more than in any other unit. Still, Dahrgash is brutal and fierce enough to keep the orcs in line.

The hobgoblins have taken to the military life quite quickly. They are by far the most professional of Baazka's force. There is an unusual amount of cooperation within the hobgoblin ranks, due primarily to the loyalty which Skarr, their chieftain, commands.

The Storm

The final element of Baazka's army is the most dangerous. Known as the Storm, it is composed of 100 ogres, 100 bugbears, and the dreaded Maelestor Rex—an ancient black dragon. The Storm's commander, Vesarius, is a brutal, militaristic beast. He demands strict obedience from