

Sergeanting 101

By HL Clef of Cividale

How do I get to be a sergeant?

- Just ask. Yes, it's that simple. Find out who the general for TRM's army will be during their reign and let them know that you would like to be a sergeant. The general will either make the decision on the sergeants or they may let their unit or company commanders do this. Either way you will have put your name in for the job or know who you need to talk to further.
- Keep in mind the wars that you will be attending when asking for a command position.

So you've asked and are now a sergeant for the Calontir army. What do I do now?

- Get yourself prepared for the war by reading the treaty. The more you know about the conventions and scenarios that will be used during the war, the better.
- Talk to your unit commander and/or the general. See what their plans are for the war. Ask what they expect of you.
- Go to war maneuvers and war college.
- Organize, organize, organize. I can't say it enough. Organize yourself and your responsibilities. Organize (recruit) people to be in your unit.
- Find an experience person to help you and give you advice. Not a person to take your place, but someone to look to for advice.

You've done all of the above and now you're at the war, what next?

- Be one of the first to get your armor and weapons inspected.
- Carry a marker and roll of duct tape to inspections. These are very useful for putting everyone's names on the back of their helmets. The duct tape can also be used for a quick fix for armor and weapons.
- Make sure everyone knows when and where inspections are happening.
- The night before the battle your company commander should talk with you about the battle plan for the next day. If they don't seek them out. Find out if there is a command meeting with the Calontir command staff.
- If you are asked to attend the allied commanders meeting go, watch, and listen.

Ready for the battle. This is what you've been waiting for.

- Make sure your troops know who you are and that you are the sergeant.
- Take a weapon that you are unlikely to jump into the fight with. You are commanding, not fighting. Your weapon is the fighters under your command.
- Help your troops with choosing the correct weapon for the battle. Going out with a bastard sword or two sword may not be the best decision. Help your friends.
- BE LOUD!!!
- Herd your cats (troops) to where they are supposed to be.
- Keep your head about you. Stay Sane.
- Know the plan. If you don't know what you are supposed to be doing, this is the last chance to find out.
- Let your troops know what they are supposed to be doing. Fill them in on the plan. If they ask a question and you don't have an answer, ask your commander.
- Ask questions; How far are we to advance?, Do we drop and lock scutumms?, every battle has similar but different questions. Let you troops know.
- Keep in mind that all plans that are made can (and probably will) change once lay-on is called.
- Be ready to take command of your unit or the army should your commander and general die. But NOT before!

- Be aware of your surroundings. Look at the field. Look at the units advancing toward you and the unit you are advancing toward. Communicate with your commander.
- Concentrate on your surroundings, but not so much that you lose sight of the goal.
- Look for heraldry (different units, Kings, Highnesses, Dukes, Counts), enemy commanders, and archers.
- Traffic control. Make sure everyone is in line and about the 3rd rank back there is a small gap. [scutum, artillery, spears, small gap, reserve]
- Don't use phrases like "Halt" or "Hold your ground". These either use the word 'Hold' or sound too much like it. Use "Stop" or "Stay your ground".
- Watch how the battle develops. Watch your flanks and watch for open flanks of your opponents.
- Let your commander know what you see because they may not see what you are seeing. Don't be put-off if they don't act on it. There may be a bigger plan that they are seeing or following. [We may need to hit at a certain time or place to make something else happen for someone else.] BUT, be ready to act on it if they think you should.
 - o Use these moments as your 'war white-board'. Keep track of what's going on and why and when they either acted on your suggestion or didn't, and note the results. MUCH can be learned from paying attention to the dominoes as they fall.
- Don't fall prey to the "we have to do [something] now" person. Say thank you, look at what they are seeing, and let them know you are in communication with your commander.
- In a resurrection battle, be guiding the fighters to spots where they are needed.
- Some commands:
 - o Commands should be given as a preparatory command and then the command.
 - Not all commanders like to give the preparatory command, but I feel that this lets the army know where they are going and what they are to do.
 - "Calontir scutum prepare to rise", "RISE"
 - "Prepare to charge", "CHARGE"
 - Everyone should know to echo these commands. If they are not being echoed, tell everyone to echo the commands that you are giving.
 - o Advance by the step.
 - "Calontir prepare to advance by the step", "STEP" [with each step].
 - o Advance to contact.
 - This is simply moving from where you started to a point in the distance or toward an opposing unit. Make sure your front line knows where they are to go.
 - Remember to keep your unit in order and enough room in for your front line to work.
 - o Advance through contact.
 - Simple advance, then a 3 step charge. Remember to announce the charge when you want it to happen.
 - The first rank should go 2 or 3 ranks deep or all the way through. Make sure the troops know how far they are supposed to go.
 - o Dress Right/Left
 - This is used to dress the scutum line, but it can also be used to shift the army to the right or left.
 - "Calontir DRESS RIGHT"
 - o Reform
 - Used to reform the army.

- Charges
 - Column
 - A column of fighters that charge straight into the weak spot of your opponent. The make-up of this charge should be mainly secondary shields and artillery.
 - A good use of this charge is to advance the army into a weak area of the opponent.
 - Sweep
 - A column of fighters that move in front of the army from right to left [or vice-versa] to disrupt your opponent so your spears can be put out front of the scutum wall or to advance the army.
 - The goal of this charge is to disrupt or kill your opponent's spears.
 - Pulse
 - A column of fighters or the entire front lines of the army surge to contact of your opponent and then back away.
 - The use of this charge is to take ground or disrupt your opponent.
 - Scutum commands
 - Drop and lock
 - The scutums drop to their knees and overlap forming the scutum wall.
 - Advance/back-up on your knees
 - Scutums advance to a point on their knees. Usually under fire, so make sure the artillery stays with them.
 - Rise
 - The scutums will get up.
- Remember HG Dongal's Rock, Paper, Scissors lesson
- A Shield wall is the Rock
 - Charges are the Scissors
 - Spears are the Paper
 - Rock beats Scissors, Scissors beats Paper, and Paper beats Rock
 - It works for most SCA battle situations.
- Be confident! When the time comes (your commander and general are dead or you and your troops are on your own), don't be afraid to make a decision. Often making a bad call or decision is much better (and fun) than not making a decision.

Some online unit and command papers written by HG Kensor to look at:

<http://www.calontir.sca.org/earlmarshal/Articles/Kensor-SmallUnitFighting-Fighter201.pdf>

<http://www.calontir.sca.org/earlmarshal/Articles/Kensor-BasicMeleeSkills-Fighter202.pdf>

<http://www.calontir.sca.org/earlmarshal/Articles/Kensor-LargeUnitCommand-Fighter301.pdf>