

LOTT 04 - The ship

Thursday, 04 May 2006

Last Updated Wednesday, 10 May 2006

Since the loss of his title, the now plain Ricold travelled to Tilea. Here I physically started collecting Dogs of War, and Ricold gained an honorary captaincy by a sympathetic soul. Unfortunately, life for the captain has never run smoothly, and in an attempt to move a small army by large ship from Remas to Barak Varr, Ricold is captured by pirates, and the last we hear, he is rotting in a hold with some of his men.

â€œAll hands on deck! Find the captain! All hands on deck!â€•

It was not the first time Ricold had heard that call. It was no so uncommon but it still sent a shiver down his spine. He left his cabin, and appeared on deck.

â€œSir, we are being chased, the captain wants all hands to arms to ensure they cannot board usâ€•

â€œOK then, I want all hands not doing anything better to man the catapults!â€• Ricold bellowed. He knew that they would beat off these pirates easily, but he wanted to be sure. Ricold decided to man one of the catapults himself, and so ran to the nearest on the shipâ€™s aft. Two other men were already there, and trying to load the catapult.

Ricold gave orders to the catapults, and the Dark Assassins manned their crossbows. They managed to hit the pirates enough to make them think twice, and they broke off the chase, but not without a few injuries of their own.

They only lost two men, and Ricold took some strength from the fact that their casualties kept going down. But two was still two too many, if they were going to finish the journey to the dwarven stronghold, they would have to still have some troops left. Thinking about this made Ricold mutter under his breath about the lack of mapping work, which meant he did not know the name of this dwarven hold. He just knew it was the only Dwarf port in the world, and that many mercenaries gathered there in hope of being on the same side of a battle as the renown Long Drongâ€™s Slayer Pirates.

Ricold had set out on this journey from Remas in Tilea. He had deemed it quicker and safer to travel by sea then by land, the Apuccini mountains were not easy to cross, and to march round could have taken far too long and cost them many people. So they had hired a boat, captained by an Elf called Epon. Ricold has arranged payment with the owner of the boat, who went by the name Rimoth, or something similar. His name did not concern Ricold at all. If he provided transport at a reasonable price, Ricold was happy. But Ricold was not currently happy with the number of casualties they were talking. They crew knew how to avoid the incoming fire, but it seemed the fighters did not. Ricold had brought the entire army with him, but they still lost numbers. Morsac had calculated the probable losses from pirates at the beginning, and was reworking the figure now. Morsac was Ricoldâ€™s Paymaster, and never let the pay chest out of his sight. Ricold was grateful for that, along with the fact that everyone knew that the Dark Assassins always had their crossbows ready, and were perfectly loyal to Morsac, this meant that the chances of a mutiny were nice and small.

Ricold had now wandered back below deck, and he rapped on Morsacâ€™s door.

â€œYes Ricoldâ€• Morsac called from inside

Ricold entered and shut the door. He questioned Morsac; â€œHow did you know?â€•

â€œOnly you rap on the door. Everyone else knocksâ€• he paused, â€œWhat can I do for you?â€•

â€œTwo more casualties, one carpenter, one fletcherâ€•

â€œWe cannot afford these losses. Make sure the next call is â€œfighters to the deckâ€™, make sure we know who can fight on boat, and who can fire at the other boat, and ensure everyone else stays below decks. Ensure at the first sign of a pirate all fighters put on armour as well. Maybe we can go without loss next timeâ€•

“Yes sir. Morsac? Why did you decree we should go through the Sartossa straight? Why not pass the outside of Sartossa?”

“Because, my good knight, we cannot afford the time. We also are just as likely to be ambushed outside the straight as we are inside. I simply did not bet on just how many casualties we would take. And so many were commoners as well.

“Now leave me, I must finish writing this up today, and you must get fighters organised”

“Sir, yes sir!” And with that, Ricold left.

Back on deck, Ricold delegated some of the more competent men to work on who should be above deck and who below, and then he headed back to his own office.

Ricold found the leader of his personal bodyguard outside the door, obviously waiting to be let in. He preceded the man in, and took a seat, and offering the other.

“Sir, I believe we might have a problem,” The man stated

“So? We always have problems. We are carrying an entire army by ship. But what’s wrong?”

“It’s the men sir, they’re not happy about the number of pirates we’re attracting. Some of them want to be dropped next stop, take their pay and leave”

“Some men do that at every port, I fail to see your point”

“A few men want to at most ports. This time more than an entire legion wants to.” He paused briefly, “If every man that wants to leave does, we will not have enough men to fight off any force that might meet us at Barak Varr.”

“You have a suggestion?”

“If we let them leave, we will be far too short of men to maintain the army on land, if we force them to stay, we will have a full scale mutiny on our hands, but, if we turn around” He trailed off

“Turn around? Are you mad man? That would leave us worse off than we started! How long until the next port?”

“10 Days sir”

“Then we have 10 days to sort this out. Dismissed”

“

“

“All hands on deck, prepare to fight!”

This was becoming repetitive thought Ricold

“You know the drill,” Ricold hollered, “it’s the same as always. Man the cannon, man the catapults, archers to the

“Sail to port!” Called the lookout. There was a second ship rounding the peak of a small island, gaining fast.

“Catapult at that new ship, Archers to the stern still. LOOSE!”

The catapults fired, so did the archers

“Ship to fore!” the lookout sounded worried

“Full sail, we are leaving!” Hollered the mate, all the sailors jumped to rig as much sail, and as much speed as possible. “Steer to port, we can get away around the next isle!”

The ship mustered as much speed, but Ricold did not think they could get away from the pirates; they had lost too much ground. Still, if they could make it around the small isle they would have a chance of escaping.

As they neared the peak of the island, it did not require the lookout’s call for all to see the ship that waited there, they were trapped.

“Every man who can wield a weapons should do so!” called the mate “Prepare to be boarded!”

As they got near the waiting pirate ship, the men on the pirate railings threw grappling hooks. A few were thrown over before they got purchase, but a lot gripped the ship. As they were pulled nearer the pirate vessel, the others cut the distance. The first threw their own grapples as the first pirates leapt from one ship to the other.

The battle did not take long. The mercenaries were outnumbered 4 to one once all the ships were in contact. Luckily, being trained fighters, the mercenaries knew when to surrender.

It did not take a long time for the pirate captain to work out the situation, and once he did, he ordered the entire ships crew slaughtered. He also found out that Ricold’s Paymaster, Morsac, was Bretonnian. He ordered the mercenaries to be split between the ships, enough for each crew to control, and not enough to rebel on any one ship. Each regiment was split as well, and Morsac was to be kept separate.

And so Ricold was shut into the hold of one of the pirate ships, along with some of his men. He was very grateful that he’d got to know most of the men during his time with the army. And they talked for the many long hours, that became days, that became weeks, that they were locked, prisoners in the hold of an unknown pirate ship, headed for an unknown destination, taking an unknown time to get there!