



Gryphon's Keep News Letter

"The Beak & Talon"

Issue #1 (April 06)

Hail and well met Household of Gryphon's Keep. This is the first publication of the Household news letter "The Beak & Talon". The newsletter will serve as a transcript of monthly events that occurred as well as a source of information for up and coming events. It will also contain short stories, armoring tips, historical research information, and any other information that could prove useful to our members. If you would like to contribute please e-mail me at armsofvalor@earthlink.net

Strength in Unity,

Thomas Alfred
Steward of Gryphon's Keep

What happened in April?

On April 30th we attended the Shire fighter practice/picnic. Three of the household members attended Larian, Michael, and Thomas. The event went really well and we went all out to show our support for the Shire and show the strength of Gryphon's Keep. We fielded two fighters and set up the household pavilion including wooden chairs and tables. It was also a great opportunity to display our new banner, our first household tabard (both hand sewn and painted by Michael), and our newly painted shields. Red, black, and gold were the colors of the day! Michael prepared and brought the food, which was most excellent, especially after a morning of hard fighting. Larian may have found his niche as a Florentine (two sword) fighter. The Pavilion proved roomy enough for several people to sit, drink, smoke pipes, and chat. I think all of us could have spent all day there (or week), but unfortunately the present world called us back for work and other mundane day to day tasks. I look forward to the next time! For pictures please visit <http://www.hallofvalor.net/gryphon/page1003.html>

(Thomas)

Two new members recruited! Though they did not officially join until early May, we had two new members join our household before the release of this news letter. Anders of Tyringe a Viking Trader and Dougal Sutherland a Scottish ex-mercenary. Anders is actually from Sweden and if you have seen his picture on the website you can tell just by

looking at him that he has Viking blood flowing through his veins. Anders lives in Crestview and is interested in learning heavy list combat. Dougal is my best friend from high school and lives in Tampa. He has joined the household to give us support when he is able. Though he does not have an interest in fighting he is keen to find out more about his Scottish heritage and history. I don't think we will see him very often, but his support is appreciated. Who knows, we may end up making a road trip to Tampa sometime for some of the huge Renaissance Fairs held there.

(Thomas)

Up and coming events:

May 9th @ 7pm - Going away for Nick at the Bittburger

June 30th, July 1st and 2nd – Arabian Knights Pensacola Florida

July 20th – Household Event (more details to follow)

Historical Article

History of Knights (down and dirty short version)

Like most periods in history, the era of knights evolved gradually. The term "knight" originates from the Anglo-Saxon name for a boy: "cniht". Indeed, most early knights were not much more than hired "boys" who performed military service and took oaths of loyalty to any well-to-do nobleman or warlord offering the most promise of money or war booty.

In the chaos and danger of post-Roman Western Europe, the population had very little organized governmental protection from brigands and conquering warbands. Knowing there was safety in numbers, local lords (who could afford it) gathered around them young, fighting-age men to fend off rebellious vassals or conquering neighbors. These men, in turn, were rewarded with war booty for their service and loyalty. Soon, grants of land were made so the young soldiers could receive an income from those lands and afford the high cost of outfitting themselves with the accoutrements of war, such as horses, armor, and weapons. The era of the medieval knight had begun.

It wasn't long before some knights began to treat their land grants as hereditary rights (usually transferring ownership to the eldest son upon death), thus beginning the rise of knights as a "landed" class whose importance went beyond simply being a military "free-agent". Knights soon found themselves involved in local politics, the dispensation of justice, and numerous other required tasks for their sovereign, or liege lord.

The knight's effectiveness depended greatly on his ability to stay mounted on his horse during combat. With the advent of the stirrup during the 8th and 9th centuries, a man could brace himself on horseback as he charged the ranks of his enemy, transferring the

power of man and charging horse onto his opponent. This "shock" combat by mounted men armed with a spear or couched lance, and protected with armor, proved a powerful military innovation.