

Jimland Reports Volume 1

By Jim Wright
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INTRODUCTION.

Date: 2001-12-09

WELCOME TO JIMLAND, WHERE ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN.

Jimland is a land of tropical jungle, rolling savannas, parched deserts, and lofty mountains; a land of flying carpets, flying dinosaurs, lost civilizations, lost tribes, lost creatures, and, of course, lost explorers. Jimland is many things, but it is never dull. So get yourself down to the Empress Hotel, book yourself a room, and have yourself a merry little Adventure. We hope you come back!

HISTORY

The history of Jimland is not recorded. When vague references are found in reports and personal histories they are usually of little help. So we have dispensed with the notion we will ever know the history of this lovely land.

SIR JAMES JAMES

That Jimland is of any interest at all is the result of the efforts of a single individual, Sir James James, Captain RN. Sir James did not discover Jimland, its existence had been known for years and totally ignored for even longer. Sir James provided the Reason to bring Civilization to Jimland, Gold and the mysterious X-Rock.

What Jimland was called before Captain James landed one sultry evening is not known. On period maps Jimland is just an empty spot surrounded by more empty spots. The Queen, God Bless Her, appointed a Royal Commission to investigate Sir James reports about the riches of Jimland. Upon verifying the reports, the Commission suggested The Empire bring civilization to Jimland and a little of Jimland back to The Empire. In addition, they suggested a small honorarium for Sir James. Sir James promptly died the next day.

Nevertheless, The Queen, God Bless Her, knighted Sir James anyway. To show there were no hard feelings about his death without Royal Permission, the country was renamed James Land. This has been altered by common use to the simpler Jimland. The natives ignore both the name and idea that The Empire rules Jimland. The Empire backs the Sultan of Jimland. The Sultan backs no one and watches his own back very carefully. Endless palace intrigues keep the Sultan's edge sharp and his patience short.

THE RICHES OF JIMLAND

Jimland is rich in Gold and the mysterious X-Rock. We all know what Gold is. No one knows what X-Rock is. Its properties defy description. It has been said it can be used to power flying machines, exploded to create great bombs, worked to create metals of extraordinary strength and lightness, ground to powder it has fabled healing powers and is reputed to a fabulous aphrodisiac. Of course all the worlds powers are jockeying for their fair share of this material. However, X-Rock is rare and hard to find which, of course, makes it all the more valuable. The Empire's claim of sovereignty over Jimland, and therefore X-Rock, is simply ignored by the rest of the world.

JIMVILLE

The Capitol of Jimland, Jimville, grew from the original encampment of Sir James. The Sultan elected to build his Palace at Jimville because, as Sir James had originally noted, "it was the least wet spot on the whole damnable coast".

MAINLAND GEOGRAPHY

The Great Mountains. Great deposits of X-Rock are said to be in the Great Mountains.

The Desert. A little explored region famous in Jimland myth for lost cities and strange creatures.

The Savannas. A vast expanse covered with tall grass and scattered groves of trees.

The Wilds of Jimland. Dark, damp, and dangerous. Home to many flora and fauna.

Tropical humidity and monsoons aside, Jimland is dark and dank land for many miles inland, ripe with great growths of vegetation, many of which remain unrecorded and unknown outside Jimland. The lush greenery dies at the foot of the great mountains that were named by Sir James the "Great Mountains". The mountain valleys are where the deposits of X-Rock have been found. Many mining parties have gone off in search of the mineral, few have returned, and the tales told by the survivors are seldom believed. Some medical authorities propose the theory that the dust created during the mining of X-Rock affects men's minds and creates delusions and nightmares of epic proportion ending with insanity. The deserts of Jimland are explored only by brave traders, inquiring scientific parties, and desperate individuals seeking riches and treasure to solve their problems.

THE SECRET ISLANDS

Off the coast of Jimland lay the mysterious Secret Islands. These volcanic islands rise dramatically from the ocean depths. They are often shrouded in a heavy fog. Many of the islands have volcanoes slumbering at their centers. The rich ash thrown up over the centuries coupled with the warm climate and abundant rainfall have created a lush growth unrivaled elsewhere in Jimland.

Travel near the Islands is a risky business not taken lightly. There are no maps of the Secret Island archipelago. A few partial maps of alleged Pirate Bases or buried Treasure appear occasionally, but are never taken seriously by the veterans of Jimland. The Native superstitions say the Secret Islands are on the backs of great turtles and move as the turtles move. So maps are of no use and are never made.

The Secret Islands harbor many Pirate strongholds. The European Powers, with the Sultan's blessings, are constantly searching the Secret Islands for the bases and attacking those they find. In addition to the Pirate Menace, the Secret Islands are alleged to be source of many tales of Ancient Temples, Human Sacrifice, strange man-like creatures, and Treasure beyond Measure.

The Secret Islands remain a fog-shrouded garden of paradise, little explored, much avoided. Recent activity centered on Pirate suppression and Expeditions by various Fearless and Famous Explorers may end this isolation, but it is too early in the effort to draw any conclusions about the islands.

The Secret Islands remain true to their name.

NATIVE CULTURE

The origins of the Native peoples of Jimland are unknown. What we do know is that the Natives are revolting. Take that as you will.

There are two kinds of natives in the Wilds of Jimland, Natives and Tribal Natives, know simply as Tribal. Natives are the basic Natives found in Jimland. They may or may not be Rebels, and they may or may not be friendly. Natives are more "civilized", usually rifle armed, think Sudanese or Pathans. Tribals are less likely to be friendly and are more ferocious on the attack. Tribals are less "civilized", more prone to attack, do not use firearms, think tribal Africans. They prefer to be left alone. Everyone tries to oblige them.

TECHNOLOGY

Most power is supplied by animals. Steam power contraptions are slowly being introduced. Bolt-action rifles are the latest thing in weapons. The Sword, Spear and Shield are still the Tribal weapons of choice, while the more civilized Natives have begun acquiring firearms of all sorts.

ANIMALS

In Jimland the past is present, and the present is very hungry. Large creatures of all descriptions abound. Things thought only legends step out of the Wilds to terrorize the Citizens of Jimland. Every week someone reports a new creature has been found. From the snow-capped Great Mountains to the teeming Oceans, Jimland is full of marvelous and dangerous creatures that slither, walk, run, swim or fly. Be alert or be lunch.

WELCOME TO JIMLAND, WHERE ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN.

Report 1 - REPORT OF THE CAPTAIN, H.M.S. DANCER.

Date: 2001-12-09

To: First Lord, Admiralty
From: Captain, H.M.S. Dancer
Date: December 9, 2001

Sir:

It is my duty to report the results of raid on the Rebels in Jimland. Pursuant to orders H.M.S. Dancer under my command rendezvoused with the American vessel U.S.S. Bee on the 8th, and took aboard the U.S. Marine complement.

Dawn, on the 9th, the Royal Marine Light Infantry and the U.S. Marines were successfully landed on the Jimland shore. The naval party then withdrew as the Combined Marine Force headed inland. No further contact was made with the Marines. H.M.S. Dancer lay offshore for three days with no word from the Marines. On the fourth day, R.M.L.I. Sergeant Tower was found unconscious on the beach by a naval search party dispatched by the Dancer to look for the Marines. The Sergeant's report is attached. Some of the statements seem extreme, but the final results were undeniable as I deemed it important to verify the Sergeant's report. Lieutenants Aldershot and Edwards handsomely volunteered to go ashore and scout the area. Their report is attached.

Report of Sergeant Tower, R.M.L.I.

We landed without incident and formed up with the Americans. We pushed inland till we could see the village ahead. At this point Lt. Drumhead ordered the American Marines to the right while we formed skirmish line to the left. On command the entire force advanced.

Village was made of several small stone and mud single story buildings. The Americans first encountered the Rebels as they advanced on the outer most building. Soon a brisk fire was being exchanged between the American Marines and the Rebels. We had not yet been seen as we moved on the left most building in the village.

With a cheer the American Marines charged the Rebels. Hand-to-hand combat raged for the building.

At about this same time, we came to the edge of the palm growth we had been pushing through. The rebels before us were behind a stone wall and in the stone buildings. We began exchanging fire with them. After several minutes of this we heard an explosion nearby. This, I think, was the Americans blowing up Rebel supplies.

Now something I can only say happened even though I don't believe it myself. Out of the palms and brush came a vision fit for hell. A giant monster with spikes growing out of its head and a great shield-like growth around its neck. It stood for a moment and then strolled out of the brush. The natives immediately ceased fire. We were not sure what to do. Finally Lt. Drumhead ordered us to fire on both the monster and the natives. This we did.

The natives returned fire. The noise of our firing and several hits scored on the monster only enraged it. It charged our position and trampled several men into paste. The Lieutenant ordered us to the right to link up with the Americans. This we attempted to do, but were again attacked by the towering monster. More men were killed by it even as they fired point blank at the beast. After linking up with the Americans in the center of the village, the fighting seemed to cease for a few minutes. The monster, thank God, stayed off to our left. It seemed to have lost interest in us for the moment.

The Americans had been exchanging a hot fire with the Rebels on the right side of the village. I saw their Sergeant cut down by a volley. The American officer ordered a charge on the Rebels. Lt. Drumhead ordered us to charge the left most natives. This we did with great fear as we could see the great beast till roaming around and another had lumbered out of the bush.

We stormed the left most stone building and fought hand-to-hand with the Rebels. I was knocked off the building roof. I saw the Rebel leader personally engage Lt. Drumhead. The Lieutenant killed the leader by his own hand. More Rebel forces now appeared at the edge of the village and began firing on the Lieutenant and the men with him.

The Americans stormed the right most building and after hard fighting destroyed the supplies in the building. After this I can report no more as I lost consciousness.

I later found my way to the beach and was rescued by sailors from H.M.S. Dancer.

Report of Lieutenants Aldershot and Edwards RN.

We were dropped in the surf at the same point the Marine force was landed. We waved off the whaleboat and went inland. It took us a half-day of hard traveling to find the village attacked by the Marines. The natives had apparently abandoned the small village. We carefully crept to the edge of the dense foliage at the village edge. For several minutes we watched the village. With no signs of life, we openly presented ourselves. Nothing contested our presence.

We found two stone buildings destroyed by explosion. We found many rebel dead mixed with American Marines casualties in and around each building. On the left side of the village we found the remains of the R.M. detachment. That the R.M.L.I. died in combat with the Rebels is sure, however we also found several men who looked as though they had been literally torn limb from limb. We also found great tracks in the ground, but no other signs of Rebels or beasts. We found no survivors.

After searching the village for several hours we returned to the rendezvous point and were subsequently picked up by H.M.S. Dancer's whaleboat.

Summary of Captain, H.M.S. Dancer.

Based on the reports of R.M.L.I. Sergeant Tower and R.N. Lts. Aldershot and Edwards, it is my conclusion that the mission objective was met. The Rebel supplies have been destroyed and the Rebel leader has been killed. The Dancer is now without Marines. The Captain of the U.S.S. Bee was informed as

to the results of the expedition. Needless to say, he was less than pleased. Further diplomatic activity in this area may be required. Without Marines I do not have enough strength to attempt to recover the casualties.

The U.S.S. Bee has departed the area. The German vessel, H.I.M. Rhine was seen hull down yesterday. Today the I.R.N. vessel Saint Peter was sighted patrolling off the Jimland shore.

Respectfully submitted.

End of dispatch.

FROM THE EDITOR

Gentle Reader, with your best interest at heart, we have sent a staff to Jimland to report firsthand our Country's noble efforts to bring civilization to all those concerned. God save the Queen!

ADDITIONAL NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Just why are the Germans and the Russians poking around Jimland in the first place? And why were the Americans conveniently close at hand? We hope the Admiralty will soon lay bare this obvious international conspiracy and protect our nation's rights in this area.

Report 2 - TRANS-MED NEWS SERVICE STAFF LANDS IN JIMLAND.

Date: 2002-01-06

TRANS-MED NEWS SERVICE STAFF LANDS IN JIMLAND

The mysterious lure of Jimland has caught the Trans-Med News Staff.

Immediately upon landing we, the Staff, consolidated our baggage on the wobbling wooden pier of the largest metropolis in Jimland, namely Jimville, erstwhile Capitol of Jimland and seat of power of the Sultan of Jimland. After a short altercation with the various locals trying to carry off our goods we assembled our party and began looking for the Hotel for which we had room reservations and high hopes for a hot shower and cold beer.

The Empress of Jimville was easily found, being the second largest building in town, the Sultan's Palace being the largest. We were cordially greeted by the Hotel's Owner. Safely tucked away into our four room suite, two rooms of which had a roof, a point of pride for the Owner, we found hot water was a specialty item and cold beers were as rare as virgins in the Sultan's Harem. Nevertheless, we set up shop. Each of us then proceeded to roam about the town, soaking up the local color and avoiding the drinking water. Our first report is attached.

JIMLAND CUSTOMS

In Jimland the natives have a multi-part ceremony called the Three Seasons of Manhood. In the winter months, native manhood is tested by hunting the Dread Snappers high in their mountain lairs. In the spring months, native manhood is tested on the Ocean by fishing for the Oh-No fish. In the summer heat, native manhood is tested by the Sacred Hunt. Each test goes from high noon till sundown. The natives also use the Seasons of Manhood to satisfy blood feuds between tribes.

As we asked about these ceremonies the natives became much agitated. It seems we are just in time to witness the Season of the Summer Sacred Hunt. We have arranged a meeting with the Sultan and have hopes he will allow us to watch the event unfold from the rooftops of his Palace. The natives rather smirked at us when we discussed this. Still, our card was sent off to the Sultan begging an audience. We shall see.

Next report will be on Jimland's geography and its important to the Powers trying to gain influence here.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Gentle Readers, several of you have been thoroughly taken aback that the good services of the Trans-Med News Service are available in the exotic far-reaches of Jimland. Let me reassure you that distance and money are no object when considered against reporting events of interest to you, our Loyal Readers. Time stands still as our reporters dash about the centuries bringing you news to make your blood run fast. Thanks to the Simpson-Berundi Chrono-Compressor Booth, of which we have the only working model, our staff can travel in time. It is true. Fear not. Our reports will span the ages. It is the least we can do for our Gentle Readers. Subscription rates will be doubled effective immediately.

Report 3 - THREE SEASONS OF MANHOOD: THE SACRED HUNT.
Date: 2002-01-13

THREE SEASONS OF MANHOOD: THE SACRED HUNT

In Jimland the natives have a multi-part ceremony called the Three Seasons of Manhood. In the winter months, native manhood is tested by hunting the Dread Snappers high in their mountain lairs. In the spring months, native manhood is tested on the ocean by fishing for the Oh-No fish. In the summer heat, native manhood is tested by the Sacred Hunt. Each test goes from high noon till sundown. The natives also use the Seasons of Manhood to satisfy blood feuds between tribes.

At High Noon the Sacred Hunt began. From the rooftop of the Sultan's Palace we could hear the beaters driving the animals toward the hunters. The Sultan had invited the British and Americans to join in as a thank you for snuffing out the rebellion. Two of the Sultan's units also joined the six native tribal warbands for the hunt.

From the rooftop we could see very little of the actual hunt. The gunfire of the hunters was nearly overcome by the snarling, grunting, trumpeting, growling, and howling of the animals trapped in the killing zone. Much to our pleasure we saw numerous dinosaur heads appearing and disappearing among the treetops. The rumors need no further confirmation. Dinosaurs of many types, and other exotic animals, live and thrive in Jimland. This is indeed a strange and wonderful land.

Sadly, we cannot report on the actual hunt and, we are sure, the heroic deeds done by the hunters. We can report that the units of the Sultan's Guard were severely mauled by parties unknown. The Americans were likewise shot to pieces. The British unit was actually credited with a kill of a large bipedal dinosaur, type unknown. The few survivors of the Royal Marines were much excited by the animals they saw even though they too suffered heavy casualties. Native warband casualties were not known although they were reported as "high".

The Sultan was pleased. He ordered the Summer Taxes collected. With these funds he would hire more mercenaries to bring the Sultan's Guard back up to strength. The tax collectors leave town tomorrow.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

On an international note, several Prussian "advisors" were constantly at the Sultan's side. What they were up to is yet a mystery. An Imperial Russian Colonel was also in the Sultan's party. The Prussians and Russians did not seem on friendly terms.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Of note was the Purple Flag Warband, lead by Neil, who creatively used a D10 as a D20. When "discovered" using this die, Neil pleaded his case in several directions. The crowd started to get ugly, but they were ugly when they came in. Please feel free to chastise Neil at every opportunity.

Report 4 - HISTORY OF JIMLAND.

Date: 2002-02-10

HISTORY OF JIMLAND

The history of Jimland is not recorded. When vague references are found in reports and personal histories they are usually of little help. So we have dispensed with the notion we will ever know the history of this lovely land.

SIR JAMES JAMES

That Jimland is of any interest at all is the result of the efforts of a single individual, Sir James James, Captain RN. Sir James did not discover Jimland, its existence had been known for years and totally ignored for even longer. Sir James provided the Reason to bring Civilization to Jimland; Gold and the mysterious X-Rock.

What Jimland was called before Captain James landed one sultry evening is not known. On period maps Jimland is just an empty spot surrounded by more empty spots. The Queen, God Bless Her, appointed a Royal Commission to investigate Sir James claims about Jimland's resources. Upon verifying the claims, the Commission suggested the Empire bring civilization to Jimland and a few of the land's riches back to the Empire. In addition, they suggested a small honorarium for Sir James. Sir James promptly died the next day.

Nevertheless, The Queen, God Bless Her, knighted Sir James anyway. To show there were no hard feelings about his death without royal permission, the country was renamed James Land. This has been altered by common use to the simpler Jimland. The natives ignore both the name and idea that the Empire rules Jimland. The Empire backs the Sultan of Jimland. The Sultan backs no one and watches his own back very carefully. Endless palace intrigues keep the Sultan's edge sharp and his patience short.

THE RICHES OF JIMLAND

Jimland is rich in gold and the mysterious X-Rock. We all know what gold is. No one knows what X-Rock is. Its properties defy description. It has been said it can be used to power flying machines, exploded to create great bombs, worked to create metals of extraordinary strength and lightness, ground to powder it has fabled healing powers and is reputed to a fabulous aphrodisiac. Of course all the worlds powers are jockeying for their fair share of this material. However, X-Rock is rare and hard to find which, of course, makes it all the more valuable. The Empire's claim of sovereignty over Jimland, and therefore the X-Rock, is simply ignored by the rest of the world.

GENERAL NOTES

The capitol of Jimland, Jimville, grew from the original encampment of Sir James. The Sultan elected to build his Palace at Jimville because, as Sir James had originally noted, "it was the least wet spot on the whole damnable coast". Tropical humidity and monsoons aside, Jimland is dark and dank land for many miles inland, ripe with great growths of vegetation, many of which remain unrecorded and unknown outside Jimland. The lush greenery dies at the foot the great mountains that were named by Sir James the "Great Mountains". The mountain valleys are where the deposits of X-Rock have been found. Many mining parties have gone off in search of the mineral, few have returned, and

the tales told by the survivors are seldom believed. Some medical authorities propose the theory that the dust created during the mining of X-Rock affects men's minds and creates delusions and nightmares of epic proportion ending with insanity. The deserts of Jimland are explored only by brave traders, inquiring scientific parties, and desperate individuals seeking riches and treasure to solve their problems.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Well-known "Scientist of the Empire" and "Member of the Royal Society of Modern Science", Dr. Julius Flagstone is in Jimville hiring porters for an expedition. When asked what he was looking for the Doctor responded, "Why, my Dear, a little company for my trip. Would you care to join me?" The Lady in question was none other than Olivia Fate, the fetching former wife of Flagstone's most contemptible competitor, the Evil Professor Fate (first name to this day still unknown and thought to be an American). After this encounter the Good Doctor and Olivia seem inseparable. Reports of Professor Fate's presence in Jimville are rumored, but unconfirmed.

Presence confirmed by the sheer size of his ego, Doctor Otto Von Igneous, of his "Imperial Majesty's Academy of Science and Religion", is also outfitting an expedition. Of course the two doctors discretely manage to avoid one another in Jimville. In the wilds it may be another story. This reporter has managed to get an associate attached to each expedition to bring back all the news of these Fearless and Famous Explorers.

Report 5 - TAXES BRING JIMLAND TO REBELLION! GERMANS LAND TROOPS!

Date: 2002-02-15

TAXES BRING JIMLAND TO REBELLION! GERMANS LAND TROOPS!

The Sultan has brought the natives of Jimland to the brink of rebellion. Again. The declaration of the latest taxes has the natives boiling. The declaration caused the sudden disappearance of all signs of wealth in the Capitol of Jimland. Just as suddenly, graffiti appeared on the walls throughout the town. The Sultan's Guard caught several natives with paintbrush in hand. The summary execution of the offenders did not seem to dampen the natives' mood for revolt.

The Sultan, casting a long look around his throne room, summoned the German envoy to his side. After several minutes of furious whispers and arm waving the envoy bowed to the Sultan and left the throne room. Two days later a sizable contingent of German infantry marched into Jimville. Accompanying the sweating infantry were several very large wagons pulled by immense team of mules. No one could pierce the sentry lines around the wagons. Great tarps covered the bulky contents. Finally the wagons were hauled into the Sultan's shipyard and stored out of sight of prying eyes. Several times that night shots rang out, followed a few seconds later by an awkward "Halt!". Dawn found four native bodies piled in front of the shipyard gate.

Back in the Empress, we of the Trans-Med News Service tried to decide if we still had to pay the families of the deceased. Our agreement was quite standard; requiring the actual delivery of facts before payment was due. This argument extended throughout the day and well into the sultry evening. Finally, in an attempt to stop the incessant wailing of the family members, we settled on one-quarter the standard fee as gesture of good faith and in honor of the attempt to gain the truth.

The following day the Germans brought in a small group of Naval engineering types. They immediately entered the shipyard and were not seen again.

Meanwhile, the Sultan's Tax Collectors have left Jimville to begin the tax circuit. Already reports of minor skirmishes have reached the Capitol. The Sultan grows more irritable. The Germans calmly strut around town like they own the place. This arrogant attitude does not set well with the other countries vying for influence and power in Jimland, namely the British, the Americans, the Italians, the French, and most annoyed of all, the Russians. The small Imperial Russian coastal craft normally attached to the Russian Consulate left Jimville with its boilers at full pressure. Its ribbons of brackish steam and smoke soon disappeared over the horizon.

The buzz around Jimville is that these two Powers were preparing something large, sharp, and nasty for each other. The English Consul merely smiled, curled his mustache, and loosened the pistol casually stuffed in waistband of his stylish pants. Even the natives avoid the German sector of Jimville's Embassy Row. Local citizens call the Embassy area "The Turk's Row of Mud houses that don't fall down as much as ours but they still leak like a sieve when it rains". These natives, such jokers!

As ever we stand vigilant for further developments. Rumors abound. The natives grow restless. It has even been reported that the less than reputable German scalawag Major Mauser was seen sneaking into the Shipyard. Our Gentle Readers need no reminding that major trouble follows this rascal Major. Only his influence with the Kaiser, his great family fortune, his ability to bring colonial riches to Prussia, and his deadly marksmanship keep his head on his shoulders. That and the presence of several hundred crack German Infantry. The presence of the dread Major Mauser is a sure sign that the Hun is up to something.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

No word has been received from either the Flagstone or Igneous expeditions. This has not caused much alarm in Jimville. It is not unusual for expeditions to disappear into the heart of Jimland and reappear months later without a report between coming and going. We remain alert for news.

Report 6 - GERMANS ATTEMPT RESCUE OF SULTAN'S TAX COLLECTORS!

Date: 2002-02-23

GERMANS ATTEMPT RESCUE OF SULTAN'S TAX COLLECTORS!

All of Jimville is talking about the news of the German's attempted rescue of the Sultan's beleaguered Tax collectors. As we all remember, the Sultan's Tax Collectors, escorted by two units of the Sultan's Guard, were homeward bound when large numbers of natives attacked them.

The Sultan somehow pressured the Germans into sending out a sizable force to bring in his Tax Collectors, their escort, and, most importantly, the Tax Loot. The Germans brought two units of crack infantry and a heavily guarded wagon train to Jimville and thence into the Sultan's shipyard where heavy security by trigger-happy German infantry kept prying eyes away.

We now know what the Germans brought in the wagons. They have a steam power monster of an armored vehicle. It has a revolving turret with a medium size artillery piece mounted in it. The infernal machine spouts steam and soot over everything. The racket of its passing is unsettling. With this machine in the lead, the dread Major Mauser led the German expedition into the wilds of Jimland.

Several days later the survivors of the expedition returned with a few remaining members of the Sultan's Guard and part of the Sultan's Tax Money. We have gathered the following reports. Our sources will not be identified.

SULTAN'S GUARD

We were providing close escort to the Tax Wagons when firing began to our right. We returned fire with effect unknown. Natives seemed to be all around us. Our left flank pushed on while the right steadily returned fire. Flying things out of our fables confounded us with smoking, buzzing bombs that bounded and rolled around before exploding and doing great damage. The bombs, though aimed at us, took many casualties from the natives as well.

We heard artillery fire ahead of us. This quite concerned us as we had not until then known the Rebels possessed artillery. It seems the Rebels are better supplied than we imagined.

We were attacked several times by large reptilian beasts of the Jungle. We successfully fought these creatures off, though they killed several of our number. The natives to our right made as if to charge us several times, but never had the nerve to actually close, being more inclined to snipe at us from a safe distance.

On the left the natives crested a ridge and were decimated by our ordered volleys. We then charged them and destroyed them.

At this point the right flank guard and the Tax Wagons separated from the left flank guard and tried to link up with the Germans to save the Tax Wagons. Very few of either Guard Unit made it back to Jimville. Some of the Tax Money was successfully brought in. Some was abandoned on the field after the sun went down and the battle ended.

GERMANS

We, at the Sultan's request, sent a force to escort the Tax Wagons safely into Jimville. Major Mauser, commanding, led two units of infantry and an experimental Steam Powered Armored Machine (SPAM). The troops advanced with the Major on the left and the SPAM on the right. The left company soon was engaged by enemy infantry and, to our surprise, artillery. The right company and SPAM continued to advance unhindered. Major Mauser demonstrated his expertise with the rifle by sniping at the artillery crew and killing many of them.

On the right the company crested a ridge with the SPAM in support to be fired on by artillery. Several very large, hungry, and angry animals were flushed out of the brush and proceeded to attack the right flank company doing great injury.

Strange flying things, looking like the flying carpets from tales of old, appeared and attempted to drop sputtering bomb on the right flank company, but did little harm. The company was attacked many times by large monstrous creatures. Many men were injured or killed. The right flank company did manage to link up with the Sultan's Guard and some of the Tax Wagons. These we safely brought back to Jimville and duly presented to the Sultan.

On a sad note, Major Mauser was last seen being charged by a large and very pissed off rhinoceros. The Major was thrown high into the air and possibly gored and/or trampled by the beast. His body was not recovered.

Casualties were high among the infantry. The natives gave a good account of themselves. Further expeditions against them should not take the native threat lightly. In view of the fact that the natives now possess artillery, it was suggested to the Sultan that greater emphasis must be put on finding and destroying the rebel bases and stopping supplies from reaching the shores of Jimland.

The experimental Steam Powered Armored Machine's performance was lackluster. The machine lost power several times and did little damage when its gun was fired. On the other hand, the enemy did no damage whatsoever to the machine, either by design or bad fire control. The SPAM needs more field tests before any conclusions can be made. To these ends we have suggested strongly to the Sultan that a punitive expedition be formed at once and sent out to find and destroy the closest enemy base. We await his decision.

Troop morale is good. Training appears adequate. Replacements have brought the Jimland Expeditionary Force to full strength again. Major Mauser is presumed dead.

NATIVES

The Sultan's Tax Collectors were chased home with their German lackeys. Most of the Tax Loot was abandoned on the field as the battle ended at sundown. Sadly, many brave warriors will fight no more. Once more the wildlife of our land was stirred into a dangerous frenzy. Many men were killed by these frightful beasts.

Our secret weapons played havoc among our enemy. They swooped from the sky and rained destruction on the enemy. Praise them all.

Our gifts from our foreign friends caused great surprise to the enemy. The artillery was very bravely served, being always at the front of the battle. We can expect some kind of reaction to these weapons from the Sultan and his lackeys. Our listeners are everywhere watching for signs of attack.

TAX COLLECTORS

We are just glad to be here. And, we quit.

RUSSIAN BEAR RISES

It is reliably reported that at a remote anchorage a large Russian troopship landed great numbers of Russian Infantry. Artillery was seen being unloaded also. And it seems the Russian have a steam contraption of their own. It is said to dwarf the German one. The cannon it carries is reported as huge. Why the Russians did not land in Jimville is a mystery. Some suggest the Russians are aiding the rebels. Others say the Russians did not want to the Germans to sit on the dock and simply count everything, as it was unloaded. No answers were forthcoming from the Russian Consulate.

EMBASSY ROW

The English Consul merely smiled, curled his mustache, and loosened the pistol casually stuffed in waistband of his stylish pants. Regular British Infantry was seen outside of Jimville. The Americans have sandbagged their Consulate making it look terribly rundown and quite scruffy. Another unit of Marines has landed. The Italians just shrugged. The French Consul's answer was "just wait till the Legion gets here. They'll straightened this out."

SULTAN

The Sultan has offered a bounty to whoever can bring him the abandoned Tax Money. Several young foreign officers were seen pleading for men to command to collect the bounty. The Sultan's Guard just smirked. The Sultan also offered a reward for every rebel artillery piece captured and brought to Jimville. Lately the German adjutant has been replaced by a British one in the circle of the Sultan's Counselors. What this presages one can only guess.

BOTTOM LINE

A large skirmish was fought in the Jimland wilds. Part of the Tax Money was safely brought in to the Sultan. The Sultan's guard took heavy casualties. The German infantry took heavy casualties, Major Mauser reportedly being one. The German Steam Powered Armored Machine failed to impress the German staff or terrify the natives. Native artillery seems to have raised the level of the conflict. The reported flying things are still being discussed. No conclusions have been drawn yet. The Rebels are full of fight and better supplied than previously thought. The Russians and Germans seem to be squaring off on one another. Conflict seems inevitable.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Still no word has been received from either the Flagstone or Igneous expeditions. This has not caused much alarm in Jimville. It is not unusual for expeditions to disappear into the heart of Jimland and reappear months later without a report between coming and going. We remain alert for news.

Report 7 - FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK.

Date: 2002-02-26

From : The Editor-in-Chief
To : Jimland Staff
Subject: Your Latest Wire

Pirates? Boxers? Hmmm. Let's look in the Atlas o' Jimland. The Atlas says:

"The slant-eyed ex-Boxers make great Scoundrels and Pirates that raid Jimland for gold, slaves, and the valuable X-rock mineral. Historically speaking, they have an eternal enemy in the Sultan. They don't get along well with the Rebels because neither wants to share power once they overthrow the Sultan. The United States and Britain are always trying to crush the pirates as they ruin the lucrative trade with Jimland these countries are trying to establish. For reasons unknown, the Italians seem to relish hunting the Pirates also. It must be the thrill of the chase. As ever, the Germans claim the Russians are aiding the Pirates and vice versa. The French aren't much concerned."

In regards to Rockets, the Atlas says:

"Yes, rockets work in Jimland, but RATHER erratically, as one might expect. But they prove entertaining to say the least."

Of interest is a well known Pirate Leader. Get something on this guy! The Atlas says:

"A renegade Scot, the sole survivor of a shipwreck on the Jimland coast, is among the Pirate Captains. He calls himself Sir Tomosan, Knight of the Jimland coast. A large reward was offered for Tomosan, dead or alive."

That's all I could find in the Atlas with just a quick look. I will have more research done to see what can be found.

I want information on either the Flagstone or Igneous expeditions. Their disappearance has caused some alarm with our Gentle Readers. Any dribble you can dig up will be fine. Remain alert for Russian activity. We are reliably informed something is up!

GIVE ME NEWS!

Your Editor-in-Chief

Report 8 - ABANDONED TAX LOOT DRAWS ATTENTION!

Date: 2002-03-03

ABANDONED TAX LOOT DRAWS ATTENTION!

All of Jimville is talking about the news of the Sultan's abandoned Tax Loot. After the previous attempts to bring the Tax Money to the Sultan/Take the Tax Loot for the Rebels, it was discovered that much of the Tax Loot had been abandoned in the wilds of Jimland. A veritable race is on to recover the Money.

The Sultan has dispatched his Guard with the orders "Its mine. I want it. Go get it." Simple enough. Of course there were the usual threats for failure and rewards for success mentioned, but we will not tire our Gentle Readers with the Sultan's overlong harangue.

The Germans, looking to salve their pride, reestablish their reputation with the Sultan, and finance the Jimland Exploratory Field Force, have assembled another sizable force. With their Steam Powered Armored Machine leading the way they marched out Jimville confident in recovering the Loot.

It is rumored that the Russians are using this opportunity to test their mettle against the Germans. They sent a force into the wilds accompanied by their huge lumbering steam contraption. It rumbled and rattled. It belched smoke and steam. It shook the ground as it moved. It got stuck in the soft ground before it got very far. The Russian Commander turned several very colorful shades of red and purple as he ordered his troops to pull the iron monster free. The Russian infantry looked very snappy as they moved out. We wonder if they can fight?

The natives seem to realize the magnitude of the prize lying unguarded in the wilds. Our informants say many warbands are converging on the Tax Chests.

We anxiously await developments.

EMBASSY ROW

When questioned about the lack of British involvement in the Tax Recovery operations, the English Consul merely smiled, curled his mustache, and loosened the pistol casually stuffed in waistband of his stylish pants. The French Consul's answer was "Just wait till the Legion gets here. They'll straightened this out."

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Concern is starting to build for both the Flagstone and Igneous expeditions. The complete absence of any news could mean a cruel fate has befallen these hardy explorers or it could mean the Professor Fate is up to his old shenanigans. We are not sure. However, no news is bad news in Jimland. We remain alert for word of the expeditions. The Italians have gallantly offered the British and German Consuls the use of their troops to launch a search and rescue operation. The eager young Italian officers look for any excuse to venture into the interior of Jimland.

Report 9 - WILD TIMES IN THE WILD LANDS.
Date: 2002-03-13

WILD TIMES IN THE WILD LANDS.

Reliable reports have come in indicating that the Germans and Russians and natives and even the Sultan's Guard are heading full tilt for a showdown over the abandoned Tax Loot. More German infantry was seen forming up on the main pier (the only pier) of Jimville and marching directly off into the wilds of Jimland. The Sultan's Guard has kept a noticeably low profile lately leading many to conclude most of the Sultan's forces are "out of town".

In a move sure to heighten tensions even more, the Russians hauled down their flag over their Consulate and removed their belongings from Jimville. No one is sure what this means. We are sure, however, that the Russians have not abandoned Jimland. It is more likely they are putting some distance between themselves and the Sultan and his staunch supporters, the Germans. We await events.

The Americans and Italians seem to be cozying up to one another. For what purpose we have no clue. The English remain aloof and await the overdue transport aptly named "The King's Bluff". The French doze in the sun muttering about the Legion "solving the problem". When reminded there is no Legion in Jimville, they gleefully answer, "Not yet!" So draw your own conclusions on that one.

An American inventor or professor or some wacko-type was seen in the American compound talking earnestly with the American Consul and Major West, the American military commander in Jimland, and his assistant the much-maligned Captain Custer. "No relation" as he would immediately answer without the question being formed. The little party went into the building much agitated about something. Again we await events.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Publicly the American, British, and German Consuls speak little of the missing expeditions of Doctor Flagstone and Herr Doctor Igneous or the rumors of the American Scoundrel Professor Fate. Privately the wheels of intrigue, innuendo, and investigation turn smoothly. The American position is that Professor Fate is only rumored to be in Jimland. The presence of his lovely ex-wife Olivia Fate proves nothing other than the foolishness Doctor Flagstone by his taking her into the wild on his expedition. Whereupon the British say that the Good Doctor would not have left town in such a rush if it were not his concerns about the presence of Herr Doctor Igneous and his band of thugs. The Germans bristle at this and remind all concerned that the presence of Olivia Fate at such a juncture can not be simple coincidence.

As an aside, the Italians say that when Major Sarducci arrives they will send an expedition into the wilds to locate the missing parties and find out what is going on.

Our native sources report nothing about the missing expeditions. The silence is deafening.

Report 10 - TAX MONEY MADNESS! GREAT BATTLE FOUGHT OVER TAX LOOT!

Date: 2002-03-17

TAX MONEY MADNESS! GREAT BATTLE FOUGHT OVER TAX LOOT!

Reports of a great battle have been confirmed as the German Expeditionary force returned to Jimville. After interviewing the victorious German officers and collaborating their reports with our other sources a picture of the great battle emerges. The victorious Russian officers were unavailable and their whereabouts unknown. The victorious natives leaders never give interviews. The victorious Sultan declined to comment.

THE FORCES

The field of battle was the same remote valley where the Sultan's Tax Collectors had been ambushed. To everyone's astonishment the Tax Loot was still where it had fallen on that fateful day. The German Force, consisting of 3 companies of infantry and the Steam Powered Armored Machine (SPAM), approached from the south. The Russian force, consisting of 3 companies of infantry and the Czar's Royal Armor Platoon (CRAP) made up of one huge steam tank, advanced from the North. The CRAP looked more impressive than its subsequent performance. As these two forces raced to gain the Tax Loot for their cause, numerous native warbands burst upon the Scene. The native force was estimated at 4 warbands and was supported by two of the much-cursed flying carpets. Strangely absent was the Sultan's Guard. Rumors now run rampant as to what the Sultan could be up to. Everyone in Jimville was sure the recently reported absence of the Sultan's Guard meant they would again be in the thick of the fight. Events proved otherwise. Their current location and mission are unknown.

THE BATTLE

The battle opened as the Germans advanced south to north sheltering behind the southern ridgeline. The Russians advanced north to south. The huge CRAP lumbered ominously forward. The natives raced in from the East and from the West. Soon a brisk fusillade had broken all over the field. The two steam tanks wheezed along with many fits and starts, as their machinery is still not perfect nor adjusted for the rough Jimland environment. The native flying carpets buzzed anxiously about dropping bombs, but only managed to hit the Russian west flank company. The eastern flying carpet was seen to nose dive into the turf leaving a sizable crater.

All forces became engaged. The eastern native forces became bogged down in an, erm, bog. There they stayed for much of the fight. The western natives were caught in a crossfire between the Germans and the Russians and took heavy casualties. In the center the two steam tanks, SPAM and CRAP, lurched to a halt and refused to restart amid much colorful and inventive language by both crews.

Typical of a battle in Jimland, the local fauna was stirred up to a growling fury. Soon there were several reptilian beasts prowling about the battlefield attacking anyone in their path. Many of the units had to forgo executing their mission orders in order to execute the terrible lizards.

Still all forces advanced, aiming for the Tax Loot scattered about the battlefield. The western flying carpet squadron, though losing three of their number, conducted several deadly bomb runs on the Russian and German western companies inflicting heavy casualties before finally being destroyed. The eastern squadron seemed to be experiencing problems in getting their carpets airborne and, once aloft, they seemed to immediately plummet into the ground amid much heckling from both the Germans and Russians.

Of course, the Germans and Russians were ridiculed in turn for the abysmal performance of their vaunted steam tanks. CRAP and SPAM were labeled the steam-powered bunkers, as their movement was nil for the longest time. Finally the sweating engineers got both machine running again and they lumbered forward. Much to the amazement of some natives who has just reached a pile of Tax Loot, the Russian CRAP actually ran over them. The Russian CRAP achieved another first in Jimland! It actually shot and hit the German SPAM. This marvelous feat has been confirmed by sources of the highest integrity. The shot, however, was a glancing blow that bounced harmlessly off the German vehicle. Other than that one shot the two vehicles seemed incapable of hitting one another. Bad fire control or professional courtesy, you be the judge?

The western natives were finally destroyed or driven off. Here the Russians captured one Tax Loot chest and proceeded to haul it home. In the east, the much-bogged down natives captured a Tax Chest and merrily carried it away. In the center the few remaining Germans captured two chests and swept across the battlefield to exit on the north side. This was quite a feat as it entailed passing through the entire Russian force, avoiding the rather tardy attempt to drive over them by the Russian CRAP, and having to deal with numerous pissed off animals of large proportions.

SUMMARY

The native rebels' captured Tax Loot will not doubt fund their continued rebellion. The Russian will probably use theirs to pay for their involvement in Jimland. The Germans returned one of the two chests they captured to the Sultan amid much fanfare. The fate of the second chest is unknown. The Sultan was pleased and did not press the German Consul too closely about the matter.

What does all this mean? The Sultan got some of his Tax Money. Some is always better than none, and he did not have to involve his Guard in the Affair. The Germans regained their reputation and influence with the Sultan. The Russians tested their mettle against the Germans and found the Hun was not invincible. Both Powers found their wonder vehicles, CRAP and SPAM, need more work. The rebels showed again they could fight toe-to-toe with the "Turks". The rebellion can only be strengthened by their capture of a Tax Chest.

No one side gained a clear advantage. The situation remains unchanged. The power struggle for Jimland continues, though the Germans and the Russians must recover their strength.

The Sultan walks the halls of his palace humming to himself. Truly, A bad sign.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Still no word from or about the missing expeditions of Doctor Flagstone and Herr Doctor Igneous. Rumors of the American Scoundrel Professor Fate still circulate.

Major Sarducci, the new Italian Commander in Jimland, has arrived along with several companies of Bersaglieri Light Infantry.

Wild reports of an alive Major Mauser have surfaced, but are unconfirmed.

Additional United States Marines were disembarked quietly early in the morning Tuesday last. They were billeted in the American Consulate gardens. Upon this sizable American Force, the French Consul merely sniffed and said, "The Legion will straighten this whole mess out." The British Consul was, for once, unavailable for comment. An event on its own merit!

Report 11 - OUTLYING PROVINCES REVOLT! SULTAN'S TROOPS INVOLVED!

Date: 2002-03-26

OUTLYING PROVINCES REVOLT! SULTAN'S TROOPS INVOLVED!

Several outlying provinces have revolted, declaring their independence from the Sultan. It is reported that units of the Sultan's Guard have gone over to the Province Sheiks. These reports have been confirmed by our sources in the area. This possibly explains the noted non-presence of the Sultan's Guard.

Already the various European factions are gathering their strength. Additional troops enter Jimville daily. Notable by their absence are the Russians. The Germans have reinforced their depleted ranks and are at full complement again.

The Italian infantry is ashore. The Italian and German Consuls have been seen in earnest conversation. The newly arrived Major Sarducci is the constant companion of Major Stukka the new German Military commander in Jimland. The Germans have the Sultan's ear.

Our sources report that the Sultan's Military Advisor has suggested the Sultan use the Germans and Italians and any other foreign troops available to quell the rebellion so that the Sultan's Guard does not have to openly fight among itself. Everyone knows there will be reprisals enough in private.

Reports of additional American Marines for Consulate guard duty have been confirmed. A British troop ship has reportedly been rerouted toward Jimland. It is said to be carrying Regular Army Troops and Artillery, reinforcements for the small Royal Marine Light Infantry detachment currently deployed in Jimville. There is some concern that the Jimland pirates under the terrible Tomosan may ally with the rebels and try to attack the lightly armed troop ship. No confirmation of this possibility is available at this time.

The French Consul still issues the same statement, which for our enlightenment he has nailed to the front door of the French Embassy. It reads, quote, "When the Legions arrives, they will sort this mess out." unquote. We told the Consul that was amusing, but not very French. This had the Consul in quite a snit that was enjoyed by all except the Consul. C'est la vie.

No reports of fighting between the Sultan's Guard has yet reached Jimville. We remain alert. Our sources throughout Jimland will relay the news at once should anything happen.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Still no word from or about the missing expeditions of Doctor Flagstone and Herr Doctor Igneous. Rumors of the American scoundrel Professor Fate still circulate.

Rumors grow that the Sultan's favorite harem member, Cassandra, is missing. It is believed the Rebels are holding her for ransom. The Sultan's Court Advisor refuses comment. No one has seen Sweet Cassandra for several days

now. It is known by all in Jimland how dear the Sultan holds her. This issue must be resolved if the Sultan is to keep a clear head during these trying times.

Report 12 - INTERCEPTED MESSAGES REVEALED! SULTAN DEALING WITH PIRATES!

Date: 2002-03-26

INTERCEPTED MESSAGES REVEALED! SULTAN DEALING WITH PIRATES!

The following Messages have found their way to Us. Gentle Reader, what can this mean? Does the Sultan deny these messages? Only time will tell. The Embassy Row is like a disturbed anthill. Just who is on which side and how many sides are there? All hell has broken loose. No one trust anyone. And, of course, the Germans blame the Russians, and vice versa.

Message 1:

From Sherlock Thorburn III

His Imperial Majesty Won Hun Lo wishes to inform the Government of Jimland that the first company of the Royal Riflemen have arrived in the port New China far to the North of the capital.

It is expected that the Royal Ambassador Flung Dung will present his credentials and enter into trade negotiations within the month at the Royal Court.

Accompanying the company is a much needed water tanker to help the progress through the jungle regions. It is expected that over the next few months two more companies of riflemen will arrive to assist in the negotiations.

Your ever humble servant

Sherlock Throburn III - interpreter to the Royal Court in Pekong

Message 2:

To: Sherlock Throburn III - interpreter to the Royal Court in Pekong
From: The Sultan's Court Advisor
Date: March 24
Subject: Royal Riflemen.

What's in the beverage vehicle? Rice wine smoothies for the troops?

The Port of New China? The Sultan is a little miffed about that choice of names. It is suggested you send the Sultan a large, expensive gift. Or attack as many of his shameless enemies as possible. Of course, we will deny all knowledge or involvement, but results speak loudly to the Sultan. I hear the Italians have need of getting the swagger knocked out of them. Are you familiar with Italians? If not, no worries, mate, just attack any European type with the possible exceptions of the Germans (currently the Sultan's fair-haired boys). You can't miss them with their silly pointed helmet thingies. It is suggested by the Sultan's Military Advisor that at least two

companies are required for a strike sufficient to warrant the Sultan's notice.

His Imperial Majesty's Royal Ambassador Flung Dung will be admitted to the Palace. Come to the North Wall, small innocuous door number three, and knock four times, then two times, then three times, then bark like a hyena. Perhaps we can suggest to His Imperial Majesty Won Hun Lo to open a proper consulate in Jimville. The Sultan likes very much having all the Consulates in one place.

If you have further questions, please hesitate to call on me. To be associated with His Imperial Majesty's Royal Empire at this stage is a bit risky.

Sincerely, but from a plausibly deniable position,

The Sultan's Court Advisor

Message 3:

To: Sherlock Throburn III - interpreter to the Royal Court in Pekong
From: The Sultan's Military Advisor
Date: March 24th
Subject: Advanced weaponry available to your troops.

The Sultan has instructed me to inform you that the Sultan's Weapon and Home Appliance Research Center has been developing a new wonder weapon that can be made available to your troops while in Jimland. These wonder weapons are called "ROCKETS". They are marvelous to behold. They are still experimental, and a bit temperamental, but hold much promise. And they scare the hell out of the big beasts that live in Jimland, a factor that surely will not be lost on a man of your position.

Please advise His Imperial Majesty Won Hun Lo that four troopers are required for crew training. The "ROCKETS" will be provided, gratis, by the goodwill of the Sultan. Of course, you must get the usual personal injury waivers and the standard non-disclosure agreements signed.

Good Luck. And you didn't get this offer from us! We will deny it to the point of having you shot.

The Sultan's Military Advisor

End Message

Report 13 - NEW AMBASSADOR ARRIVES IN JIMVILLE!

Date: 2002-03-29

NEW AMBASSADOR ARRIVES IN JIMVILLE!

Attached is a message received from Unknown Sources. The arrival must have occurred under the cover of a hot and sultry Jimland night as the referenced troops and Ambassador have not been seen in the light of a hot and sultry Jimland Day.

Message Start.

To: The World Media Newsroom in Jimland Capital [Obviously the writer knows not to whom he writes. - Ed]
From: Unknown Source
Date: March 29th
Subject: Arrival in Court

His Royal Ambassador Hu Flung Dung presented himself before the Royal court with lavish gifts of silk and spice for the throne. [It is said the Sultan really preferred Cash. Lots of cash. - Your Editor]

Surprising to most people in the capital was the escort of Royal Riflemen dressed in a splendid powder blue for the occasion. Does this indicate a new company of riflemen or just the aforementioned Red Jackets in dress uniform? The rumors still abound. When approached the Ambassador shrugged his shoulders and said me no speaky engleesh before retiring. His interpreter Sherlock Thorburn III was unavailable for comment at this time.

Message End.

What does all this mean, Gentle Reader? We have no clue, and can only repeat the French Consul's pithy answer, "When the Legion arrives, they will sort this mess out." Do not be alarmed. Remain calm. We are sure there must be a reason for (or behind) all this activity.

Report 14 - TRANS-MED NEWS SERVICE FIGHTING OFF HOSTILE TAKE OVER!

Date: 2002-03-31

TRANS-MED NEWS SERVICE FIGHTING OFF HOSTILE TAKE OVER!

The Trans-Med News Service is fighting off a hostile take over bid from the behemoth Universal News Network. This action is no less severe than that in Jimland even though it happens in the boardroom among the rich and famous and powerful. Casualties will be heavy.

At stake is the very existence of the Trans-Med News Service. UNN has stated they wish to acquire the rights to the assets and resources of TMNS, but retire the name and all of the Management. Field and Production Staff would be consolidated with UNN's own staff throughout the World. The TMNS Flagship Paper would be renamed and refashioned to be more in line with UNN's other offerings.

Our Sources say the UNN is primarily interested in getting their hands on the Simpson-Berundi Chrono-Compressor Booth, of which we have the only working model. Financial titans around the world are lining up their support both for and against this move. Governments are investigating claims of the German government backing the take over. The Germans claim its the Russians. The Russians point a finger at the English who claim if they were behind such a deed it would only be to stop the German-Russian plans to muzzle the free press.

Report 15 - GERMANS AND ITALIANS LAUNCH SEARCH FOR SULTAN'S FAVORITE GAL!

Date: 2002-03-31

GERMANS AND ITALIANS LAUNCH SEARCH FOR SULTAN'S FAVORITE GAL!

Rumors that the Sultan's favorite harem member, the sultry Cassandra, is missing have been confirmed. Even as this reporter sends this cable, mighty forces of German and Italian infantry march out of Jimville in search of the Sultan's main squeeze, the seductive Cassandra.

It is interesting to note the only forces sent on this expedition were German Infantry, 4 companies commanded by Captain Luger, a Seasoned Soldier, on loan from the in transit See Battalion, and Italian Infantry, 2 companies commanded by Captain Baretta who it is said has slightly homicidal tendencies. Major Sarducci was reported ill in hospital unable to assume command. Colonel Stukka, newly promoted via a cable from the German War Office, is the Army Commander. None of the Sultan's Guard was in the force. Perhaps the Sultan does not trust his own Guard, or perhaps there are other things going on in Jimland we, of the Trans-Med News Service, have not yet discovered.

More reports of rebelling provincial sheiks come into to the Sultan's palace daily. The residents of Jimville grow worried for their safety. Many of the natives have boarded up their house and literally headed for the hills, proclaiming to be on extended vacation till things calm down. Simply meaning they are waiting to see who wins in this particular rebellion, the Sultan or the rebel sheiks.

Rebellion does not seem to bother most of the population of Jimland. Other than temporary inconveniences, the rebellions merely replace one oppressive ruler with another. The Sultan, of course, being an example going against this pattern. Still the Sultan's capitol, Jimville, is eerily quiet in the evening of late. A barometer of activity is that even business at the Jimville House of Girls and Casino has fallen off dramatically. The owner bemoans the fact that the troops keep getting sent out of town and killed and while the locals stay at home listening for footsteps in the night.

Rumors continue to surface regarding the fate of Major Mauser. Is he dead or alive? No one seems to know or agree. Rumors say: 1. he was captured by natives and killed, 2. he was captured by natives, found some new religion, and is now a native sheik, 3. he was captured by the Russians, tortured, then killed, 4. he was captured by the Russian and just killed, 5. he was captured by parties unknown and taken to the Valley of Hideous Death to await being killed, 6. he was captured by a large hungry animal and killed, 7. he has been dead all along and could be killed again if anyone could find his body.

We don't know what to think. Major Mauser is a remarkable individual. Its a shame to think he might survive the Wilds of Jimland, crawl back into Jimville staving and wasted, to be promptly killed for failure to perform his mission. Such is the life of a hero; exciting, dangerous, and usually very brief. We remain on the lookout for verifiable rumors.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Still no word from or about the missing expeditions of Doctor Flagstone and Herr Doctor Igneous. Rumors of the American scoundrel Professor Fate still circulate and get wilder every day.

From the mountain fastness to the north comes word of a new "holy man" rousing the Natives to throw off the yoke of foreign oppression. The man is called Omar Oh'my, Mullah of the Mountains, and Sheik of All Jimland and the Lands Beyond, a Simple Instrument of the Will of God, Defender of the People. and Terror of the Infidels. That's the short version of his titles as rendered in a letter send to the Sultan on the hide of a long lost tax collector. Perhaps Omar Oh'my is the reason for the rebellion? Perhaps he is seizing the moment of strife to raise another rebellion? Perhaps it is coincidence? We are sure of one thing, the Sultan will not tolerate this man having a head on his shoulder longer than yesterday. Obviously, after squashing the rebel sheiks, a punitive expedition must go up into the mountains of Jimland, root out this vermin and exterminate him. At least those are the sentiments of the Sultan's Court Advisor. We remain alert for more news on this front.

BREAKING NEWS!

This just in! An American patrol has returned with an article of clothing identified as belonging to Olivia Fate who, as we all remember, was with the long missing Flagstone Expedition. The clothing was found floating down the great River Jim. Does this mean she is alive? Is the good Doctor Flagstone alive? Will rescue operations commence and head up river at first light?

Report 16 - RESCUE ATTEMPTS ENDS IN FIASCO!

Date: 2002-04-05

RESCUE ATTEMPTS ENDS IN FIASCO!

The combined German-Italian rescue attempt of Cassandra ends in disaster. Casualties high for all involved. Cassandra still captive of Rebel Natives. Russians involved. The Mighty Force of German and Italian Infantry that marched proudly out of Jimville has returned. Survivors still return in small groups.

The German Infantry lost more than 60 percent of their force. Colonel Stukka has been recalled to Germany for review of the action. It is rumored he was the Last to cross the river into hostile territory and the First to leave. It is sad that such a fine career should be ended by such an affair. Captain Luger, of the See Battalion, Distinguished Himself by being the First across the river and single-handedly charging a Native warband and engaging it in hand-to-hand combat. The Brave Captain was seen to fall during the fight.

The Italian Infantry lost close to 80 percent of their brave men. They unleashed several devastating volleys, then charged across the river. They came the closest to rescuing Cassandra when they entered the building in which she was being held and engaged Natives in close combat. Captain Baretta earned Mention in Dispatches leading his men forward. He single-handedly held off a Native warband until support arrived allowing his troops to cross the river while under heavy enemy fire.

Surprisingly, Russian troops were involved on the fracas, but no one was able to determine whose side, if anyone's, the Russians were on. Several officers reported seeing the Russian General Smirnoff leading the Russian Companies. This force appeared unexpectedly behind the Native position. No one could tell if the Russians were working with the Natives, against the Natives, for following their own nefarious plans. The Russians were heavily attacked by the Natives and were nearly wiped out by all accounts. They did, in fact, rescue Cassandra from the clutches of the Natives and were moving toward the Italian position when they were slaughtered by a Native Warband lead by Tastimin the Despicable. No one knows who this leader is and everyone hopes never to hear of him again. Only time will tell.

Native casualties were unknown. Survivors said they must have been 50 percent or higher also. Several of the infernal Flying Carpets were spotted, but had little effect on the battle. It is suspected that the Native Pilot Corps has been severely thinned by the recent battles and they are now forced to put inexperienced men onto frayed rugs. It was also noted that several tribes from the Desert regions were in this fight. This means the rebellion has spread farther than expected. Bad news for the Sultan and his Allies.

The Natives had chosen their ground very well. Just getting across the river proved to be a daunting task, not mention the heavy fire from the Native Warbands taking a heavy toll on the Allies. Crocodiles and/or Alligators (take your pick) proved a very nasty surprise. These vicious beasts lunched on many a Brave German and Italian soldier trying to wade the

river. Contrary to previous Jimland Battles, there were very few animals encountered on the battlefield and they did not influence the outcome of the struggle.

Fortunately, the allies seemed to know in which house in the tiny village Cassandra was being held. The Italians made a bold strike at the house at the same time the Russians were storming the place. The Natives, led by the Legendary White Sheik, flooded the area with reinforcements. A great combat over, in, and around the house ensued. Bayonet versus Scimitar. No quarter given, none received. A Terrible Slaughter followed. Men on all sides died in heaps. It was reported one could walk from the ground to the flat roof of the small house on bodies piled against the building.

Numbers told and the allies were driven off with few to recount the tale of destruction. The Sultan is beside himself with anger. To be so close and fail! He knows that he may not get another chance. The blow to his pride and reputation is bad. No one crosses the Sultan's path. Both the Germans and Italians have wired their respective countries for replacements and reinforcements. Both forces have been rendered useless by this battle. The survivors regroup, but are too few to undertake any immediate action.

Meanwhile, the French Consul tut-tuts and taps the Notice on the Embassy door. We simply ask, "Where the Hell is the Legion. Anyway." We would like to report the British have at least one Regular Infantry Company in Jimville now to support the lone Royal Marine Light Infantry Company. Perhaps the British are gearing up for some action.

The American Marine Company returned to Jimville this AM. Where they went and what they did is unknown. The troops were tight-lipped and rather surly when we tried to ask some questions. Luckily none of us required hospitalization.

Where is Cassandra now? We can only speculate. We are not even sure if she is alive. We doubt the Natives would kill her since she is a valuable bargaining chip where the Sultan is concerned. The Sultan is not a man to give up easily when he wants something, especially something taken from him. The situation can only grow worse.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

We sadly report there is still no word from or about the missing expeditions of Doctor Flagstone and Herr Doctor Igneous. Hope for these Brave Explorers begins to fade.

Report 17 - PIRATES ACQUIRE HIGH TECH WEAPONS!

Date: 2002-04-11

PIRATES ACQUIRE HIGH TECH WEAPONS!

The following cablegram was slipped under the Trans-Med News Service door yesterday PM. Does the Sultan know no shame?

Cable Start:

To: Sherlock Throburn III - HIM Royal Court Pekong
From: The Sultan's Military Advisor
Date: April 11th
Subject: Rocket and Crew

Please inform His Imperial Majesty that the Rocket has shipped and the Crew have been whipped into a frenzy to support your operations. The Sultan's Weapons And Home Appliance Research Center has crated and shipped a Rocket Launcher to your Secret Base on the Secret Island off the Coast of Jimland. It is a Mark I model fondly called the "Big Frigging Rocket". Enjoy.

As always we will deny any involvement in this whole sad affair.

The Sultan's Military Advisor

Cable End:

Is there anything left to say except "If only the Legion were here to stop this madness"?

COMINGS AND GOINGS

We must report all hope for the missing expeditions of Doctor Flagstone and Herr Doctor Igneous has evaporated. Relatives have now started bickering over wills, inheritances, and fortunes gained or lost. A moment of silence was held at Last Call at the Jimville House of Girls and Casino in honor of the brave souls now forever gone. They will be missed.

Report 18 - TRANS-MED NEWS SERVICE DEFEATS HOSTILE TAKE OVER!

Date: 2002-04-13

TRANS-MED NEWS SERVICE DEFEATS HOSTILE TAKE OVER!

The Trans-Med News Service has successfully fought off a hostile take over bid from the behemoth Universal News Network. After several frantic weeks of investigative work we have discovered:

1. UNN is primarily interested in getting their hands on the Simpson-Berundi Chrono-Compressor Booth, of which we have the Only Working Model. Worry not, Gentle Reader, this Fabulous Machine is safe in our hands.

2. Using the Simpson-Berundi Chrono-Compressor Booth, we sent a man back to discover the Truth. Upon his return it appears the UNN does not really exist. It may have, but no longer does, or really never did, or it could have, but doesn't now. We think you get our drift. Let this be a warning. It could happen to you.

3. Several financial backers of UNN are now in Debtors Prison. It sad what level these people will stoop to.

4. The new, gleaming, multi-level TMNS Headquarters are a marvel to behold. It was reported by several of our Competitors that the facility had a swimming pool, bowling alley, and large employee cafeteria. This is simply not true. There are two swimming pools, Management's heated one and the Employees' au natural. There is no bowling alley, but the ice rink is now open. The employee cafeteria is also a gross exaggeration. We opted for several separate restaurants serving an assortment of cuisine.

5. The Germans claim its the Russians. The Russians point a finger at the English who claim if they were behind such a deed it would only be to stop the German-Russian plans to muzzle the Free Press. All this is absolutely true, true, true.

Sleep well, Gentle Readers. We will continue to bring you All the News that you will need. Let this be a lesson to those who would muzzle the Press. It will not happen on our watch, or couldn't have happened anyway.

We must report all hope for the missing expeditions of Doctor Flagstone and Herr Doctor Igneous has evaporated. Relatives have now started bickering over wills, inheritances, and fortunes gained or lost. A moment of silence was held at Last Call at the Jimville House of Girls and Casino in honor of the brave souls now forever gone. They will be missed.

Report 19 - PRESS ORGANIZATION OF PEORIA TITILLATES! PURE PREVARICATION!

Date: 2002-04-13

PRESS ORGANIZATION OF PEORIA TITILLATES! PURE PREVARICATION!

We, of the Trans-Med News Service, look forward to further reports of our worthy competitor The Press Organization Of Peoria ("Little Known; Far Reaching"). It is amazing to see how they can take simple facts and deduce completely facile explanations.

We offer, in the Spirit of Reporting the Truth, office space in any of our offices to their staff (or distaff for that matter). I'm sure the Reading Public would find it interesting to compare reports of events. This comparison will surely show the Hard Work and Pious Adherence to the Truth that we here at The Trans-Med News Service hold so Dear and bring to every effort we undertake.

Let the Press Organization Of Peoria ("Little Known; Far Reaching") continue it fantastic reports. The world needs a gauge to appreciate our Noble Efforts.

Rides on the Simpson-Berundi Chrono-Compressor Booth are right out.

It has been suggested that one character known only by the code name of "Evil Kevin" was, or perhaps still is, working for P.O.O.P. This can be deduced by his constant error in letting slip the word "poop" far too often for mere coincidence.

To the Editor of the P.O.O.P., please number your issues so that when we take umbrage at their contents we can properly quote the issue for our Astute Readers' Edification.

Howsoever, we look forward to further reports from The Press Organization Of Peoria ("Little Known; Far Reaching").

Report 20 - PIRATE RAIDS NEAR JIMVILLE. CAPITOL ON ALERT.

Date: 2002-04-19

PIRATE RAIDS NEAR JIMVILLE. CAPITOL ON ALERT.

News of Pirate Raids drawing nearer Jimville have the Capitol on full alert. The various Consulates are being snugly boarded and sandbagged in preparation for the worst. Strangely, the Sultan's Place stands open and lightly guarded. Perhaps the Sultan is trying to calm the good citizens of Jimville during this hour of fear? Perhaps not? To date, the Pirate raids have not touched on the holdings of the Sultan. Whether this is by good fortune or good diplomacy we are not sure.

The American and British Consuls have been having a meeting for most of the day. The respective Military Commanders were invited, but all others were left cooling their heels. The British Captain Wade-Inne, RMLI, and the American Captain Custer ("No Relation!"), USMC, were seen talking excitedly together as do all hot-blooded young officers. It was also noticed that the British and American Marines seem to have withdrawn to their compounds as if coiling before lunging at the enemy.

We suspect something is up from these two Powers. Though usually quite outnumbered by the Germans and the Russians, if they were in town, these two Powers now field the bulk of the forces in Jimville after the abortive rescue attempt by the Germans and Italians. Only the French have fewer troops in Jimland, the French Ambassador's proclamation notwithstanding. It appears that the Pirate Menace will be handled by the British Royal Light Marine Infantry and the United States Marines. Not a large force, but a high quality one by any account.

Our sources report that a native courier was accidentally shot several times while trying to leave Jimville. Found upon his person was a map and directions to one particular harbor, sheltered from the storm, where you can play all day, and let your cares drift away. We suspect it leads straight to a Nest of Pirates. Time will tell. At the most only four companies of Marines could be sent to mount an attack. Doing this would leave Jimville virtually naked. When asked about this, The American Consul has remained silent, but continues wearing a Rather Large Sidearm under his coat.

COMING AND GOINGS

We have received no information about the abducted Cassandra since the disastrous rescue attempt by the Germans and Italians. We pray for her safety if not her return to the Sultan. Although lately it has been reported that the Sultan has been seen in the company of a new member of the Harem, one called Jasmine the Honey-Lipped. We feel sure this is only idle gossip and that the Sultan would not forsake Sweet, though missing, Cassandra.

All reports from Our Sources have completely stopped in regards to the Lost Expeditions of Doctor Flagstone and Herr Doctor Igneous. They must be presumed lost. A sad fate for such notables and such quotables. Still we hold on for further news with hope in our hearts.

Report 21 - SCOUTS RETURN FROM PIRATE STRONGHOLD!

Date: 2002-04-25

SCOUTS RETURN FROM PIRATE STRONGHOLD!

The scouts hired by the Royal Marine Light Infantry have returned. This group, lead by the redoubtable Big Jake Frere, have been to the Pirate's Secret base on the Secret Island off the Coast of Jimland. Our reporters have managed to interview the men. Below is a summary of their report.

SCOUT'S REPORT

The Pirates are on the Secret Island. They are there in force. While we were there, three Pirate ships entered the harbor. Two subsequently left for places unknown.

The Pirate Camp close on the Coast of the Secret Island. They have constructed a rough building, which appears to be their supply storage building. Rough waist high walls are under construction around the Supply Building and other areas. The Pirates live in simple tents. No other permanent structures were seen.

To guard the Camp from seaward assault or bombardment, the Pirates have set up a Huge Rocket thing pointing seaward. The Rockets are the size of a man. The number of Rockets is unknown. Their effectiveness is unknown. The crew appears to be made of Natives from mainland Jimland. We suspect collusion among these Rebel elements, but where the Big Frigging Rocket came from we have no idea. We doubt the Pirates have the ability to construct such a thing.

Big Jake Frere said he would lead the Royal Marine Light Infantry to the camp for an assault. He has recommended landing on the other side of the Secret Island, marching across in the night and making a Dawn Assault on the Pirate Camp.

MARINES LEAVE JIMVILLE

Even as this report is cabled to the Home Office, the Royal Marine Light Infantry and the United States Marine forces are boarding a Royal Navy ship in the Jimville harbor. We wish them well. All Jimville awaits events.

Report 22 - MARINES ATTACK PIRATE STRONGHOLD!

Date: 2002-04-27

MARINES ATTACK PIRATE STRONGHOLD!

Royal Marine Light Infantry and United State Marines successfully attacked the Secret Pirate Base on the Secret Island off the Coast of Jimland. As we previously reported, Big Jake Frere lead the Combined Marine Force to the camp for the assault. As he recommended, the Marines landed on the opposite side of the Secret Island, marched across in the night, and made a Dawn Assault on the Pirate Camp.

THE MARINE REPORT

A Combined Marine Assault Force attacked and destroyed the Pirate Base on the Secret Island off the Coast of Jimland. The Forces involved were the Royal Marine Light Infantry Companies One and Two, commanded by Captain Wade-Inne, United States Marine Companies One and Two commanded by Captain Custer ("No Relation!"), and Royal Marine Light Infantry Company Three and United States Marine Company Three commanded by Captain Broomhandle, Regular Army.

Captain Wade-Inne's force was on the right flank. Captain Custer's force was in the center, and Captain Broomhandle's was the on the left flank. All forces advanced briskly across the island showing admirable restraint and retained good formation in the advance. The Pirate sentries were less than alert and the entire force approached quite close their camp before the alarm was given.

Once the Pirate Force raised the alarm, they seemed confused and unable to bring well directed fire on the advancing Marines. USMC Company Three suffered the heaviest casualties, being nearly wiped out. They suffered their losses in the melee on the left flank during the fight over the walls in that area. RMLI Company Three flanked the walled area and laid down heavy fire. The Pirates routed and were destroyed.

In the Center, Captain Broomhandle single-handedly charged the Pirates guarding the Supply Building. He showed great daring in this seemingly foolhardy attack, carried the day, and drove into the position slaying all that opposed him. Not to be out done, Captain Custer("No Relation!") charged to the aid of Broomhandle. None stood in his way. Last, but certainly not least, Captain Wade-Inne bravely joined the melee for control of the Supply Building. The three dashing Captains killed or routed all Pirates in the Supply Building. Captain Custer set the Building afire. Sometime later the Supply Building blew up. No one was lost in the explosion.

Captains Broomhandle and Wade-Inne rejoined their commands, while Captain Custer("No Relation!") charged the Rocket Battery. Alone, he fought the Rocket Battery Crew. Slaying some of the crew, he forced the other back. With this respite, Captain Custer set the Rocket Launcher afire. Almost immediately the entire contraption exploded. Miraculously, Captain Custer("No Relation!") survived, but the Pirate Rocket Crew was blown to bits.

The USMC Companies One and Two by now had charged the center of the Pirate Compound and capture the walls located there.

On the left flank, RMLI Companies One and Two had exchanged fire with the Pirates guarding the Rocket Battery. RMLI Company Two charged the position, fighting a successful melee with the Pirates that allowed Captain Custer to charge the Rocket Battery and Crew.

Casualties are as follows:

RMLI Co. One: Moderate

RMLI Co. Two: Moderate

RMLI Co. Three: Light

USMC Co. One: Moderate

USMC Co. Two: Moderate

USMC Co. Three: Very Heavy

Casualties among the Pirates were very heavy. Their entire force was effectively wiped out. The two pirate leaders, Tastimin and Itchipalms, were both killed in the fight over the Supply Building. All three of the aforementioned Captains were credited with slaying these Evil Renegades. Both the Supply Building and the Rocket Launcher were destroyed.

The Pirate Rockets were much feared, as any unknown weapon is. But during the course of the battle, it was observed that the Crew firing the Rockets had great difficulty in hitting what they were aiming at, regardless of range or target formation. It seemed every other Rocket went careening across the battlefield with wild abandon. Little damage was caused by these weapons. Captain Broomhandle is reported to have survived an near direct hit with no more damage than a bloody nose and a ringing in his ears.

The British Consul is quick to point out that this successful raid does not end the Pirate Menace. "This was just one Nest of Scum. There are others that must be found and dealt with. The Marines will continue with this effort for the foreseeable future."

It was noted the Combined Marine Assault Force was carried to and from the action and ably assisted by H.M.S. Baskerville, Armed Transport.

With the Secret Pirate Base destroyed and the Marines safely back in Jimville, the town breathed a collective sigh of relief.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

A German Supply ship anchored in Jimville harbor and offloaded more Regular German Infantry. The German garrison is now back to full strength. Surprisingly, Italian Troops were also disembarked. The small Italian Force is also back to full strength.

A Russian Transport was reported outbound from Jimland. We can only speculate that the Russians must have also received replacements. It is further reported that Scout Big Jake Frere was sent to look for the Russian Camp.

As an aside the Marines joke that Big Jake's scouting skills are much better than his shooting skills. They suggest issuing bullets to Big Jake is just weighing him down with unnecessary encumbrance. It seems that though in the thick of the fight, Big Jake could not hit anything by shooting his rifle.

The Scout just shrugged and refilled his bandoleer, then disappeared into the Jimland Wilds.

At present a sense of calm, such as it is, has settled over Jimville. The Natives seem quiet. The rumors are few. The brandy is good. The Marines are well pleased with themselves. "It is quiet. Like the quiet before the storm," remarked the American Consul. We shall see.

Report 23 - ALLEGED COLLUSION BETWEEN SULTAN AND PIRATES!

Date: 2002-04-27

ALLEGED COLLUSION BETWEEN SULTAN AND PIRATES!

The following cablegram was found by Reliable Sources while Dumpster diving behind the Sultan's Palace.

Cable Start:

To: Sherlock Throburn III - HIM Royal Court Pekong
From: The Sultan's Military Advisor
Date: April 27th
Subject: Bad Luck

Please give His Imperial Majesty the Sultan's condolences. Please don't let this little misfortune hinder in any way your raids. They are a smashing success.

Rest assured the Sultan's Weapons and Home Appliance Research Center has crated and shipped additional Rocket Launchers to your Other Secret Base on the Other Secret Island off the Coast of Jimland. Shipped were another BFR Mark I model and the new user friendly BFR Mark II, fondly called the "Death Pack Five". All the reloads you could ever dream of are also being shipped under separate cover to avoid suspicion.

Additional crews will be furnished by the Sultan without charge. We would like them back in good condition when you are done with them. The crews that is. Please keep the Rockets as a free gift.

Enjoy.

As always we will deny any involvement in this whole sad affair.

The Sultan's Military Advisor

Cable End.

We, the Press Corps and Citizens of Jimville, stand agog.

At present a sense of calm, such as it is, has settled over Jimville. The Natives seem quiet. The rumors are few. The brandy is good. The Marines are well pleased with themselves. "It is quiet. Like the quiet before the storm," remarked the American Consul. We shall see.

Report 24 - WORLD HERALD RETRACTS ERRANT STORIES. PROMISES THE TRUTH!

Date: 2002-05-17

WORLD HERALD RETRACTS ERRANT STORIES. PROMISES THE TRUTH!

Previous reports alleged to have been reported by The Trans-Med News Service were in fact never reported at all. In all honesty, the entire trumped up existence of The Trans-Med News Service is a hoax. After several frantic weeks of investigative work we have discovered:

1. The Trans-Med News Service's alleged ownership of the Simpson-Berundi Chrono-Compressor Booth is a bald-faced lie. The World Herald has the Only Working Model. It is safely tucked away in a Secret Vault in a Secret Underground Location. Worry not, Gentle Reader, this Fabulous Machine is safe in our hands.

2. Using the Simpson-Berundi Chrono-Compressor Booth, we sent a man back to discover the Truth. Upon his return it appears Trans-Med News Service does not exist. It may have, but no longer does, or really never did, or it could have, but doesn't now. We think you get our drift. Let this be a warning. It could happen to you.

3. We would like to Thank the Several Persons in High Places in Several Governments for their invaluable assistance in bringing our investigation to a Successful Closure. In addition, the Editor would like to especially thank Professor Fate, late of The United States and currently Sans Domicile for His help without which History might go uncorrected.

4. As usual the Germans claim it's the Russians. The Russians point a finger at the English who claim if they were behind such a deed it would only be to stop the German-Russian plans to muzzle the Free Press. All this is absolutely and irrefutably true.

Sleep well, Gentle Readers. We will continue to bring you All the News that you will need. Let this be a lesson to those who would muzzle the Press. Do not let vague rumors of a non-existent press cloud your judgement. It will not happen on our watch, or couldn't have happened anyway, or if it did it won't.

Report 25 - THE LEGION ARRIVES IN JIMVILLE! PARADE HELD.

Date: 2002-05-19

THE LEGION ARRIVES IN JIMVILLE! PARADE HELD.

This morning amid much fanfare The Long Awaited Arrival of the French Foreign Legion took place. It was a festive occasion with much music and a general air of enthusiasm. The French Consul was the featured speaker at the Reviewing Stand set conveniently in front of the Sultan's Palace.

After waiting two days aboard a storm tossed transport in the Jimville harbor The Legion disembarked, formed up, and followed the Sultan's Royal Band through the hot and humid main street of Jimville. It was a splendid parade, marred only by several of the seasick Legionnaires losing their composure, not to mention their lunches, in the fetid harbor air. Be that as it may, everyone enjoyed the Parade and the Martial Tunes played by Sultan's Royal Band.

At the close of the day, the French Consul stood majestically on the steps of the French Consulate saying, "Now, The Legion will straighten this whole mess out." Then he swept triumphantly into his Residence. We all hope Monsieur Le Consul is right.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

We are pleased to report that Captain Wade-Inne, late of the Royal Marine Light Infantry, has been recalled to England in light of the unfortunate incident of the Three Barmaids and the Goat. We applaud the quick resolution of this whole affair.

New in town is Captain Charles, Royal Marine Light Infantry. We leave it to our Astute Readers to figure out whom he is replacing. Captain Charles is described as "a quiet, non-drinking God-fearing Officer with an aversion to farm animals and a close relationship with his Revolver."

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

It has been many long weeks and still we have received no word on the missing expeditions of Doctors Flagstone and Igneous. Still missing in person, but not in our Hearts, is Dear Cassandra, late of the Sultan's Harem. Dare we raise rumors of the lamented Major Mauser? Is Jimland a land of missing persons? Can no one find out what happened to these Cherished Souls torn from the Bosom of their Friends?

Well Gentle Readers, we can stand by no longer. We have begun a search for a suitable Knight to rescue our Treasured Compatriots from the Unknown. This Hero will be provided with all required equipment and a sizable, yet modest and not too flashy, expedition with which to beat the bushes and return our lost Loved Ones to us. Applications being accepted at all Offices of this Benevolent Organization. Sign up soon and be thrashing your way through the sultry Jungle in no time. Full medical coverage included. Life insurance available at reduced rates. Additional benefits include 401K, Credit Union, and discounts at many local merchants.

Report 26 - ATTACK LAUNCHED ON SECOND SECRET PIRATE BASE!

Date: 2002-05-20

ATTACK LAUNCHED ON SECOND SECRET PIRATE BASE!

It was revealed this morning that a Task Force from Jimville has launched an attack on the biggest Pirate Base found to date. The Task Force, code named "Enema", consisted of the following troops:

Colonel Fitz-Standing - Commanding

Big Jake Frere - Head Scout

Captain Custer commanding two Companies of United States Marines.

Captain Charles commanding two Companies of Royal Marine Light Infantry.

Captain Petard commanding two Companies of The Legion in their first action.

Captain Fazouli commanding two Companies of Bersaglieri.

This impressive force is being transported by the H.M.S. Baskerville, Armed Transport. Escort for the Baskerville is being provided by the H.M.S. Dancer, Frigate. The Dancer, as our Gentle Readers will no doubt remember, was engaged in the very first action by European Forces in Jimland.

Though back in Jimville in full strength, neither the Sultan's Guard nor the Germans had any troops in the assembled force. One can only wonder about this. And we continue to wonder about the whereabouts of the Large Russian Force in Jimland.

The Huge Pirate Base was rumored to be located on Another Secret Island off the Coast of Jimland. It is said to be Even Larger than the First and, like the First Pirate Base, has at least one infernal Rocket Battery present. It is also rumored that Tomosan, Scottish Terror of the Sea, is the Leader of this Den of Saltwater Scum.

The information about the Pirate Base was "extracted from a less than willing source" who was allowed to die peacefully after prolonged interrogation. Quoting Colonel Fitz-Standing, "It was the right thing to do. Him being so helpful and all." Right you are, Colonel.

All of Jimville turns their eyes toward the sea and awaits the Victorious Return of the Task Force. Meanwhile, sandbagging and strengthening of the Consulates continues unabated. The American Consul said, "Better safe than sorry", and, hitching up the Rather Large Revolver under his coat, went back into his office.

Report 27 - ATTACK ON SECOND SECRET PIRATE BASE A QUALIFIED SUCCESS!

Date: 2002-05-25

ATTACK ON SECOND SECRET PIRATE BASE A QUALIFIED SUCCESS!

The Task Force that launched the attack on the biggest Pirate Base found to date has returned. The Force was to consist of the following troops.

Colonel Fitz-Standing - Commanding

Big Jake Frere - Head Scout

Captain Custer commanding two Companies of United States Marines.

Captain Charles commanding two Companies of Royal Marine Light Infantry.

Captain Petard commanding two Companies of The Legion in their first action.

Captain Fazouli commanding two Companies of Bersaglieri.

However, due to "scheduling conflicts" the newly arrived French Troops failed to appear for the battle. The Official Reason was simply stated as time zone lag. They had forgotten to reset their chronometers to Jimland local time and actually missed the boat. The Armed Transport Baskerville sailed without them. The French Consul was unavailable for comment. We believe the shouting coming from his residence was comment enough.

The Huge Pirate Base was rumored to be located on Another Secret Island off the Coast of Jimland. It was said to be Even Larger than the First and, like the First Pirate Base, has at least one infernal Rocket Battery present. It is also rumored that Moo Lee, Terror of the Sea, was the Leader of this Den of Saltwater Scum. The base was not quite as large as expected while still larger than the first Secret Pirate Base attacked. Two infernal rocket batteries guarded the base.

This time the attack was made in full daylight. The Pirate force was ready and waiting. The Pirate Scum proved to be a tough foe. Casualties were described as heavy. Details are listed below:

Colonel Fitz-Standing - KIA, leading the attack. The Good Colonel was the First Man in the Enemy Camp and personally captured one enemy building, which later sadly proved not to contain any material of interest. He will be missed.

United States Marines - Heavy casualties. Captain Custer returned unharmed.

Royal Marine Light Infantry - Moderate casualties. Captain Charles proved his mettle, earning the moniker of "He came to Fight" and this he did with success. He was "Mentioned in Dispatches".

Bersaglieri - very heavy casualties. Captain Fazouli was badly wounded, but was safely returned to Jimville where he is receiving the best medical treatment available.

Pirate Casualties were termed "very heavy".

Big Jake Frere distinguished himself by personally removing a Pirate Hero in hand to hand combat that lasted for some time.

The Pirate Scum leader Moo Lee escaped with the few remaining pirates. Moo Lee is now called Moo "Hold-Them-Boys-While-I-Reconnoiter-The-Rear" Lee. One Pirate supply building was destroyed. Actually, an unlucky hit by a Pirate Rocket did the damage much to the pleasure of the Marines of all nations. A large Rocket Launcher was also destroyed after a struggle with its crew who all died defending their terrible machine.

The Terrible Rockets at first seemed useless. The Crews had trouble hitting anything. Finally, they adjusted the horrible machines and scored several damaging hits on the Left Flank and Center Units. One Pirate Rocket was dragged away by the Pirates in working condition. We urge the Sultan and all the Consuls to hunt the damned machine down and destroy it before it is turned upon Jimville itself.

The Fauna of Jimland made snacks out of number of men from both sides. They constantly got caught between battling units and hindered both sides. The animals were terrible to behold and spoiled several attempted attacks and counter-attacks by both sides.

A huge flying beast never seen before appeared, skewered a Marine, and was promptly shot to bits by the unfortunate soldier's mates.

It was reported, but never confirmed, that someone had glimpsed a woman being held by the Pirate Scum that matched the description of Sweet Cassandra, late of the Sultan's Harem. The woman was taken away by the surviving Pirates. No further information is available. The Sultan's Court Advisor was unavailable for comment. We believe the shouting coming from The Sultan's Palace was comment enough.

While considered a success, the returning troops admitted they were roughly handled by the Pirates. To a man, they vowed to find the Pirate Scum and deal with them. They even allowed that they might let the French tag along. The French Consul was unavailable for comment. We believe the additional shouting coming from his residence was comment enough.

The Pirate Menace is still out there. We cannot relax. Vigilance is the price of Security. We urge all parties to hunt down these Sons of Filth and exterminate them, their families, and all their friends.

SWEET THING DANCE

The Annual Sweet Thing Dance and Pie Eating contest will be held next Sunday at the Jimville House of Girls and Casino. Everyone is welcome.

Report 28 - DOCTOR FLAGSTONE ALIVE! DOCTOR IGNEOUS ALIVE! MAJOR MAUSER ALIVE?
Date: 2002-06-08

DOCTOR FLAGSTONE ALIVE! DOCTOR IGNEOUS ALIVE! MAJOR MAUSER ALIVE?

This morning two half-dead Natives stumbled into Jimville. One claimed to be from Doctor Julius Flagstone's expedition. The other claimed to be from Herr Doctor Von Igneous' expedition. Both reported that their expeditions were alive, but not well. Both requested a Rescue of their Expeditions. Each blamed the other for their Troubles. Before the astonished witnesses could stop them, the two half-dead Natives became fully dead Natives by shooting each other during the argument over their Troubles.

Rushing to their aid, the crowd found Flagstone's Native dead as a doornail, while Igneous' Native whispered His Last Words into the ear of None Other than The German Consul. The Consul dropped the natives with a thud and exclaimed loudly, "Mauser's alive too! It was Fate." With this, he stiffly strutted in a Totally Dignified Fashion as fast as he could for the German Consulate.

Even now the German and British Consulates are beehives of activity. It is obvious to all that a hasty rescue attempt is being formed. But where are they going? The Natives never mentioned a location. Does this mean that the Lost Expeditions have never been Lost all along?

Mauser's presumed survival has sent a galvanic shock through Jimville. Even the Sultan has expressed his pleasure at this new piece of information. We quote the Sultan's Court Advisor. "The Sultan is pleased to hear that Major Mauser is alive. The Sultan hopes that all measures necessary will be taken to ensure his safe return to the bosom of his fellow countrymen. The Sultan extends his best wishes to Major Mauser and offers rewards aplenty for his sterling service in the past and in the future. If the unfortunate Major is found being less than alive, the Sultan offers his condolences and withdraws the offer of rewards aplenty."

The final thing shouted by the good Consul was "It was Fate." Now what does that mean? Who's fate or Fate? Was it Major Mauser the Native was talking about? Why all this fuss over one German Major when there are two Lost Expeditions to be rescued? All is not as it appears, Dear Reader.

The British and German Infantry have formed up in their areas on the edge of Jimville, but seem less hurried than the Americans. The French and Italian Consulates and Military Commanders hold daily meeting together. No word of what they discuss is heard. Of course, no word whatsoever is heard from the Russians. We have not yet found their camp, but rest assured, Gentle Reader, we will.

The American Marines seemed very agitated. Could it be that the Americans launched their previous rescue efforts with too little information and brought back only frustration. Or perhaps they had knowledge not revealed to others? Or perhaps the Zealous Captain Custer ("No Relation!") talked Major West into an act of folly. The American Consul remains silent, and continues wearing a Rather Large Sidearm under his coat.

The French Consul, daily, taps his cane on the Notice nailed on the Embassy door. We, of the Press Corps, smile and nod understandingly.

COMING AND GOINGS

Jimville is taking on the aura of a mining camp as more and more miners, surveyors, blasters, diggers, and various mining types come into town. Reports of a large find of X-Rock have no doubt lured these rough and tumble adventurers to Jimville. Daily, one or more are thrown in the Sultan's dank jail to cool their heels in the stench. This does not endear either party to the other. But X-Rock is a worthy gamble if its reported properties are true. Several Mining Teams have left town heading, it is said, for the Great Mountains. No one expects to see them again. A pity. They are very colorful fellows in their own way.

Report 29 - RESCUE ATTEMPTS LAUNCHED!

Date: 2002-06-15

RESCUE ATTEMPTS LAUNCHED!

This morning rescue parties left Jimville, destination unknown. Unknown to us at any rate. A company of Royal Marine Light Infantry under Captain Charles left to rescue the Flagstone Expedition. A Company of German Infantry commanded by Captain Burgher went off in search of the Igneous Expedition.

A Company of American Marines under Captain Custer left on an unknown mission. It is presumed they are helping one or both of the other rescue parties, but the American Consul is being silent as to their mission.

We wish all the rescue forces the best and hope they return quickly with the Expeditions safe in hand.

Word has reached Jimville that angry Natives are also in pursuit of the long missing Explorers and their Parties. This adds more problems to the issue of rescuing the expeditions. It has been learned that the Missing Expeditions have stumbled across a Lost City and were vying with one another to return with relics from the Lost City which, it seems, are sacred to the Natives of Jimland.

It's always something.

Upon return of the Missing Expeditions, we anticipate new findings to set the scientific community abuzz. However, they must be rescued first, and we have solid faith in the successful conclusion to that part of the puzzle.

We await the unfolding of events.

Report 30 - RESCUE ATTEMPT SUCCEEDS! RESCUE ATTEMPT FAILS! MAUSER ALIVE?

Date: 2002-06-21

RESCUE ATTEMPT SUCCEEDS! RESCUE ATTEMPT FAILS! MAUSER ALIVE?

The rescue parties sent after the Lost of Expeditions of Professors Flagstone and Igneous have returned. Success and failure sum up the attempt. We have managed through considerable effort to get full reports from all parties involved with the exception of the Native Rebels.

THE IGNEOUS EXPEDITION

Professor Otto Von Igneous began the day by boldly advancing toward the Monolith at whose base lay the Relics of the Lost City. His Party stayed in the shelter of the western ruins. After advancing into the open Igneous glanced around at the Natives pouring in from the North and East and beat a hasty retreat back to the western ruins from which they delivered fire into the approaching Natives.

Igneous then directed his bearers to withdraw to the south and safety, while he and his men continued to fire on the Natives. A Great Ape appeared out of the jungle's edge and attacked the Good Professor's men in the ruins. Hans, the Professor's able assistant and bodyguard, was seriously wounded before the beast was killed.

With the German Army no where in sight and the Royal Marines advancing up the middle of the ruin, Igneous lead the remaining member of his party after the bearers who took shelter behind the Royal Marines line.

Suddenly, the Professor's party was assailed by Natives coming from the West. The Professor bravely stood his ground and killed many natives with his pistol and hunting knife.

When the remnants of the German Infantry finally arrived the Professor escorted them back to Jimville. Losses for Professor Igneous' party were moderate.

THE GERMAN ARMY

Captain Burgher led the Regular German Infantry through the thick jungle and out onto the desert's edge. The jungle severely hampered their ability to move quickly to the attack. Once out of the jungle the Company began a slow march northwest toward the firing coming from Professor Igneous' position in the western ruins.

The advance came to an abrupt halt when a great Native force attacked the Germans from the east. This attack settled into a lengthy firefight. By the day's end the German Infantry were nearly destroyed.

Several great pterodactyls attacked the Germans and the Natives and were successfully beaten off. As usual in Jimland, the noise of the fighting attracted several large animals with thoughts of food on their mind. This day was dominated by Great Apes who several times attacked the Germans and Professor Flagstone's party.

Captain Burgher personally charged and killed an great two-legged dinosaur that brought him "mention in dispatches".

The German Infantry won the undying hatred of Professor Flagstone when in a thoroughly reprehensible action they gunned down some of Flagstone's unarmed and innocent bearers. To quote Captain Burgher, "I thought they were worth some points dead. Sorry." Right, Captain. Flagstone's men returned fire on the Germans, but no casualties were reported. More bad blood between the Germans and the British.

Pitifully few German Infantry escorted Professor Igneous back to Jimville.

THE ROYAL MARINES

The Royal Marines, lead by the redoubtable Captain Charles, also had trouble clearing the jungle. But once out of the entangling brush, they formed skirmish line and advanced directly through the middle of the ruins. They exchanged fire with several Native bands as they advanced. A giant desert snake attacked the Company but did no harm.

The Company's advance provided an unexpected avenue of safe retreat for Professor Igneous. During this retreat a Native Band charged from the west and was meet heroically by Captain Charles alone. With sword and pistol and no little cursing, the brave Captain single-handedly stopped the Native charge. The Natives then settle down to fire on the Royal Marines as they continued to advance and on Igneous as he continued to retreat.

Seeing what he thought was the slumping form of one Major Mauser, German Army, and a crate of relics being hauled slowly away, Captain Charles ordered a charge to try to retrieve both the Major and the Crate. Sadly, the Natives managed to disappear into the brush before the charge could carry home.

The Royal Marines escorted the Flagstone Expedition back to Jimville. Captain Charles reported the company was ready for more action as casualties had been light even though the unit was engaged throughout the battle.

THE FLAGSTONE EXPEDITION

Professor Julius Flagstone and his party were occupying the eastern ruins when the action began. Many Native warbands attacked from the east, this seemed to be the main attack of the Natives. Flagstone's men fired on the advancing Natives, but had to give ground and abandon the ruins. They took cover and continued firing from outside the western and southern walls of the ruins.

Native assaults reached the very walls of ruins, but were repulsed by the Cool-headed Professor and the Admirable Heroine, Olivia Fate. Olivia's vaunted marksmanship seemed to have left her at first, but she soon settled down and potted a Native or two.

Early in the action a Great Ape attacked Flagstone's bearers. The good Professor was unable to assist them as he and his men were much occupied fending off assault after assault by the Natives. Many of the bearers were smashed into goo by the Great Apes. Eventually the Apes were killed, but not until they had reduced the number of Flagstone's bearers by half. This number was further reduced by the dastardly German Infantry who inexplicably fired on the helpless and terrified bearers. Flagstone has lodged several

official complaints and called for an international investigation of the Germans and remuneration for the families of the dead bearers.

In the later stages of the battle, Olivia Fate became separated from the Flagstone Expedition as she ran forward to get a better shooting position. She was charged by no less than Ali bin Bubba. They grappled inconclusively. Hearing the yelling of Olivia, Professor Flagstone threw caution to the wind and charge blindly over the dune to rescue Olivia. There the three fought. Ali bin Bubba, Olivia Fate, and Julius Flagstone. When it was over, bin Bubba was dragging a shackled Olivia Fate into the brush while a stunned Flagstone tried to recover his wits. Fate's fate is unknown.

Sadly Flagstone returned to his party, regrouped, and withdrew with the Royal Marines. Flagstone's Expedition suffered moderate losses in the affair. All of Jimville suffered for the loss of Olivia Fate. Talk of a Massive Rescue Mission is underway.

NATIVES

The Native bands were seen to be under the control of Tastimin the Despicable, Itchipalms, and Ali bin Bubba, brigands one and all. It is reported that the Natives suffered massive casualties, but managed to carry off the Crate of Relics from the Lost City and the limp form of Major Mauser. Itchipalms, the last Native to leave the field, turned and shook his mighty tulwar at the Royal Marines, uttering some obscene curse at the Brits before disappearing off the dune crest in the dying light of day.

The annoying Flying Carpets appeared again and were quite the talk of the battle survivors. It seems they were much more effective in bombing their own troops than the enemy. Many times bombs bounced and rolled from the target into friendly formations causing havoc.

The Royal Marines particularly enjoy telling about a sputtering bomb they observed being thrown at the Flagstone Expedition. It started south of the ruins, curved gracefully westward, bounced around the ruin corner, rolled northward right past their front, then careened eastward around another ruin corner to explode mightily, smack in the middle of a large huddle of Natives causing a great many casualties. To quote RMLI Sergeant Bull, "Couldn't 'ave done it better myself".

The Flying Carpet Pilot Corps seemed to have some difficulty in keeping their rugs aloft. In addition they were beset by the Great Flapping Terrors, the Giant Pterodactyls known as Quetzalcoatlus.

The Native Infantry on the eastern side of the battlefield showed remarkable ability to take casualties and not panic. Time after time the natives were shot to bits, but refused to panic. Man after man fell, riddled, but they wouldn't run. As a tired German Soldier said, "They were brave fellows, all of them. Too bad we had to shoot them, all of them." Bullets outlasted bravery as the Natives died in heaps.

MASSIVE RESCUE MISSION

Talk of a Massive Rescue Mission for Olivia Fate is all over Jimville. All the Consulates refuse to comment. The Sultan's Court Advisor refuses to comment, but sternly reminds one and all that further increase in foreign troops in Jimland is much against the wishes of the Sultan. The Sultan reminds the Consuls that Jimland is an independent country, not a vassal

state. Reports from our sources in the field say the Native Rebels have withdrawn far up the River Jim to regroup and to avoid the counter-strike they know will come.

Report 31 - HOSTAGES IN HANDS OF MERCILESS SLAVERS!

Date: 2002-06-23

HOSTAGES IN HANDS OF MERCILESS SLAVERS!

An astounding report has reached our Office this afternoon. A reliable source has informed us that several missing persons are, in fact, not so missing after all. It is worse than that. They are prisoners of Tastimin the Despicable.

It seems Tastimin has gone slaver. Our information reports that Tastimin is heading across the desert to parts unknown to sell his prisoners for a tidy sum or a cold beer and a warm woman, whichever he is offered first.

Oh, the Horror of it all. Our Beloved Cassandra. Our Cherished Olivia Fate. Our Brave Major Mauser. One and all hostages of Evil Incarnate.

Our source, at least the only one to return alive, reported that Tastimin killed our associates over lunch. Which is to say, that during his mid-day repast The Vile Slaver had several people killed for amusement. When told that word of his action would surely get back to Jimville, Tastimin is reported to have said, "Let them try to catch me. Bwahahahahahha." (Hey, we're working with slim information here.)

Tastimin and his band were last seen heading toward the Jimbo River, a tributary of the Mighty River Jim. If he can get across it and into the trackless desert we fear the captives will never be seen again.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Professor Flagstone and Professor Igneous are buying all the supplies in Jimville. Wages being offered to Bearers have reached ridiculous rates, five cents a day not being uncommon. Apparently both Great Explorers are pressing to return to the area of the Lost City to continue bring its secrets back to Civilization where they can be fairly examined and, if possible, used to bring a better life to one and all. What do they know about this Lost City they are not revealing? Why are they so anxious to tempt Fate again after their recent narrow escape?

What of the American Marines? Where are they and what are they up to? Only a handful remain to guard the Consulate.

SCOOP OF THE DAY

Several Russian Officers were seen exiting the Sultan's Palace in the wee hours of the morning. Only the ubiquitousness of our confidants allowed us to spot the slinking Russians. They refused to answer any questions and escaped our following them by boarding a small yacht and disappearing quickly to sea. Now what was THAT all about, we wonder?

Report 32 - THE LEGION MOVES OUT!

Date: 2002-06-25

THE LEGION MOVES OUT!

In the humid mist of a Jimland morning the French Foreign Legion formed up in the deserted Jimville main street and, at a single sharp command, marched quietly out of Jimville. Whither goest thou, Monsieur Le Frog? None would say. Of course, an able associate of Ours will be there to report the unvarnished Truth wherever they go.

It seemed pretty obvious over a glass of gin, actually the obviousness increased in direct proportion to the gin, that The Legion was going to intercept the Vile Slaver, Tastimin the Despicable. Captain Petard looked every inch the Gallic Hero as he led his command into the Wilds of Jimland. Good Luck, Captain. The French Consul posed on the Steps of His Consul and tapped on the faded and frayed notice long pinned to the door. We shook our heads in agreement. Yes, The Legion would straighten this mess out. So we hope.

Perhaps The Legion is operating in conjunction with Les Americans, eh? The American Marines and the Legionnaires get along grandly in Jimville, drinking and raising hell together. Let us hope they fight as well together. We wish all parties the best success possible, Tastimin's head on the Main Gate of the Sultan's Palace.

Another spate of Pirate Raids has occurred, this time to the west of Jimville. This news was brought in by the German Transport, Mince, that docked two days ago. Also brought in by the transport were the first German See Battalion troops to grace Jimland shores. The men looked quite grand and very military in their pale khaki uniforms, much paler than the dirt colored uniforms of the Regular British Army. We of the Herald do miss the old red tunics. Sadly the world moves on.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Professor Flagstone and Professor Igneous are nearly ready to return to the region of the Lost City. They seem to be watching one another's preparations. This seems odd to us, but perhaps they know something we don't.

We begin to worry for Big Jake Frere, the Master Scout, who in our employ, went off to find the elusive Russians and their base. If anyone has any news please come round to our office and keep us informed.

Report 33 - RUSSIAN BASE FOUND!

Date: 2002-06-26

RUSSIAN BASE FOUND!

Big Jake Frere struggled into Jimville at sundown yesterday. He and two of his Askaris were all that remained of the small scouting party that left Jimville weeks ago. Their mission was to find the elusive Russian base. Had he accomplished his mission?

The big scout smiled a smile big even for him. Yes, the Russian base was found. No sooner was this information out on the streets than the German Consul invited the exhausted man to dinner at the Consulate. Also seen in attendance were Colonel Blucher, the new German Military Commander, and Captain Burgher, of whom we all know.

Before Big Jake limped over to the German food fest, he sat for a while in our less sumptuous office and recounted his search for the Russians. Here is his report.

BIG JAKE FRERE'S REPORT

We left town a while ago. How long was it? Seems like a lifetime, but you know how long we have been gone. [Six weeks. Ed.] We went back to the battlefield where the Germans and Russians fought over the Sultan's tax money. From there we tried to follow the trail back to the Russian camp. But that was to no avail. The trail was too cold which is hard to believe considering the number of Russian troops and the infernal machine they have. But impossibly, they had disappeared.

So we sat down, had a pipe, and thought things over. Finally it occurred to me that the Russians must get their supplies from somewhere, so we started sniffing around some of the wildland trails we know of. No unusual activity there. So what where did they go. One of the lads suggested they marched into the sea and disappeared. We all had a good laugh at that. But it set me to thinking again.

The sea was the answer I decided. I sent the lads around to the coast and started trying to hire boats. To the West it was no problem. To the East it was no boats. So we walked over that way.

As we walked over we were attacked several times by Rebels, but managed to beat them off or beat a hasty retreat ourselves. I lost several of the lads in these scuffles. But once, we got us a prisoner. He had a Russian belt on and the buckle was way too shining for his likes. So we persuaded him to give us some information. Then we buried the body deep so no one would know we were around.

Straight to the Russian Base we crept. As we suspected it was on the sea. Now, I can tell you where, if you're ready to pay up.

[There is a lapse in our notes here as we had to retrieve the money and count it twice before Big Jake was satisfied. Ed.]

Well I'll tell you where the Russian is holed up. You know Mount Jim? Big damn extinct volcano over on the east coast. Good. You know the Three Fingers? You know, stick out your first three fingers. The big knuckle behind your middle finger is Mount Jim. Then there's the North Finger, the East Finger, and the South Finger. Don't ask me, I didn't name them damn ridges.

Anyway, we crawled down and found the Russian base is on the south side of the North Finger. Pretty big place too. When we was there, there was a big freighter at the pier and lots of soldiers getting off. We didn't stick around too long since the Russian had patrols all over the place. Seems like they have built a little fort up on the side of Mount Jim to keep watch out to sea. Got a damn regular trail right up to it.

We saw something else too. And, bless me, this is no lie. We saw the White Sheik go in the base. And we saw a fellow we thought for sure was Omar Oh'my go in too. Later we saw the Sheik and his boys leave with two wagons all covered with tarps. Don't know what was in the wagons, but whatever it was, it was heavy. They still hadn't crossed the ridge by the time we left.

Oh, yeah, for what its worth, I saw that infernal machine the Russian had or at least I saw something blowing smoke and making a hellish racket.

Well, gotta go. German Consul is expecting me.

End Big Jake Frere's Report.

Gentle Reader, we would be remiss if we did not continue the story. Our associate at the German Consulate, of course we have associates at Every Consulate, reported that the Germans paid Big Jake handsomely for the same story. We don't hold it against Jake. He's just trying to earn an honest living.

The Germans queried Big Jake till he got annoyed about the Russian base, its size, its defenses, number of troops and what types, etc., etc., as military men are prone to do. They hauled in several maps and helped Jake find the location. After Big Jake was gone, the Germans worked into the morning's little hours. Several lengthy cables were sent off to Berlin. Several short replies were received.

We will keep you informed as the German activity develops, as surely it will.

As an aside, the Italian Consul and Military Commander were invited to breakfast the next shortly after the Italian patrol craft tied up at the Jimville pier.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Professor Flagstone and Professor Igneous are still scrounging supplies thorough Jimville and the surrounding area. Both have received an audience with the Sultan. Neither will say what was discussed.

There is still no word on the American Marines. The American Consul continues wearing the Rather Large Revolver, though now he wears it in a holster around his waist. Shades of Dodge City! These American are such characters. We are expecting cowboys and indians next.

Report 34 - NATIVES ATTACK JIMVILLE!

Date: 2002-08-30

NATIVES ATTACK JIMVILLE!

FLASH! FLASH! FLASH! The Native Rebellion has reached Jimville , the idyllic Capitol of Jimland. There is very little this reporter can add to the personal experiences that follow, gathered Dear Reader, while hearts still raced and blood was still fresh in the streets.

CAPTAIN CHARLES OF THE ROYAL LIGHT MARINE INFANTRY

"We kicked their butts . They will never dare attack Jimville again, if there are enough of the damn beggars left to attack anywhere now. I hope our Commanding Officer sends us out after them. We'll find them and finish this little episode once and for all. With the Sultan's blessing, of course."

CAPTAIN FAZOULI OF THE BERSAGLIERI

"We kicked their butts. They will never dare attack Jimville again while the Bersaglieri are here. Why, lucky for them, we didn't follow them out into the wilds and destroy them entirely. An oversight in the heat of battle, which I can assure you, will be soon remedied. With the Sultan's blessing, of course."

CAPTAIN IRELAND OF THE SULTAN'S GUARD

"We kicked their butts . They will never dare attack Jimville again while the Sultan rules, may that be long and glorious. Lucky for these Colonial Troops, the Sultan's Guard was here to save their ass. I will recommend directly to the Sultan's Military Advisor, that the entire Guard be sent to find the home of these villains and destroy them where they hide. With the Sultan's blessing, of course."

THE SULTAN'S MILITARY ADVISOR

"This has been an unfortunate incident. I have recommended to the Sultan that a force, drawn from the Colonial Forces available, be formed to search out and destroy the Rebels wherever they may be. To ensure the safety and well-being of Jimville, and in fact the Sultan himself, the Guard shall be held in reserve in Jimville, ready to pounce should the Rebels come back. I feel confident that this plan will be followed, with the Sultan's blessing, of course."

THE SULTAN'S COURT ADVISOR

"This has been an unfortunate incident. We hope the good people of Jimville return to their homes and take safety in the fact that the Rebels were utterly destroyed. The minor damage done to Jimville will swiftly be repaired and life will resume its happy rhythm, with the Sultan's blessing, of course."

LOCAL GOSSIP

The Sultan is, shall we say, a tad unhappy. Several sources reported the Sultan stomping around His Palace berating both his Advisors and the full assemblage of Consuls and their respective Military Commanders for over an hour. All parties concerned left with their tails between their legs. Word has it that new taxes and tariffs are being planned to finance the rebuilding

of the destroyed areas of Jimville. The Sultan has great plans. We shall see, with the Sultan's blessing, of course.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

After the ruckus, Professor Flagstone and Professor Igneous returned to scrounging supplies throughout Jimville and the surrounding area. Both have received an audience with the Sultan. Neither will say what was discussed.

There is still no word on the American Marines. The American Consul continues wearing the Rather Large Revolver, though now he wears it in a holster around his waist. These Americans are such hooligans.

The Legion left ages ago and has not been heard from. We will pay standard fees for information leading to the location and activity of the Legion. The French Consul refuses comment and simply taps on the tattered notice still adorning the Consulate door. Helpful man, the Consul.

Report 35 - HOSTAGE RESCUE ATTEMPT AT LAST!

Date: 2002-09-08

HOSTAGE RESCUE ATTEMPT AT LAST!

Today we have learned that the long awaited Hostage Rescue Attempt was made. American Marines and French Foreign Legionnaires attacked the Slave Raiding Bands of Tastimin the Despicable and Itchipalms. The action was hot and heavy.

The Slavers were attacked as they attempted to cross the River Jim near the Coast. It is reported that Tastimin had possession of the Hostages, the Lovely Cassandra, the Fetching Olivia Fate, and Major Mauser of the German Regular Army. Tastimin was heading north. The Marines and the Legion approached from the West, but with little hope of catching Tastimin and his cutthroats. Much to the surprise of everyone, Itchipalms, the Rogue Slaver, for reasons only known to him attacked Tastimin.

Soon a brisk firefight was taking place. The Hostages were going nowhere. Spurred on by this turn of events, the Marines and the Legion advanced to the east. The Marines moved along a more northerly route on the banks of the River Jim. The Legion was using a southern route through the dense jungle. The River Jim teemed with crocodiles with a hungry glint in their lifeless eyes. They would prove a large problem for all parties.

Across from the Marines route lay a small area of ancient ruins. The only ford across the River Jim lead south to north directly to the foot of the silent ruins. Doubtless these ruins were placed to watch over the ford in time gone by. The Marines, seeing no movement in the ruins, proceeded along the southern bank heading for the gunfire to the southeast.

Now something unexpected happened. [Unexpected in Jimland? - Ed.] From out of the jungle came Headhunters. They seemed to be everywhere. The Legion was attacked. Tastimin was attacked. Itchipalms was attacked. Even the Marines were attacked. Rifle fire broke out everywhere. Headhunters dropped in heaps. Itchipalms cut off the only line of advance for Tastimin through the swampy ground near the River Jim. The shooting continued.

The Legion, led by Captain Petard, continued through the jungle maze trying to close on Tastimin. The Marines fanned out, advancing along the riverbank and sending a column on a parallel route further south through the Jungle.

Suddenly, the Headhunters disappeared into the jungle. Absolute stillness followed. Itchipalms, not being one to forgo the moment, proceeded to break the quiet with a volley at Tastimin's brigands. Once more the two slave traders exchanged shots. Tastimin inched further toward the river, though Itchipalms clearly blocked his path and the Legion was closing in.

A single shot, then several more rang out from the ruins. A Marine fell mortally wounded. A strong feminine voice cried out, "Sod off, Sailorboy, or you get more than you can handle." More shots followed. Another Marine went down. The Marines returned fire but with no observable effect. More shots came their way. The Marine advance came to an abrupt halt.

Meanwhile the Legion was closing on the Slavers and their Hostages. Now, as it seemed to one and all, the Wilds had been unusually quiet. Of course all good things come to an end. With a flapping of great wings, a huge creature dropped from the sky and right into the Legion. Snap went the great beak, and down went a Legionnaire. At point blank range the Legion opened fire and the creature was driven off. Captain Petard grimly ordered the advance to continue.

Still the two slaver bands fought. Several charges resulted in hand-to-hand combat and losses both sides. A Flying Carpet was spotted by the Marines and reportedly shot down. More of Jimland fauna began to show up, drawn by the racket of the battle. All parties were beset with hideous monsters from lost times. Fire was exchanged between the slaver bands, the slavers and the Legion, the slavers and the Marines, the Marines and parties unknown but definitely female in the ruins, and everyone shot at the local animals.

Tastimin's brigands were taking the worst of the battle casualties. Itchipalms himself came under heavy fire from the ruins and barely managed to pull his men back. The Marines abandoned the interior route as Captain Custer, no relation, ordered his men back to the river.

The Legion charged Tastimin. Tastimin charged the Legion. Itchipalms charged Tastimin. Tastimin charge Itchipalms. The ruins kept the Marines pinned down. All hell broke loose. Men fell everywhere. Hostages exchanged hands and back again. Monstrous creatures rampaged about playing no favorites.

The Legion began to escort the Dear Cassandra back to safety. A few, a very few, of Tastimin's brigands roughly hauled Major Mauser toward the river. A few, a very few, of Itchipalms' men threw Olivia Fate over their shoulders and headed for the river also.

The Marines waded across the River Jim. The Crocodiles had a feast. Next, Itchipalms sent some men over with more success. More Marines charged across the thrashing waters. Many crocodiles got their fill of fresh Marine.

In the Ruins a deadly fight took place. The Marines found they had run into the "Babe Squad", a famous band of female fortune hunters and crack shots. They seemed to be defending an ancient chest of some sort. The Marines charged in. Itchipalms, avoiding a rather angry T-Rex, charged in. As the dust began to settle one of the Babe Squad was seen dragging the chest into the nearby jungle growth. The Marines were exhausted. Suddenly a figured raced by and into the jungle. Itchipalms did not give up easily. Another figured lunged past the Marines. Captain Custer was hot on Itchipalms heels. The north bank of the River Jim quieted down.

Far to the South, the Legion with the Precious Cassandra safely in their midst, headed back to safety. Tastimin looked about and found his men and hostages gone. Pulling his great tulwar out he dashed off down a jungle track trying to head off the Legion.

Tastimin soon found the Legion. Legion bullets soon found Tastimin and blasted him into the bushes. The Legion was triumphant.

BACK IN JIMVILLE

The Legion marched proudly back to Jimville. The Sweet Cassandra was returned, sobbing for joy, to the warm embrace of the Sultan. Everyone was smiles and congratulations. Everyone that is, but Jasmine, "the honey-lipped". She did not smile.

The Sultan awarded Legion Lieutenant LaFleur promotion to Captain on the spot. The Legion Commandant, Major DeVille, heartily confirmed the promotion of his youngest Lieutenant, all the while rolling his eyes and forcing a smile. A memorial plaque was presented to the French for Captain Petard who was killed during the fighting. The Sultan also gratefully thanked the Americans though no promotions or other awards were bestowed. Jimville settled into a happy fiesta atmosphere with a great open-air banquet put on by the Sultan. Cassandra sat at his side more radiant than ever.

We are joyous at the return of Beloved Cassandra, though we lament the loss of the Fetching Olivia Fate and the stern Major Mauser. They may be gone, but we will cherish their memory.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Several days later, as dusk fell on a happy and tired Jimville, a tattered woman led a heavily laden mule into Jimville. She booked a room at the Empress. Soon Professor Flagstone and later Herr Doctor Igneous were seen to enter the woman's room. Each left in a much-agitated state. Later still, Big Jake Frere went to the woman's room. We have no report of his leaving. We have set our reporters in motion to find out what is going on, Gentle Reader. We are confident we will soon reveal this newest mystery.

Report 36 - GERMAN ATTACK ON RUSSIAN BASE RUMORED!

Date: 2002-10-12

GERMAN ATTACK ON RUSSIAN BASE RUMORED!

THE GERMAN REPORT

It has been reliably reported by our sources that the Germans are planning a large-scale attack against the Russian base located on a small peninsula at the base of Mount Jim, the massive and long dormant volcano on the Jimland coast. Fresh German Troops have arrived and the See Battalion has been recalled to Jimville.

THE RUSSIAN REPORT

Russian activity is unknown. Though our sources say the Russians have also been stockpiling munitions and disembarking additional troops. It appears a major action is in the offing. We will bring you any further news, as it becomes available.

MYSTERIOUS VISITOR

The mysterious woman who arrived in town shortly after the Triumphant Rescuers is still unknown. Even the staff of the Empress of Jimville does not know the woman's name. It is reported that the woman asked for a room and no questions. A question died unasked on the proprietor's lips as the woman placed a Large Pile of Money on the counter saying, "There's more where this came from. And remember no questions. I want hot water now and cold champagne in thirty minutes. I am expecting guests. Do not keep them, or me, waiting." With that she scooped up the room key off the counter, her rifle and pack from the floor, and headed up the stairs. All we know is that she lives well, has apparently inexhaustible supplies of money, says very little, and looks Fabulous in whatever she wears, her beautiful golden curls offsetting her sparkling azure blue eyes. Her laugh is like velvet. Of course, every woman in town thinks she's a tramp. The men, well, never mind.

PIRATE RAIDS

Pirate trouble again raises public concern. New pirate attacks, both on vessels and coastal villages, has the Sultan shouting at his Advisors. The British, American, and German Consuls have been summoned to the Palace. No comment has been forthcoming from anyone. It is further rumored that the pirate is none other than Tomosan, thought destroyed in the previous attacks on pirate bases. The Sultan's concern has reached new heights in light of the news that several of his coastal holdings have been burned to the ground. Tomosan's doing? Perhaps, perhaps not, as it was alleged that the Sultan was in fact supplying the pirates with high tech weapons, namely Rockets and the crews to run them, and that previously the Sultan's holding had been carefully avoided by the pirates. So what is this new wrinkle?

Report 37 - THREAT OF GERMAN AND RUSSIAN WAR INCREASES!

Date: 2002-11-03

THREAT OF GERMAN AND RUSSIAN WAR INCREASES!

GERMANS MOVE OUT!

German Troops left Jimville in the early light of dawn. Most marched out on the execrable paths that serve as roads in Jimland. The noisy, smoke belching S.P.A.M. lurched along the roads with the sweating infantry.

It is anticipated the S.P.A.M. will once again challenge the Russian C.R.A.P. although this behemoth has not been seen since its rather poor showing during the engagement over the Sultan's Misplaced Tax Loot. Many say the monstrous thing is just too big and heavy for the Jimland environment. Only time will tell. And where would the Russians get a replacement anyway?

More troops, including the See Battalion, boarded several wheezing tramp steamers in the harbor. Joining the convoy outside the Jimville harbor was a shiny new ship bearing the German flag. What cargo this ship carried is unknown.

RUSSIAN REPORT

Big Jake Frere, operating under exclusive contract to the Herald, has gone into the Wilds of Jimland to bring us further reports on Russian activity. This extreme measure was made necessary by the German's complete inability to share their knowledge of the Russian base with the Gentle Readers of the Herald. We find this reticence rather irksome. We, of course, will report all the facts Big Jake brings back. Truth before Skullduggery!

PIRATE MENACE CONTINUES

Pirate trouble continues to raise public concern. A series of small pirate attacks, both on vessels and coastal villages, has the Sultan threatening everyone within earshot. Additionally, it has been confirmed that the pirates are, in fact, lead by Tastimin the Despicable. We paid good money for this?

The British, American, French, and Italian Consuls were previously summoned to the Palace. No comment has been forthcoming from anyone. Lately only the French and Italian Consuls have been scurrying to the Sultan's Palace when he yells. What the British and Americans are up to is anyone's guess. It is reported that several troopships from far-flung British Empire outposts are bring more troops to Jimland. For what purpose, we ask?

EXPEDITIONS FORMING AGAIN

Flagstone and Igneous are forming new expeditions. They seem to have calmed down and are most casually gathering their supplies and bearers. It's as if they are waiting for something or someone. Both are most cordial when they meet, something previously unknown. Could this have something to do with the Mysterious Woman still booked into the Empress?

Reports have reached our ears that several more Famous and Fearless Explorers are coming to Jimland. Once more we must pose the obvious question, For What Purpose?

Report 38 - WAR CLOUDS GATHER OVER JIMLAND!

Date: 2002-11-09

WAR CLOUDS GATHER OVER JIMLAND!

THE RUSSIAN REPORT

Big Jake Frere, operating under exclusive contract to the Herald, has gone into the Wilds of Jimland to bring us further reports on Russian activity. The following is his first report.

"The Russian base was right where I left it, on the coastal flank of the great old volcano Mount Jim. The Russians have more troops there than I remembered.

Several Rebel Native Warbands were also seen camped outside the camp. Daily, Russian Officers and Sergeants would go out to the Natives and spend the day with them on the target range or go off into the Wilds. We dare not follow them there. I have lost several of my boys to these adventures with nothing to show for it. So we waited and watched.

The Russians have a large transport steamer tied to their makeshift pier. During the day it is quiet with little observable activity, but a very visible, large, and heavily armed guard. At night it is a beehive of activity. I don't know what is on the ship, but from the sound of things, it seems the Russians have another of those infernal machines.

Once, while I was peering through my wonderful new field glasses (marvelous things, they are!), I spied soldiers not in German uniforms, but looking like the Italians back at Jimville. I can't be sure though. Anyway, there are soldiers there that are not Russian. They never leave the ship that I can tell. So what they are doing is mystery.

By the way, there was no sign of the Germans. They have not approached the Russian base yet. I have sent several of the boys out to locate them. I'll let you know what I find out. By the way, this will be an extra charge item, just in case you were wondering. I have a business to run after all.

After watching the Natives for a while, I decided we needed better information. So I got us a volunteer right out of their camp one night. He only confirmed that Tastimin was not present before he went and died on us. Better luck next time."

End of Big Jake's report.

MARINE ACTIVITY

British Royal Marine Light Infantry and American Marines left town yesterday aboard a small British ship, destination unknown. Pirate hunting perhaps?

EXPEDITION UPDATE

Flagstone and Igneous are still forming their new expeditions. They have been observed visiting the Mystery Woman in the Empress. We have attempted to learn what was being discussed, but our staff was rudely hustled out of the room. She survived the fall and is recovering nicely.

Reports of more Famous and Fearless Explorers coming to Jimland appear to be True. The World Renowned Explorer and Finder of Antiquities Lord Shale has arrived in town with one assistant and a bottomless bag of money. The Price of Bearers is again skyrocketing. The going rate is now 7 cents a day for a bearer, 20 cents a day for armed askari, locally referred to as "Thugs".

Based on conversations with his Lordship, we can confidently report that another Famous and Fearless Explorer is on the way. None other than Alexander Pebbles, the World's Shortest Adventurer, is enroute to Jimville even as you read this. We are sure he will arrive soon because, as Pebbles says, "the best path is the Shortest path". We only quote them, Dear Reader.

Report 39 - BIG JAKE FRERE REPORT! RUSSIANS! GERMANS!

Date: 2002-11-16

BIG JAKE FRERE REPORT! RUSSIANS! GERMANS!

BIG JAKE'S REPORT

Big Jake Frere, operating under exclusive contract to the Herald, sends his second report.

"The Big News is that the Russians have gotten themselves another of those infernal machines. This one is smaller than the first monster. It seems to be able to move quite easily over the Jimland terrain. It has strange rolling things that look like belts on each side supported by many small wheel-like things. Strange. But effective, as I have not yet seen it get stuck in the swampy ground around the base.

More Russian Troops arrived today in a small old steamer. This may be why no one had previously observed the Russian build up. Their troops are arriving in small numbers aboard second hand steamers. From the look of this old scow I'll bet not all the Troops sent will ever Arrive!

I digress.

The Big Transport is getting up steam, so I'll assume that now that it has unloaded its cargo it is leaving. Something that big on the Jimland coast is sure to attract attention, something these shifty Russians don't want, I'm sure.

The boys that went looking for the Huns have come back. This is going to cost you Triple rates by the way.

The Germans have also landed more of the damn steam monsters. How many are unknown, but its true. What is going on here? I want some information quick like or I'm pulling out. My boys are getting a little nervous. If we are found, we have nothing to stop these iron giants. To top it off, they are definitely heading this way. Stand by for some action.

The Natives have gathered their gear and left. My scouts say another group is on the way in. The Russians are holding a regular Rebel School here! Bet the Sultan would pay dear for that information!

Yesterday I thought I saw a Pirate Ship hull down on the horizon. But I can't be sure. Could have been a coaster. The Pirates seem to have given this place a wide berth. We haven't seen hide nor hair of them. Maybe its all the Guns the Russians have guarding the base that makes ol' Tastimin think twice. The old rascal is no fool."

End of Big Jake's report.

EXPEDITION UPDATE

The various expeditions, Flagstone, Igneous, Shale, and Pebbles have all moved to the outskirts of Jimville, which really wasn't all that far if you

know what we mean. Each camp is growing as bearers, cooks, scouts, and askari are recruited into each group.

All four Explorers now go as a group to visit the Mystery Woman. Every day at lunchtime they stroll over to the Empress and up to The Woman's Room. Several hours and several bottles later, they stroll back to their camps. We can get no reports of what is going on since the unfortunate handling of our previous staff on the scene. But rest assured, Gentle Reader, we will continue to try.

Report 40 - RUSSIANS! GERMANS! IT'S WAR!

Date: 2002-11-21

RUSSIANS! GERMANS! IT'S WAR!

BIG JAKE'S LATEST REPORT

Big Jake Frere, operating under exclusive contract to the Herald, sends his third report.

"The Germans are now only two days march from the Russian Base. They advance with no opposition. Surely they will attack soon. I have noticed that the See Battalion is not with the Regular Army troops. I wonder where it has gone?

The Russians continue their routine unaltered. Certainly they must be aware of the German advance. Perhaps they seek victory by simply defending their base.

Rebel Native Troops are trained each day as if the Germans were a world away.

My boys and I grow excited by the battle about to be waged. We will be taking a new position away from the expected line of German advance. Reports may be harder to send as the noose tightens."

End of Big Jake's report.

The German Consul in Jimville refuses to comment on our reports. He has closed up the Consulate like a fort. The remaining German Infantry in Jimville is camped within the Consulate grounds and seems to be ill tempered. C'est la guerre, boys.

MARINE UPDATE

We have received no word about the mission or fate of the Royal Marine Light Infantry or the US Marines. Since their departure nothing has come to our sources as to what is going on. The previously reported reinforcements from the far-flung British Empire have not arrived yet. Were they only rumors after all?

EXPEDITION UPDATE

The expeditions have vanished in the night! Flagstone gone! Igneous gone! Shale gone! Pebbles gone! Where? No one knows except perhaps the Mystery Woman. And She Too has Vanished Without A Trace! Our trusty team of investigator went to her rooms and reported it was as if She had never been there! Like a Ghost She is gone. With the Expeditions perhaps? Which one? Worry not, Dear Reader, We Will Get Answers to ALL these Important Questions!

Report 41 - GERMAN ATTACK ON THE SECRET RUSSIAN BASE A SUCCESS! MAUSER ALIVE!?

Date: 2002-11-24

GERMAN ATTACK ON THE SECRET RUSSIAN BASE A SUCCESS! MAUSER ALIVE!?

BIG JAKE'S LATEST REPORT

Big Jake Frere, operating under exclusive contract to the Herald, sends his fourth report.

"The Germans attacked today! What a battle it was. The Russians were ready. Strangely the Rebels stayed away, maybe they were intimidated the huffing and puffing of the steam tanks.

The German force consisted of two companies of Regular Army infantry and a Large steam tank under Captain Burger, two companies of Regular Army infantry and a Small steam tank under Captain Stukka, two companies of See Battalion infantry and a Small steam tank under Captain Luger.

The Russian force consisted of two companies of Regular Army infantry and a Small steam tank under Captain Yanoff, two companies of Regular Army infantry and a Large steam tank under Captain Pavlov, two companies of Regular Army infantry and a Small steam tank under Captain Kalashnikov.

Burger attacked the south end facing off against Yanoff. Stukka attacked the middle against Pavlov and the North against Kalashnikov. The See Battalion attacked the North flank trying to roll up the Russian line.

All the infantry not in cover headed for some. The flank marching See Battalion wandered around in the Wilds a bit before appearing on the battlefield. At this point their supporting tank experienced mechanical problems and stopped cold. Much cursing and die rolling later, the machine still sat, serenely unmoved by it all.

Elsewhere the tank drivers found it easier to run over the poor, and now bloody, infantry whenever they appeared in the open than to shoot at them. Burger's troops tried to outflank the southern Russian building but were stopped. They then tried going straight through the woods and were stopped again by desperate hand-to-hand fighting.

Stukka headed south, then north, then east, not getting far in any direction as Pavlov and Kalashnikov both put troops in his way. Again fierce hand-to-hand combat was fought.

Luger nonchalantly ordered his men forward, saying "Leave that piece of s**t behind." Of course the tank's steam pressure immediately rose to full, and the infernal machine rumbled off into the action. Luger's Number 5 company charged the northernmost Russian building. The Number 6 company head due south trying to roll up the Russian line or at least get behind them.

The two small Russian tanks were having a fun time trying to run over careless German troopers. Too much fun it seems, as the Germans swarmed the tanks and managed to stuff several grenades/dynamite thingies into the tanks. Both tanks promptly blew up taking no few Germans with them. These events

seemed to cause one and all to reevaluate the cleverness of trying to run over infantry.

In the North, Luger's Number 5 company stormed the Russian building. Much to their astonishment, they discovered Major Mauser, long thought to be a victim of the Slavers. Freeing him from his bonds they carried the Major from the building. Soon Stukka's men arrived to set the building alight.

In the south, Burger's lumbering tank rolled over several Russians and was promptly swarmed. Shortly thereafter it blew up in a spectacular display which also destroyed the southern building. The Germans got lucky there! Burger's force, now a mere shadow of its original glory, began to retire from the field feeling they had done their part. Yanoff's Number Five company was nearly destroyed, but Number Six was still very much full of fight, but they let Burger retire unmolested.

In the center of the battlefield, the three remaining tanks, two small German and one Large Russian traded shots to no avail. The tank with the See Battalion, making up for early mechanical ineptitude, scored the only hit by one tank on another. However, this hit harmlessly bounced off. Much shouting was heard coming from the tank!

As usually happens in a Jimland battle, the locals in the form of big and nasty animals finally began appearing and in numbers. This caused some scurrying by the various infantry, but casualties were remarkably light all things considered. Captain Burger was simultaneously engaged with a Russian Sergeant and a great Flying Monster. He managed to survive and is recovering nicely.

Captain Luger, in the North, was attacked by a great hairy Ape and by feigning death managed to live to fight another day. Some talk has surfaced about whether the Good Captain was faking it or actually fainted at the sight of the beast. Alas, we shall never know.

Darkness finally caused the two sides to draw back in exhaustion. The Russian base is in flames. Casualties were high on both sides.

The Germans claim a Major Victory. The Russians, of course, aren't saying anything. My boys and I, from where we sat, think it was more a near run thing than either side will let on. The steam tanks, for all their lurching and belching steam, seemed reasonably effective, at least running over infantry, until the infantry decided a dynamite enema was the answer. Against one another the tanks seemed particularly ineffective. Back to the drawing board I'd say.

No Natives took part in the battle that we could see. Strange, since so many had been in the Russian base training lately. I wonder what mischief they are up to.

Well, this is the last report from the place formerly known as The Secret Russian Base. The Germans have withdrawn, hauling their damaged tank off with them. The condition of Major Mauser is unknown. The Russians are left with the debris. I don't think they had the fight knocked out of them just yet.

Heading back to Jimville for a beer. Have my money ready."

Report 42 - PIRATE MENACE GROWS WORSE.

Date: 2002-11-27

PIRATE MENACE GROWS WORSE

Reports are flooding into Jimville that the Pirate Menace is growing worse. Reliable sources tell the Herald that Tastimin the Despicable is trying to form a Pirate League. The aim of the League is to run the Europeans out of Jimland once and for all. Then they will turn their tender mercies on the Sultan. No doubt Tastimin has a clear idea of who should be running Jimland.

Attacks continue up and down the coast. It is even rumored that the Pirates attacked the Russian base shortly after their beating at the hands of the Germans. These same Germans strut around Jimville like prize gamecocks.

Now, of course, the Sultan went ballistic over this little tidbit of News about the Pirate League when we delivered it in the Morning Edition Headlines! He has his whole Guard scouring the countryside looking for the Secret Pirate Base. To no avail, we might add.

However, Gentle Reader, We at the World Herald feel the need to give you All The News You Need. To this aim we have again hired the Famous Scout Extraordinaire, Big Jake Frere. Paying his usual exorbitant fees, in advance we again might add, we have sent Big Jake out into the Wilds of Jimland once more. His mission, which he has accepted, is to find the Secret Pirate Base and report back to the World Herald Office here in Jimville.

We will pass all the Usual Information on to the Appropriate Authorities for the Appropriate Fees. It a cold world we live in, Dear Reader.

MARINES STILL MISSING

The Royal Marine Light Infantry, commanded by Captain Charles, the United States Marines, commanded by Captain Custer ("no relation"), and now the German See Battalion, commanded by Captain Luger ("fully recovered") are all missing from Jimville. Out to sea, as it were. Where they are is a mystery. We highly suspect they are out Pirate Hunting and anxiously await any news of their well being.

All the Consulates deny these obvious facts, which only make us more confident the Pirate Menace will soon be put to rights.

EXPEDITION UPDATE

The Expeditions still camp at the edge of Jimville. For our geographically challenged readers, the edges of Jimville are not all that far from the center, or even each other. Just in case you wondered. Ever.

The Expeditions continue to hire bearers and other necessary staff. The four leaders, Flagstone, Igneous, Shale, and Pebble continue their mid-day meetings and meals with The Woman, as she is now called. Sadly, after all our efforts, we have no clue who this beautiful woman is. If anyone has any information, we will pay top dollar to share it with the Curious World.

SCIENCE CLUB NEWS

The local Science Club would like to remind everyone that the constant referral to the four legged dinosaurs as "harmless" is not correct. These beast are as dangerous as any other dinosaur. Given that they do not attack unless provoked doesn't mean one can ignore them. Remember the Abdulla triplets, who are now the Abdulla twins. Well done, Science Club.

LOST AND FOUND

The French Consul would like his dog back. There will be no questions asked.

Report 43 - PIRATE ROCKETS OVER JIMVILLE!

Date: 2002-12-04

PIRATE ROCKETS OVER JIMVILLE!

In an unprecedented display of chutzpah, Tastimin's Pirates launched a brazen daylight attack against Jimville. Calmly sitting just outside the harbor defenses, the Pirates shot numerous Rockets in the general direction of the Sultan's Palace. We say in the general direction for it appears there are still some technical details to be worked out with these Wonder Weapons, namely, steering the damn things.

While obviously aimed at the Sultan's Palace many went astray and landed all over the place. One hit next to the Empress of Jimville causing a small fire that was quickly extinguished by the residents led by none other than The Woman.

Another exploded behind the Jimville House of Girls and Casino causing much smoke and noise but no significant damage. A note of apology was rowed ashore under a white flag and delivered to the proprietor with Tastimin's profuse regrets.

The Sultan's Palace was hit twice, but both Terror Rockets failed to explode. The Sultan, white with rage, could only stand on the Palace Wall and shake his fist at the Pirate Vessels while uttering some rather original and very colorful invectives at Tastimin.

BIG JAKE FRERE

We have received no reports from Big Jake yet. We hope this is not a Bad Sign.

ITALIAN STALLION

All in the Italian Consulate of Jimville are a chatter with the News that the Famous and Fearless Italian Explorer Guido Palomino, a.k.a. The Italian Stallion, is coming to Jimland, and we quote, "to assist in bringing Civilization to the Natives, Joy to the Hearts of His Countrymen and Riches to the Great State of the Two Italies", unquote.

Overheard coming from the French Consul to the American Consul, "This ought to be interesting".

Responses from the other Famous and Fearless Explorers: Flagstone, "Palomino, here? The Twit!". Igneous, "Now I can do some serious drinking." Shale, "Palomino, here? The Twit!". Pebbles, "Yeah. Sure. Right."

Surprisingly, coming loud and clear from the open window of The Woman's room, "Guido is coming here! The miserable little son of a .." At this point the window slammed shut. Our reporter's fall to the street below was luckily cushioned by a passing pedestrian who is recovering admirably.

Well, Dear Reader, it seems a little spice has been stirred into the Jimland mix. Delicious, n'est pas? We can only wait and see.

EXPEDITION UPDATE

The Expeditions still camp at the edge of Jimville. We, here at the World Herald, are beginning to wonder if they will ever take to the Wilds of Jimland. It seems they prefer the heady wine of The Woman to the Uncertain Thrills of Adventure. Our staff stands ready to accompany them should they ever sally forth.

MARINE UPDATE

No news is stale news. If the Pirates are here, where are the Marines?

BAKE SALE

The Ladies of the Jimville House of Girls and Casino are having a Bake Sale. The proceeds go to local Charities to help rebuild damaged parts of Jimville. Everyone is invited. No weapons inside the building please.

Report 44 - PIRATES ATTACK AT THE VERY DOORS OF JIMVILLE!

Date: 2002-12-11

PIRATES ATTACK AT THE VERY DOORS OF JIMVILLE!

In an EVEN MORE unprecedented display ofchutzpah, Tastimin's Pirates attacked the passenger vessel, Baskerville, carrying the Famous and Fearless Italian Explorer Guido Palomino. AGAIN, just outside the harbor defense, the Pirates swooped in to attack. They fired one broadside, closed, and boarded the vessel. Only Palomino was removed from the ship!

Actually he was the only person, the Pirates took every bit of cargo they could carry, most conspicuous were several huge crates marked in bold letters "Professor Fate, Jimville, Jimland". What they contain and where the nefarious Professor is we can only guess.

Responses from the other Famous and Fearless Explorers on hearing of Palomino's capture: Flagstone, "Palomino, the Twit!". Igneous, "Now I can do some serious drinking." Shale, "Palomino, The Twit!". Pebbles, "Can I join you there, Iggy?"

Soliciting a response from The Woman brought only a quick right jab that was narrowly dodged and a swift kick to the groin which sadly wasn't.

BIG JAKE FRERE

No reports from Big Jake yet. We hope this is not a Very Bad Sign.

Dear Reader, what can happen next? Does the Sultan intend to allow this complete disregard of his authority at the very door of his Palace? Can the Consuls sit still while Innocent Civilians are abducted under their very noses? Can....

The cable was garbled at this point. It began again moments later.

My Dearest Sultan,

You want this silly wacko back? Come and get him! Send your pansy marines, pal. I await your pleasure. If you can find me. If you would rather pay for this idiot's release then the price is your Throne! Eat lead sucker.

Sincerely,

Tastimin

The cable line went dead at this point. We have nothing to add.

SCIENCE CLUB NEWS

The local Science Club confirmed reports of "shooting stars" in the skies over Jimville this week. They explained that "shooting stars" are not stars at all, but small pieces of rock called meteorites which are burning up high in the atmosphere. They are of little danger to the residents of Jimville. Well done, Science Club.

Report 45 - BIG JAKE RETURNS! WILD STORIES ABOUND!

Date: 2002-12-14

BIG JAKE RETURNS! WILD STORIES ABOUND!

Big Jake Frere struggled back to Jimville three days ago with his whole scouting operation in disarray. All of the men that work for Big Jake, his "boys", are gone. It's a very fragmented report that Big Jake presents to you, Gentle Reader. Very fragmented, very expensive, and very hard to believe. Here is Big Jake's report taken at his bedside as he recovers from His Adventures.

Begin report.

"Well, it all started when you guys sent me looking for the Pirate base. Remember? Well, we found it. It was as empty as a gin bottle at a drinking contest. Nobody home. The Pirates had left in a hurry cause stuff was laying about. Everyone was gone. Everyone but two people anyway.

Olivia Fate, of all people, was there looking pretty shook up and in a sorry state. Upon seeing me, she fainted dead away. The second was the old rascal Ali bin Bubba, former Rebel Chief, now blubbering idiot. Not being able to rouse Ms. Fate, I turned my hand to Ali. He was shaking all over, couldn't help himself, couldn't stop. Had to get him pretty drunk to get him to talk.

He told me that close by the Secret Pirate Base the Pirates under Tastimin had found something strange. Seems they was out setting up ambushes and scouting the terrain in case the Marines attacked them when they found the remains of a Lost City. I call it a Lost City cause I never heard of it before in Jimland. Its the stuff the Natives use to scare they kids with, kind of like the boogie-man.

Well, with no one around to scout on, I decided to have a look. The boys were none to eager for this little adventure, but I cuffed a couple of 'em and hollered at the rest, and soon we were off into the Wilds. We half dragged poor old Ali with us. I left a guard with Ms. Fate to look after her till we returned.

Well, it seems close by to Ali is about two days hard marching to us. We finally came to the edge of the ruins. And ruins they are. Hardly anything standing taller than my waist. Everything overgrown and crumbled down. Ali wouldn't go into the ruins with us. He had some kind of seizure when we tried to drag him along. We dumped him trailside and, leaving a man to watch over him, the rest of us eased into the ruins. Very quietly we moved in. Some watching, some moving, very careful like.

It was then I noticed that it was very quiet. Very, very, quiet. Like all of Jimland has shut up all at once. Well, it started me sweating, I'll tell you. I halted the boys and set up a perimeter where we were. Everyone watching the bush. For a long time we waited. The loudest noises were our breathing. Drinking from a pouch sounded deafening. We waited.

Nothing happened. The boys were getting a little nervous. That bothered me cause everyone knows my boys are tough as nails and fear nothing in Jimland. We waited. I had this itchy feeling on my back like someone was watching, but hell, we could see no one. We waited.

Well, the sun was starting to go down. The boys was getting real nervous, but doing fine, just hiding and watching and waiting, even being as nervous as they was. Finally, I stood up and looked around. Nothing moved, but me. Nothing made a sound, but me.

Suddenly a noise and thrashing on the trail. Before I could stop them, the boys opened up with everything they had. Had I mentioned that they were nervous? Well, I had no idea. The thrashing stopped. I carefully moved over to the area. There in the bush, riddled, was the man I had left with Ali. Instantly I yelled for some men to find Ali. The rest I told to resume their watch, and to hold their damn fire till I said otherwise.

Shortly the search party returned and reported that Ali was nowhere to be found. Well, the sun was pretty much gone by now, no use trying to find him in the dark. I looked at the boys. They were still pretty tight and looking this way and that. I decided to head back to the Pirate camp. That pleased them for sure.

As night settled in we formed up and headed back to the deserted camp. Overhead the sky was clear and beautiful. A shooting star traced its fiery trail across the heavens. And blinked once and halted.

That was enough. The boys bolted back towards the Pirate camp. I found myself standing there like I hadn't a care in the world. Shaking myself out of it, I began to slowly follow the boys back to the camp. Off in the distance, where we had been heading, but where we had never quite got to, there was an eerie glow in the bush. I looked up. The star was gone. Hell, it probably had never really stopped, but this night was one of those nights when you didn't trust anything and hardly anyone.

Well, we got back to the camp in record time, two days. The boys was exhausted. I went to see how Ms. Fate was doing. She wasn't there. The guard was. But dead men tell no tales. These really spooked up the boys. They all wanted to go home right then and there. But as it was just nightfall, I talked them into waiting till dawn. Again we formed a perimeter. No one slept. I tried to, but hell, I was beginning to be a little nervous myself. Kind of edgy, you know.

It must have been about two in the morning when we heard something moving way off in the Wilds. Something big from the sounds of it. Well, we weren't sure what to expect now, so I ordered the boys out of the camp and into the bush on the side of the camp opposite from where the noise was. Let me tell you, it was something big, and close, and quiet. We hunkered down in a tight group and waited.

It was taller than the trees when we finally saw it. It was colorless or at least in the dark we couldn't see any colors. It was huge. And it wasn't a animal either. I don't know what it was. Then there was another one coming from the east.

It seems we ran all the way to the coast. Then stole some canoes and paddled like hell back here. The boys all said they was done and quit. Well, I don't believe it, but they all left, for now anyway. They're good boys and brave. They'll be back. Then I'll go looking for what those things were.

I'm pretty tried. Think I'll take a little rest now.

End report.

Big Jake Frere is not one known to tell a tale. His experience has clearly left him shaken. We are sure, Dear Reader, that having rested, Big Jake will no doubt get to the bottom of this mystery.

MARINES STILL SEARCHING FOR PIRATES

The combined marine forces of the British, German, and American Consulates continue to search for the Pirates. With the location of the Secret Pirate Base found by Big Jake, we, of the World Herald, quickly and profitably, passed this information on the Appropriate Authorities. It is reliably reported that the Marines are closing in on the base even as this written. We wish them Good Luck and trust they will put and End to the Pirate Menace.

EXPEDITIONS STAGNATE

The Famous and Fearless Explores about Jimville seem rather unenthusiastic about heading out into the Wilds. Meetings with The Woman continue daily. The entire party visited Big Jake as soon as they could. They left abuzz. Our Tireless Efforts to find out what is going on with the Expeditions had been unsuccessful. Our Timid staff refuse the assignment ever since the incident with the hot tar and feathers. The Explorers claim it was a simple misunderstanding. Tut!

WANTED

Wanted: Brave and Loyal Men with No Fear. To Join the Famous Scout Big Jake Frere for Adventures in the Wilds of Jimland. Top wages, medical benefits for those with injuries that make it back to camp.

Wanted: Brave and Loyal Men with No Fear. To Join the Famous Reporting staff of the World Herald, News Source To The World. Top wages, medical benefits negotiable.

NOTICE

The French Consul is not amused that his dog was returned. Piece by piece.

Report 46 - SECRET PIRATE BASE DESTROYED! STRANGE MONSTERS ATTACK MARINES!
Date: 2002-12-15

SECRET PIRATE BASE DESTROYED! STRANGE MONSTERS ATTACK MARINES!

The Royal Marine Light Infantry and the German See Battalion successfully attacked and destroyed the Secret Pirate Base of Tastimin the Despicable. The United States Marines failed to rendezvous with the Task Force.

As the Task Force approached the Secret Pirate Base it became clear the base was deserted. Captain Charles, RMLI, and Captain Luger, SB, briefly conferred and decided to continue on and complete their mission.

Just on the edge of the base, the Task Force was surprised as a giant apparition appeared on the far side of the base. It was unlike anything the marines had seen before. Descriptions are confused, but generally all agree the things walk on three or four leg-like appendages, standing high above the treetops. The casing of the monsters was smooth, round, and featureless. Very little noise came from the things. The Marines continued to advance.

Suddenly a series of colored "rays" of light shot out from the thing to fall on the Royal Marines. Trees fell. The air crackled. Men's hair stood on end. The two steam tanks accompanying the marines behaved erratically.

Noises came from the Marine's left. Another monster gracefully appeared and colored rays of light danced over the See Battalion. Several men fell dead. An apparition of terror suddenly appeared in the See Batt's midst. Terrified men fire on the beast. Finally it let out a shriek and disappeared.

A third striding giant appeared on the Task Force's far right flank. The Task Force regrouped and continued on, determined to complete their mission. Soon a general firing from the Marines rifles, cannons, and tanks filled the air and did not stop. The towering monsters strode swiftly about emitting beams of deadly colored light. The Marines discovered the monsters could not effectively target then once they took cover in the woods. Soon, all Marines were safely in the trees.

Gunfire continued to rattle on the monsters. Suddenly one pulled in its legs and settled to the ground, inert. No one knew what to make of it. Soon another monster did the same. The Marines pressed on.

Captain Chares, RMLI, made it to the first building in the Pirate Base. Bursting through the door revolver ready, Charles found the limp form of Olivia Fate. Reviving Ms. Fate enough to stumble out of the building, the Brave Captain lead her to safety, but not before he had set the building afire. His men covered his escape with Ms. Fate. RMLI Company 2 set the northern building on fire and withdrew into the adjacent wood, all the while firing on the monsters walking to and fro spraying their colored beams about. Strange creatures sprang out of nowhere to attack marines. In a word, weird.

The resting monsters sprang back to life and attacked with renewed fury. The Marines fired back. Jimland fauna appeared everywhere and favored no one,

though it appeared they stayed away from the strange, silent, walking things. The battle went on.

See Batt Company One set the southern building ablaze. The giant striding monsters by now had destroyed both tanks and the Marine guns and crews. The Marine rifle fire seemed ineffective. Both Captains ordered a withdrawal, considering that they had more than completed their mission.

As the sun plunged behind the mountains of Jimland, the Marines with remarkably few casualties headed home, safely taking Olivia Fate with them. The strange walking things seemed to sense the battle was over and strode to the sea's edge. There they halted briefly, then walked out into the sea to disappear.

Late that night as the weary Marines boarded their waiting ships, all of Jimland saw a great "shooting star" ascend into the beautiful night sky and disappear.

CONCLUSIONS

What were these things: unknown. What were they doing here: unknown. Where are they from: unknown. Where are they bound: unknown. Will they return: unknown. What is known: squat, Dear Reader, simply squat.

OLIVIA FATE SAFE AGAIN

What we do know is that all Jimville celebrated the safe return of Olivia Fate, especially Julius Flagstone. A big party was held in the Jimville House of Girls and Casino, hosted by all the Famous and Fearless Explorers. The Woman was noticeably absent.

THE WOMAN

In fact, The Woman apparently decamped Jimville during the festivities. Her room was found empty. Our staff reported it was as if she had never been there. Strange. No explanations were forthcoming from the Empress Staff. Gentle Reader, as always, we will endeavor to get to the bottom of this Mystery.

UNITED STATES MARINES RETURN

The United States Marines disembarked in Jimville the next day. They had experienced engine problems and were late landing. In their haste to rendezvous, they became lost in the Wilds of Jimland and failed to make the battlefield. On their way back to their ship they were had several brushes with Pirates, but suffered no fatal casualties.

AT THE END OF THE DAY

All's well that ends well. Olivia Fate is safely home. Task Force casualties were blessedly light. The strange towering walking things are gone into the night sky. The Secret Pirate Base is destroyed.

SPECIAL AWARD

A special award goes to Kevin for "taking a fall" for the alien monsters. Literally! Another confirmed case of "rubber chair leg". A warning to us all.

Report 47 - BIG JAKE FRERE DISAPPEARS FROM JIMVILLE!

Date: 2002-12-17

BIG JAKE FRERE DISAPPEARS FROM JIMVILLE!

As previously reported, Big Jake Frere had returned to Jimville with his whole scouting operation gone sour. He was exhausted. From his bedside he told us of the events of his scouting mission. He had gone in search of the Secret Pirate Base under hire of the World Herald. Strange things occurred on the mission. The Secret Pirate Base was found deserted. An ancient ruined city was discovered in the Wilds of Jimland. Something so spooked Big Jake's trusty men that they all quit upon their hasty return to Jimville.

Now Big Jake has disappeared from Jimville. We took the liberty of examining Big Jake's room at the Empress. Here is what we found. The room on the upper floor of the Empress was on a corner with one window on each outer wall. One window faced the adjacent building, the other the Wilds of Jimland as they tried to reclaim the land around Jimville. In typical Empress fashion, the furnishings of the room were plain, but sturdy and functional with a kind of lean grace to them. Big Jake's gear and weapons were gone. Left behind were assorted clothes and very little more. No notes or communications of any kind were found. No signs of foul play were evident.

A single intriguing clue was found. On the bare wooden table lay a ceramic bowl. In the bowl were the ashes of burned papers. Slightly under the bowl was found a tiny half-burned fragment of paper. Written on the paper in a strong feminine hand were two words. "Good Luck".

Our sources report that no one in Jimville knows when Big Jake left or where he is headed. His account at the Banque de Jimville has been frozen until he shows up to claim it. It was revealed after a quick audit of Big Jake's account that he was far wealthier than perhaps anyone suspected. In addition, several months ago a large sum of cash had been withdrawn. A careful grilling of the usual suspects revealed that even they had no knowledge of what has happened to Big Jake. The large sum of cash has not suddenly shown up in anyone's possession.

We tracked down a few of Big Jake's "boys". They could offer no explanation. It also appears that they say none of them went with Big Jake. This we cannot confirm because no one really knows how many men worked for Big Jake. We must take this on faith alone. There seems no reason for them to lie about this as they had all just quit their service due to recent events.

Stranger still, there are no reports of food or supplies being purchased or stolen around the time of Big Jake's disappearance.

We ask you, Dear Reader, would an experienced Master Scout like Big Jake Frere just up and run off into the Wilds of Jimland unprovisioned for no good reason? We think not! We suspect the worst. In fact, we offer a reward for any information leading to the successful location of Big Jake, Beloved by All of Jimland.

The Sultan has even offered to contribute to the reward as Big Jake on several occasions has performed "services" in the Sultan's interest.

Worry not, Gentle Reader, We Will Discover the Truth.

MARINE TOYS FOR TOTS

The Royal Marines and the United States Marines with the cooperation the German See Battalion are holding their annual Toys for Tots drive. Please put new and used toys in the containers at the locations listed below. The toys will be refurbished by the Marines and handed out to needy children at the Sultan's Annual Holiday Dance.

Jimville House of Girls and Casino
Rick's American Lounge
Banque de Jimville
Sultan's Palace, Main Gate only
Main Pier, Jimville Harbor

EXPEDITION UPDATE

The Famous and Fearless Explores about Jimville seem astounded by the sudden and mysterious disappearance of Big Jake Frere. Activity has picked up in all the camps. Interestingly enough, a certain coldness has developed overnight among the once buddy-buddy Expeditions. Now all encounters are formally polite rather than the back slapping friendliness of yesterday. Let us confide in you, Our Valued Readers, our sources stand ready to accompany the Expeditions if they too decide to suddenly head off into the Wilds.

SCIENCE CLUB

The Science Club would like to invite interested parties to "Better Living Through Chemistry Night". It will be held at the remains of the old Native pier. Since the pier is somewhat shorter than it was at the last meeting, it is advised that non-Club should please stay off the pier. A collection will be held for the Abdulla Twins of which only one survived the little incident at the last meeting. The Science Club Membership drive starts soon. Join Up. Join the Fun.

NOTICE

The Italian Consul would like His dog back. In one piece. No questions asked.

Report 48 - ROOKIE EXPEDITIONS TAKE TO THE FIELD!

Date: 2002-12-23

ROOKIE EXPEDITIONS TAKE TO THE FIELD!

Two Expeditions, lead by "Not-So-Famous, But Still Pretty Fearless" Explorers have ventured into the Wilds of Jimland and returned. The first Expedition was the Ponatowski Expedition consisting of 4 Heroes, 6 Askari, and 11 bearers. The second was the Trotsky-Churchill or the Churchill-Trotsky expedition depending on whom you ask. Strangely enough, it also consisted of 4 Heroes, 6 Askari, and 11 bearers.

THE TROTSKY-CHURCHILL OR THE CHURCHILL-TROTSKY EXPEDITION

This Expedition left their base camp in a jovial mood. Of course, they immediately ran into trouble by stumbling into a nest of Poison Spiders. Bye-bye bearers. Undaunted, they continued on. They were pelted by golfball sized hail. They were attacked by Natives. They got lost in the mountains for about two lifetimes. They bartered with Friendly Natives. They hired some unemployed Soldiers. They found a River flowing northward. They had to turn back due to supply problems. They straggled back into basecamp much wiser in the ways of the Wilds of Jimland.

THE PONATOWSKI EXPEDITION

This Expedition left their base camp in a festive spirit. Of course, they were immediately attacked by angry Natives. Ponatowski's loyal yet hardly missed valet, Frisbee, was captured and hauled away by the Natives. Ponatowski vowed to pay his ransom and see the poor fellow free. Next came mountains to get lost in. The discovery of the Jimland Albatross, many attacks by Natives, the discovery of an X-Rock deposit which paid for the Expedition by itself. More Natives attacks were beaten off, just. They weathered the appearance of a hungry T-Rex. More Natives attacked just as the Expedition drew near their base camp. Luckily all's well that end's well. Ponatowski's X-Rock find should make him a rich man.

THE OTHER EXPEDITIONS

The Famous and Fearless Explores still sit in their camps. One begins to wonder who the REAL Explorers are in Jimland. The Success of the two Expeditions outlined above has put the heat to the feet of the Big Name Guys. Maybe they just talk a good Expedition. None of them have gone into the Wilds since their harrowing rescue many moons ago. Have they lost their nerve? We wonder.

Meanwhile, Dear Reader, all Jimville fetes the Ponatowski and the Trotsky-Churchill or the Churchill-Trotsky, whatever, Expeditions for being the New Famous and Fearless Explorers in Jimland.

Well done, Gentlemen.

NOTICE

The Italian Consul is still waiting for the return of his dog.

Report 49 - ROOKIE EXPEDITIONS TAKE TO THE FIELD AGAIN!

Date: 2002-12-27

ROOKIE EXPEDITIONS TAKE TO THE FIELD AGAIN!

Four Expeditions, lead by "Not-So-Famous, But Still Pretty Fearless" Explorers have ventured into the Wilds of Jimland and returned. The first Expedition was the Cassimir Ponatowski Expedition consisting of 3 Heroes, 6 Askari, and 11 bearers. The second was the Bond expedition. It consisted of 3 Heroes, 6 Askari, and 11 bearers. The third was Richard "Rocky" Thorton III consisting of 4 Heroes, 2 Soldiers, 2 Askari, 10 bearers. Fourth was the Expedition of Joe with 4 Heroes, 1 Soldier, 5 Askaris, and 10 bearers.

What happened to these intrepid Explorers?

PONATOWSKI EXPEDITION

They marched north. They discovered a New Species of Large Bird. They discovered a lake that was cleverly named Lake Bob. They found a river. They got lost. They got lost in the Fog. They cleared the Jungle and entered the Savannah. They turned around and headed home. They fought unfriendly Natives. They found a fragment of an ancient Map. They were attacked by a huge swarm of ants. They fought more unfriendly Natives. They made it back to their base camp.

BOND EXPEDITION

They got ready to march, but Bond was too drunk to leave camp that day. So they relaxed in the base camp while their Leader got over his "headache". Finally they marched north. Then they marched east. They fought unfriendly Natives. They found a river and began to follow it. Their food supply went bad. They starved to death. Well, a lot of them did. They stumbled into some friendly natives who sold them some food. They marched west. They marched south and back to their base camp much reduced in number.

THORTON III

They marched north. They were immediately attacked. "Moose", the designated heavy of the Expedition, was immediately snuffed. They continued to march north. They marched into the Mountains. They found out Mohammed, their guide, was completely useless. They were lost in the Mountains for what seemed a lifetime. Finally they found a way out and into More Mountains. Mohammed looked like he might be served up for supper. They finally struggled out of the Mountains and into a friendly Village. They started marching home. They found an Ancient Native Holy Relic of great value. They marched on. They found the Remains of a Long Lost Expedition. They went through their pockets for loot. They marched on. They discovered a New Species of Giant Snake. They made it back to their base camp much reduced in numbers.

EXPEDITION JOE

They marched north. They fought unfriendly natives. They marched west. They discovered a Mountain 4000 feet tall. They fought more unfriendly Natives. They found a native Village. They marched straight into the Mountains. They ambushed the Thorton III Expedition in a mountain pass. It wasn't pretty. They struggled south. They discovered a New Species of

Primitive Man. They marched east. They made it back to their base camp much reduced in numbers.

THE OTHER EXPEDITIONS

The Really Famous and Fearless Explorer Camp has had a shake up. Lord Shale has returned home to defend himself against accusations that he is not really a Lord, or even Registered Gentry. Alexander Pebbles was run out of Jimville after he was found cheating at cards at the Jimville House of Girls and Casino. Good riddance say one and all. To both, agree one and all.

So we are down to Julius Flagstone and Friends, and Otto von Igneous and Minions. When they are going to leave town no one knows. To quote Flagstone, "Great Explorations never hurry to start. No matter how hasty the departure the return is still many hard months and many perils away. Plan, be patient, await your time, then go with as many factors in your favor as you can get." To quote Igneous, "I'll leave when I'm bloody ready! Now scram before I accidentally shoot you three or four times." Well, they certainly have Style.

Meanwhile, Dear Reader, all Jimville applauds the efforts of Ponatowski, Bond, Thorton III, and Joe (though We Most Seriously Question His Morals based on his Unprecedented Attack on Thorton III). New Famous and Fearless Explorers, one and all.

Report 50 - BIG JAKE RETURNS! INCREDIBLE FIND!

Date: 2003-01-07

BIG JAKE RETURNS! INCREDIBLE FIND!

Big Jake Frere has returned to Jimville. Better than that, he has been places and seen things that will astound us all. Even better still, he has been persuaded, at Our Considerable Expense, to write a report about what has happened. We are sure, Dear Reader, you will find it worth every cent of the latest subscription increase.

BIG JAKE FRERE'S REPORT

Well, I'll begin at the beginning. Remember the weird events of the "falling stars" and the even stranger things that beset the Marines on the Big Raid on the Secret Pirate Base [see Report 46, Ed.]. And shortly before that my boys and I had a bad experience of our own [see Report 45, Ed.]. My boys, brave lads everyone, all up and quit once we made it back to Jimville.

Well, as I recovered I had plenty of time to think on what had happened. It wasn't pretty. But it got my attention. I had to find out what was going on in those ruins. First, I wondered if I could even find them again. I looked in the mirror one night and what I saw didn't please me much. That wasn't me looking back, but some scared old man. Then and there I resolved to find out what was out there, hiding somewhere in the Wilds.

Well, I just packed up my gear real fast like. Didn't take anything I couldn't carry myself as I decided to do this bit of traveling alone. I mean I didn't think any of the boys would come with me, and I didn't feel as I could even ask them to. So putting my gear in order I left Jimville in the middle of the night, real quiet like because I didn't want anyone following me. I had a feeling about this little trek and the feeling was torn between fear and trembling excitement. The two can get confused and I was feeling pretty jumping anyway.

It took me over two weeks of hard marching to get back to the general area of the Secret Pirate base. I found it just as the sun set. It was still deserted. It was eerie-like, sitting all alone in the place. For some reason I didn't want to start a fire. So it was cold food and warm water. The night sky was clear. I lay on blanket in a roofless mud hut and watched the stars. It was quiet and still, as beautiful a night as I have ever had in the Wilds.

The next day I began trying to find the old ruins of the Lost City. Originally Ali bin Bubba had led us through the jungle to near the place without really knowing where it was. I tried to remember the trail we had followed. It wasn't easy. On the fourth day, about noon, I found it. It gave me the willies. It wasn't a big place by any measure. I circled it twice easily in the afternoon with plenty of time to stop and look around. The second time around the ruins was when I found it.

Off to jungle side of the ruins was a not so ruined pile of stones. They looked out of place. It took me a while to realize why. They had been loose stones that had been dragged from the ruins and piled up again in an orderly,

but hasty fashion. I walked around the pile. It was about ten feet long, maybe six feet wide, and four feet tall. It was partly covered in weeds, vines, and creepers. I pulled a few off. There was something scratched in the stones. I pulled all the growth off. There on the topmost stone was an inscription. It read, "Dennis David Lee, rest in peace."

Well, we all know about Denny Lee. The crazy old coot was once my Hero. A Giant among Explorers and Seekers of the Unknown. A brave and fearless man who had ended his days in Jimville a wreck, pitifully telling his wild tales for a beer or worse. We all know the tales. Stories of Lost Cities, Forgotten Civilization, Strong Magic, and Mysterious Machines and Places. We all knew he was one day too long under the Merciless Sun of Jimland.

Well, I was standing there thinking all this to myself. The Wilds were as quiet as a graveyard, if you'll pardon the expression. A couple of the stones had fallen off, so I started to put things to right when I caught a glint of something. I figured Denny Lee wouldn't pass up any opportunities, and besides he owed me, so I began removing some stones. I wasn't disappointed.

I found Denny Lee alright. Long dead and mostly gone. I also found his gear, or at least what they put in with him when he died. I pulled his old rucksack out. That, and a some simple camp supplies was all there was. In the rucksack I found these things; a compass, much used but still true, his big old knife that had amazed me as a child, a small worn leather bag containing four round metal ball-like things with strange writing or pictures on them, and Denny Lee's journal. That's it. I stuck it all in my pack, built the stones back up nice and strong. Denny Lee will rest comfortably there, forever, as far as I am concerned. And I'm not saying where he is.

What I found most wouldn't consider a treasure. I didn't at first. I made it back to the deserted Secret Pirate Base and settled in for a couple of days. It was like I needed the rest and needed to be away from Everyone. Therapy I think you'd call it. The Wilds seemed happy to have me there. The days were warm and bright, the nights crisp and beautiful. No one and no thing bothered me. Life was as it should be.

Finally, one morning as I was cooking breakfast and enjoying a cup of coffee and the fresh sunlight, I thought of Denny Lee's Journal. I pulled it out and settled against the side of a hut. It was all in Denny Lee's broad hand. In fact it was really three journals bound up in an oiled leather cover. It looked like he took great care in keeping them safe. I flipped to the last page and read. I felt like I was stealing. I put the journals in order and began to read again from the beginning.

I spent seven days reading the journal. I'd read, take a break, gather some firewood for the night, hunt a little, but I kept coming back to read. I didn't believe it at first. But as I slinked through the Wilds hunting I thought. I finally thought why not! Some of it made clear sense to me. Some I just didn't believe.

Well, finally I had read it all. Twice. I was out of supplies and refreshed. I packed up and made my way back to Jimville. Everyone seemed real relieved to see me, except maybe the German Consul, the Manager of the Empress, the President of the Banque de Jimville, and a couple of the gals

over at the Jimville House of Girls and Casino. Well, ok, not exactly everyone was thrilled I was back unharmed. Can't please everyone.

What was in Denny Lee's Journal? Well, things I don't half believe, at least till I see them myself. If old Denny Lee is to be believed, there are some amazing things out there in the Wilds of Jimland. Things of our past, present, and future. I have made an arrangement with several parties here in Jimville. I'll name them now just in case something happens to me. I told some of Denny Lee's story to Julius Flagstone and Otto von Igneous as I thought they would understand. I'm selling Denny Lee's story to the Herald for every penny I can squeeze out of the bastards. [That's the sad Truth. Ed.] I'm keeping Denny Lee's journal. I'm heading out with a few well-chosen boys to see what's what.

I wish you all well. I will tell you what I find when I return. [IF. Ed.]

End of Big Jake's Report.

Big Jake, as you know, Dear Reader, has left Jimville. He took a handful of his best boys with him. They wouldn't go till he sat and talked to them all day. Finally they agreed to go, at least the ones he especially wanted to go. We wish them well and want to make it publicly known that we have him under Exclusive Contract for any information he may return with to Jimville.

In addition, much to our surprise, Big Jake left us with a rather large pile of typed manuscript. Who would have thought he could type much less even knew what a typewriter was! It is entitled "The Denny Lee Story". Not original, but sufficient. We will publish Denny Lee's story in several parts. We do not vouch for the contents nor do they reflect the beliefs, policy, or reality of the World Herald, its owners or staff.

FAMOUS AND FEARLESS EXPLORERS

As if waiting for the revelations of Denny Lee's Journals the Flagstone and Igneous Expeditions have departed Jimville. Amid much hubbub the two Expeditions got last minute supplies and staff in order and shuffled into the Wilds of Jimland. We have suspicions of what they are after, but then their choices are several and their ends their own. Of course, the Herald has staff in both Expeditions. Rest assured, Gentle Reader, we will bring the complete story of each Expedition, Big Jake Frere's included.