

# SOLDIERS of FORTUNE

by Matt James



4e OPEN DESIGN™

MIDGARD™  
CAMPAIGN SETTING



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# INTRODUCTION

**W**elcome to **SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE**! The following pages detail the social, economic, patriotic, and often lucrative reasons why characters are drawn to the dangerous profession of being a mercenary. This book also details why people are driven to take such difficult and dangerous jobs and why they do it for variable pay—willing to risk life and limb for another—or simply some extra coins in their purse. In the end, this sourcebook can give you a new perspective on the life of a mercenary and its trials and tribulations. And certainly you will find new and exciting options to further define your character and bolster them with powers and abilities.

Mercenary companies, or private armies, are a vital and important part of any military operation and often attract a full spectrum of participants seeking the spoils of war. Many people consider soldiering a solemn and difficult profession, one where the comforts of a common life are left far behind. Even more are unaware of the professional side of such a life, whereby (for example) earls and dukes earned their titles by raising free companies of warriors to serve as part of a larger force—or for the valiant efforts that distinguished them from all others with acts of chivalry and honor. In **SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE** we will include expanded rules for raising your own army and the benefits thereof, including title, social rank, and even large-scale combat. Though many of the rules found within are story-based, DMs will find plenty of help officiating how to run an elaborate and exciting campaign of war.

In the real world, many prominent figures in history rose to the nobility based on their ability to raise private armies on their own and lead them to glorious victory. Very seldom can any kingdom or empire sustain a very large force by itself; many often employ the free armies of their nobles to fight in distant lands. Politically speaking, it was just as advantageous to the nobles as it was to the king or emperor they served.

**Wolfgang Baur**

October, 2010

**W**hen Wolfgang Baur first contacted me about doing a project for him, I was elated. I had become fascinated like so many others with **KOBOLD QUARTERLY** and his Open Design projects. I also knew of Wolfgang's work with TSR back in the 90s and have long been a fanboy of his work—yes, I said fanboy. When he asked me to do a sourcebook on a subject with which I am very familiar, namely soldierly topics related to mercenaries, I was ecstatic! One of the few things I truly enjoy (almost as much as gaming itself) is military lore and all things associated with the culture and traditions thereof.

Speaking as a retired soldier (medically retired from wounds received in combat, May 2005), some of the greatest moments of my life have been while serving in uniform (not to mention most exciting!). Because of the military, I have met life-long friends, gained an appreciation for dedication, and have earned skills and principles that will stay with me for the rest of my life. These things are intangible and if I can even spark a bit of it in others through my writing and game design I will have lived a great life.

Being a soldier is one of the most rewarding and life-enriching professions out there. I compare it to work as a police officer, firefighter, or first-response EMT—the men and women of these professions are willing to sacrifice time (and sometimes their own lives) to serve others. I believe there is something very special about those who answer the call to serve. In contrast, this type of commitment is not for everyone and I always make a point to tell others to not feel degraded by a calling they themselves would never do. Everyone has a purpose in life, and I feel mine was to serve in the military so that another would not have to.

I hope you enjoy this sourcebook half as much as I did writing it, and that you find ways to include the contents in your own adventures, characters, and campaigns. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me on the Kobold forums or at my website, [loremaster.org](http://loremaster.org). Keep an open mind when reading this book and know that while many things are influenced by the real world, Midgard (the world of the Free City of Zobeck) is a fantastic world of mystery and adventure, of war and peace, of victory and defeat.

**Matt James**

October, 2010

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

**SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE** provides many new ways to customize your character. Take from this book what you feel will improve your character and game-play experience; discard the things that won't. As with any product in the gaming world, you are encouraged to adapt and change anything you feel necessary and to discuss these changes with the other players and storyteller. Use the fluff provided as a means of inspiration to create a diverse and truly awesome character to maximize your enjoyment.





## CHAPTER 1

# GOING TO WAR

Warfare has permeated history since the first mortals ever drew breath. Whether it is a matter of pride, fighting over a warm place to sleep, or simple boredom, war has existed in all forms and will continue to exist until the end of time. Even the gods of Midgard conduct war, bickering over notions far more confusing than any common mortal cares to understand. Most often, though, religion, money, defense, patriotism, necessity, and pure conquest have been more than enough reason to raise an army, march vast distances, and lay waste to another culture. Men go to war over the dirt of another man and will sacrifice all for his ideals and understandings to secure their victory.

Below are some common reasons the diverse cultures of Midgard raise arms and go to war. This list is not all-inclusive, but hopefully storytellers can use them to help shape their own campaigns and storylines. Players are a smart and cunning group of individuals, and they will appreciate the undertones of plot devices you use to help describe your environment. Going to war for the sake of war is not only dull, it is robbing your gaming patrons of an easily added rich experience. Take the extra time to define these parameters, and you will make your story a success.