

War Torn: On the March


When an army marches, everything changes. A territory under attack by an invading army becomes a desperate place where basic necessities are rare and trust elusive. Laws disappear and justice is arbitrary. Good people are reduced to desperate and evil acts to preserve their way of life and survive. On the other hand, times of war present opportunities for the crafty and wise to prosper. This article presents 100 places and events adventurers might come across in a land torn by war.

1. Three soldiers have stabbed a merchant, left him for dead, and now loot his cart for tools and weapons.
2. A stable boy who lost both his parents in the fighting has decided to take his revenge by stealing the horses of six enemy soldiers and taking them to the resistance fighters.
3. One soldier and a few craftsmen guard a nearly completed wheeled catapult.
4. A cave next to a stream contains a hidden cache of cheese, stale bread, and 100 days of trail rations left by the invading army.
5. Soldiers spar with dull weapons while they wait in line to sharpen their blades at a blacksmith's shop.
6. A messenger on a griffon flies low; he carries battle plans between the leaders of two allied armies.
7. A large band of enemy soldiers force local people to take an oath of allegiance to the invading ruler or be branded as property and carted off as slaves.
8. Soldiers forcibly grab new army recruits from the young men and boys in a small village, but skip over any who can pay a bribe of at least 2 silver pieces.
9. Defending soldiers burn the fields of their own country and take the livestock of poor farmers to deny food to the approaching enemy.
10. Two tired and hungry deserters reveal the location and strength of their army's camps if given food, drink, and a place to stay.
11. A large group of refugees, cattle, sheep, and carts filled with personal items heads for safety behind friendly lines.
12. Clerics of the invading army desecrate the temple of a local deity and pray to their own deities for success in battle.
13. A picket of three alert soldiers, including one who has climbed a tree and one with a war dog, watch the approach to the main army's camp.
14. A halfling scout searches for signs of the enemy army.
15. The illusory visage of a wizard scans the terrain out ahead of a small party of enemy soldiers.
16. A few simple-minded lookouts cook their lunch in a makeshift hilltop fortification made of dry, flammable brush and logs.
17. A mob of people in a small village chant "death to the invaders" and beat the legs of two enemy collaborators with clubs.
18. Five soldiers lead twenty captured civilians, including the wealthy steward of the local castle, away as slaves.
19. A band of eight resistance fighters wait to ambush patrols behind enemy lines.
20. A damp cave guarded by four soldiers contains thirty starving prisoners of war that are being killed one at a time and dragged deeper into the cave by a lurking monster.
21. Spiked pit traps protect a flank approach to a military camp.
22. Three enemy clerics sacrifice a captive wizard to their deity by submersing her in a bog.
23. One wounded soldier still survives on a four-day old battlefield of rotting corpses and mass graves.
24. Soldiers standing guard along a ridge to slow the enemies' advance are only decoys stuffed with grass and leaves.
25. An enemy garrison patrols a small town, but has been unable to gain entry to the local monastery.
26. Two soldiers and four wagons filled with mundane looted items head back toward enemy lands.
27. An owlbear trained to fight on command and harnessed for pulling war machines has escaped and is on a rampage.
28. Soldier light signals fires along a ridge to announce the approach of the enemy army.
29. Invaders force the people of a small town to play music and dance in the town square, while soldiers publicly execute their leaders.
30. Animated plants under the command of a druid attack the forces besieging a small wooden keep.
31. Invading soldiers contract a terrible blistering disease sent by the local deity.
32. Two powerful wizards are engaged in a spell duel on the walls of a deserted keep.
33. Commoners armed with picks, shovels, and clubs rise up and attack the enemy army's baggage train.
34. A field hospital set up in an old mill beside a stream is full of soldiers covered in electricity burns.
35. Elves mounted on griffons fly overhead to check out enemy strength and positions.



36. A traveling blacksmith with a dark sense of humor makes good money sharpening weapons and repairing armor for soldiers.
37. A necromancer raises an undead army from a battlefield of bodies charred by fire and lightning.
38. A mother sends her young daughter to bring poisoned wine and bread to enemy troops.
39. Soldiers have forced local peasants to build three catapults to attack the small tower of a local knight.
40. Well-armed enemy woodcutters fell trees and cart them off to make fortifications and siege weapons.
41. A group of children hide in an abandoned town where all the buildings were burned and the well poisoned.
42. An invading army fords a river lowered by lack of rain.
43. Ravens and rat swarms scavenge the remains of an ambushed patrol.
44. Conquering soldiers and political leaders conscript locals to help build a statue of their victorious leader.
45. A group of desperate refugees have set up a camp in the woods and turned to banditry to survive.
46. The local military governor has tied the bodies of nine resistance fighters to poles along the road as an example to others.
47. A horn blows as tired defenders on horseback rally for a counterattack against the invaders.
48. Soldiers collect rocks and dirt to damn a river that supplies water and fills the moats of a fortress under siege.
49. An open field contains piles of weapons burned to deny them to the enemy, yet there are still serviceable daggers, short swords, and one beautifully worked longsword.
50. A cult of an evil deity sacrifices a wounded soldier on a hill, which was the site of a recent, terrible battle.
51. Young boys with wooden swords reenact a scene of soldiers forcing innocent villagers over a rocky cliff.
52. Sooty smoke from mass funeral pyres reduces visibility and makes eyes burn.
53. Soldiers and their huge scarred lieutenant force a group of blacksmiths to make chains and collars for slaves.
54. An enemy officer receives a field promotion for his ruthless suppression of resistance among a group of farmers.
55. Farmers search for livestock they drove away before soldiers passed through.
56. City gates are only opened for residents and merchants with traveling papers, and they are never opened after sundown.
57. A bandit gang led by a notorious outlaw has become an effective resistance group.
58. An army under attack signals for reinforcements by creating smoke and lighting bonfires.
59. Hundreds of worn and dirty tents, fire pits, and supply wagons cover what used to be a cornfield.
60. Swarms of biting flies hover over a trench that carries wastewater from a military camp to a nearby stream.
61. Craftsmen replace a burned bridge with connected rafts.
62. Military leaders attend a worship ceremony at an impressive temple built of rough-cut logs.
63. A local strongman and his thugs kidnapped the mayor and took control of a small town with the consent of the conquering army.
64. A unit of 100 lightly armored cavalry scouts the region, looking for enemy armies or spies.
65. In fulfillment of an ancient debt, an army of goblins emerges from underground to help defend the region.
66. An unusually high river prevents two armies from reaching each other across a ford, so they shout taunts and build ballistae.
67. Prices of weapons and basic necessities triple, while the cost of luxuries like fancy clothes and jewelry drop.
68. Defending soldiers build a simple fort on a ridge, with wattle walls and small hand-powered catapults.
69. A small flock of fake sheep is a lure to draw foraging enemy soldiers into an ambush.
70. A messenger raven flies overhead, carrying a small leather pouch containing a warning of an upcoming attack.
71. A brushfire caused by an unattended campfire rages out of control, threatening an isolated monastery.
72. A small band of army deserters dressed in peasant clothes and led by a self-absorbed aristocrat makes its way back toward home.
73. Soldiers collect tolls along all major roadways to support the war.
74. A painful skin disease works its way through a military encampment and the nearby town where they commandeer supplies.
75. Hundreds of war dogs and their trainers terrorize a town they believe is hiding a local prince.
76. A ruthless captain moves down a line of enemies impaled on poles, drinking a little blood of each one from a silver chalice.
77. A small band of rangers climbs dangerous cliffs to bring supplies and information to a besieged city.



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78. A walled town opens its gates to the enemy and flies purple banners, signifying that it is free and neutral in the current fight.
 79. The inns have been looted by soldiers, so they have no fresh meat or bread, and serve a brew of chicory and nettles instead of ale.
 80. Gruff warriors have ordered uncooperative townsfolk to stand on one foot in the town square, whipping them if they lose their balance.
 81. The horizon is black with smoke from campfires and pyres burning dead bodies.
 82. A wounded, insane minstrel walks along the road singing a depressing dirge of death and destruction; he will not stop or be consoled.
 83. A starving band of warriors has resorted to banditry and cannibalism.
 84. Soldiers of the invading army each have a tattoo of a coiled scorpion to show their allegiance, and some have many other tattoos from previous campaigns.
 85. Orc mercenaries waiting in ambush along a mountain pass have found a beautifully decorated cave.
 86. Military musicians practice their craft in a farm field and attract the attention of fey creatures from the adjoining forest.
 87. A distraught merchant moves frantically around the woods, trying to remember where he hid his treasure.
 88. Hill giants and trained mammoths build two border forts and clear the way for a new road between them.
 89. Powerful clerics cause a volcano to erupt and cut off the enemy's advance.
 90. Enemy soldiers carve their names and rude sayings into standing stones held sacred by the local people.
 91. Enemy armies fight a battle amid the fallen walls and columns of an ancient city.
 92. A small band of blind monks fights its way into the city to recover an ancient document taken by enemy soldier.
 93. Enemy soldiers rob the tombs of ancient rulers.
 94. A dragon takes advantage of the confusion, burning and looting towns on both sides of the conflict.
 95. Local villagers bring food and treats to soldiers on watch atop a long defensive wall.
 96. Soldiers herd enemy prisoners of war into a narrow river canyon and prepare to flood it by destroying a dam upriver.
 97. Warships land a large army of spearmen and archers along the coast.
 98. Mermen and mermaids attack enemy supply ships.
 99. A patrol of well-armed dwarves gets sidetracked by rumors of a hidden treasure.
 100. Wizards control conquered enemies with dire magic.

