

FIRE AT THE "LIMES" BORDER
A SCENARIO SET IN THE ROMAN PROVINCE
OF RAETIA (northern Bavaria) IN 256AD

The commander of the Roman fort along the "Limes" Raetian border line, Prefectus (Major) Agrippa, became aware of columns of black smoke rising from the lands beyond the Roman stockades and ditch marking the frontier of the Roman Empire. The Aleman tribe was again in commotion and this time the smoke being black instead of the usual white seemed a bad omen for the Roman garrison, namely the 2nd Raetian Cohort (battalion). Agrippa addressed his Centurio (Captain) Glabrio, a boldheaded veteran of the 2nd Raetians, now a Roman citizen but still maintaining the slight accent of his Gaulish home, who was standing a few steps behind awaiting orders of his commander.

"These Alemans seem to be getting more insolent day by day and a major attack on the Roman Empire fortifications appears imminent. We will not be able to withstand such an onslaught for long and are surely in need of support from the *Legio XXII Primigenia Pia Fidelis* stationed in *Mongontiacum* (Mainz). The Legio is 5-6,000 strong as compared to our cohortes quingenariae of just 500 auxiliaries. It is our duty to hold out as long as possible, but by Jupiter, I do not intend to perish in this barbarian province that far away from my beloved Rome", Agrippa spoke to Glabrio.

"Prefectus, o la la, it iss veery much whaat I fear as vell and don't waant to end up in dire circumstaances; ve need to make some alternative plaan. As alvaays ze Legio XXII will be slow in moving and shall arriwe too late if Alemans attack soon" responded Glabrio.

"Quite right Glabrio, we need to take some measures to secure our position, hide the banners and sanctums of the 2nd Raetian Cohort, before we displace ourselves prior to the attack. The two of us shall carry them away in a chest and hide them somewhere along the Limes, tomorrow in the early hours, to retrieve them once the Legio XXII has arrived. In this way we shall appear as the heros of the Raetian cohort who saved the banners and sanctums" whispered Agrippa.

"In the meantime give orders to Decurio (sergeant) Arivinus to double the occupation of the watch towers in the vicinity of the fort, and let Ensign Publius take a patrol along the Limes. They all need to be alert and give immediate notice to the fort once the Alemans approach" snorted Agrippa to his Centurio.

Beyond the Limes on "Barbarian" territories, a young Aleman nobleman, named Ulf, was shouting orders to a group of warriors to add more moist leaves to the fires to maintain thick black smoke columns. This was finally the signal the Aleman tribes, who had been gathering for the last 15 months, were awaiting. The attack across the Limes was imminent. Count Gero, a charismatic leader and warrior, had been able to unite the various Aleman tribes under his command. The target was clear: conquer and retain land for his people at the cost of the imperious Romans. Three loud horn signals sounded from the nearby village, which meant everyone was to assemble for a declaration by the Count.

Gero, an impressive figure with grey moustache and scared face, was wearing his double-horned brass battle helmet and raising the heavy war spear to demand silence. "Fellow tribesmen" his voice thundered across the village square. "The time is ripe to regain what belongs to our ancestors"! The crowd starting cheering. "Aleman tribes from near and far have assembled to make us powerful and the Romans shall be shattered by our iron fist". The crowd was getting ecstatic shouting: "Gero, Gero, Gero, take us beyond the Limes to the fertile lands of our ancestors". Gero exclaimed: " Soon we will move and swipe away the Roman brute. Sharpen your swords and spears and be ready, soon!!!"

Gero waved to his son Ulf and his advisers and bodyguard to follow him into the chieftain's hut, while the crowd continued pledging their allegiance to Gero "The Leader of Alemans". The hut was full of smoke from the fire place and the smell of stale beer and urine when the warriors entered and gathered around the massive oak table. There were still puddles of the strong Aleman brew on the table from last night's feasting. Gero signalled to the others to sit around the table and waited a few moments before he started his monologue.

"We need to break through the Limes border line at night in silence to make a surprise attack on the main fortification along this part of the Limes. This fort is held by the 2nd Raetians a cohorte of roughly 500 experienced auxiliaries, as reported by our intelligence. A surprise can only be achieved if we are able to eliminate one of the watch towers in the surveillance chain, before a fire signal can be passed on to the next post. As you know these watch towers are all within visibility range from one another and a signal can be passed on within a short time, which would nullify our surprise attack. Therefore, I will lead a small force of selected warriors to eliminate one of the watch tower crews, while our main force awaits the order to follow afterwards unseen through the gap. Then we shall fall on the Raetians and slaughter them to the last man. That will intimidate the rest of the Romans to mess around with the Alemans.

My son Ulf, Wolfman the Druid, 3 archers and my axmen bodyguards, will cross the Limes stockade with me tomorrow in the early hours. We need to find the secret tunnel of Fritho - the rotten bastard - to pass beneath the defensive line unseen. Nevertheless we will take a ladder which we will need to reach the elevated entrance of the watch tower. The archers will take out any of the Romans who appear on the upper floor to give fire signals, while the rest of us will target the entrance".

The warriors snorted their approval and praised Gero for his cunning and cleverness.

"With Wotan and Teutates on our side we shall be victorious" bellowed Gero and dismissed his staff to prepare for the coming onslaught.

THE GAME

It is in the early hours of a damp and foggy November day in Roman province of Raetia in 256 AD. A small force of Aleman warriors has approached the Limes border line but still hiding in the woods a few steps away from the Roman stockade and ditch. The Roman watch tower is quiet and there is only a weak light on the upper floor which indicates that there must be a soldier on guard. The tower has a crew of five: Decurio (sergeant) Arivinus, one archer and three soldiers. At the same time Prefectus (Major) Agrippa and Centurio (Captain) Glabrio, secretly slipped out of the fort carrying a pair of shovels and picks as well as a large chest containing the banners and sanctums of the Raetian cohort. Their intention being to hid away

the chest in a hole somewhere along the Limes border. Earlier that evening Ensign Publius and a small patrol of the Raetian Cohorte had left the fort to pass along the Limes watch towers and check that everything was in order.

The Game will start with the Alemans approaching the Limes stockade and ditch as well as searching for the hidden tunnel under the fortifications. In order to find the tunnel the Aleman player may draw one card from a stack of 36 cards (containing 4x cards with face value 2-10) per move. The tunnel will be discovered only with a 9 or 10 card. Should the tunnel be found it will take one move for upto 3 warriors to pass through. If the ladder is used to climb the stockade, again 3 warriors may traverse per move and another move to pass the ditch, but there is a danger of being discovered by the guard in the watch tower. To determine whether the guard is alert in this case, toss a normal dice: 5 and 6 means he is alert and will check further. Throw a second dice and if it is again 5 or 6 he will discover the Alemans and alert the garrison of the watch tower. If the second throw was a 4 he will awake a second guard as support (that means in the next move two guards may become alert). With a 1,2 or 3 the guard will not pay further attention for that move.

Should the Alemans be spotted the watch tower has the order to signal to the neighbouring watch towers that there is imminent danger ahead. This is handled in the following way: In the move following detection of the Alemans a guard has to signal with a lite torch to the next tower for 3 consecutive moves (if this is achieved - i.e. guard is not shot or eliminated otherwise by the end of the 3rd move), the signal has been received and the fort is alerted of an imminent attack - so no more surprise effect. The patrol of Publius will appear the following move to encounter the Alemans. However the patrol may also arrive earlier. After the first completed move of a torch signal the Roman player may draw one card. If it is a 9 or 10, then the patrol saw the fire and will arrive the following move. After two consecutive completed moves of signalling, the Roman player may draw two cards for patrol to arrive (same rules as above).

As regards Prefectus (Major) Agrippa and Centurio (Captain) Glabrio, the Roman player will draw one card at the beginning of each move. With a 2,3 or 4 the two will appear in the bushes next to the watch tower with a chest they want to bury. Once they have arrived they will start digging the following move. They need to accumulate 15 points (one throw per move with a percentage dice) to successfully hide away the chest. They will then disappear if they were not detected by the Alemans. Alemans close by may discover them with a normal dice throw of 5 or 6 (one throw per move).

The GAME has a total of 15 MOVES!

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The player with the most points after 15 moves wins this game. The following points can be achieved:

ROMANS

1. Discover the Alemans and successfully warn the fort with 3 consecutive fire signals

20 Points

20

2. Bury the chest with the sanctums and banners of the 2nd Raetian Cohorte

10 Points

Total 40

3. Points for surviving Romans - Agrippa (3), Glabrio, Publius, Arivinius (2), Others (1)
17 Points max.

3

2+7 = 9

4. Points for killed or captured Alemans - Gero, Ulf (3), Druid (2), Others (1)
15 Points max.

9

11

BONUS POINTS - If both Gero and Ulf get killed or captured - additionally 5 points

32

ALEMANS

1. Eliminate the watch tower and prevent that the fort is warned with 3 consecutive fire signals
20 Points

2. Capture the chest with the sanctums and banners of the 2nd Raetian Cohorte and carry it across the Limes.
10 Points

10

3. Points for killed or captured Romans - Agrippa (3), Glabrio, Publius, Arivinius (2), Others (1)
17 Points max.

17

15

4. Points for surviving Alemans - Gero, Ulf (3), Druid (2), Others (1)
15 Points max.

10

10

Total 40

BONUS POINTS - If both Agrippa and Glabrio get killed or captured - additionally 5 points

5
32

5

Note: Alemans will break off fight if Gero, Ulf and Druid Wolfman all get killed.

FIGHTING POINTS

ROMANS

- 1. Decurio Arivinius (veteran & head of watch tower) (+2)
- 2. Agrippa / Glabrio / Ensign Publius / Cavalry (+1)
- 3. Others (0)

ALEMANS

- 1. Gero / Ulf (+2)
- 2. Druid Wolfman (+1)
- 3. Others (0)