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Engines of War

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From the Dawn War between gods and primordials, through the destructive conflict between Arkhosia and Bael Turath, all the way to the current incursions of the Iron Circle, war has been a constant throughout the history of the world. It is little wonder that some mortals, no doubt inspired by the dark whispers of Bane himself, seek more efficient ways to wage the bloody business of warfare. This article presents living siege engines that many of the D&D world's major races have devised.

Clockwork Rookery

Clockwork rookeries are masterpieces of engineering and artifice. Though they look similar to regular siege towers at first glance, they are not only more resilient than the nonliving versions, but also self-propelled, easier to maintain, and sentient. In battle, enemies see ephemeral rooks swarming from the tower to harry them, but these celestial illusions are invisible to the tower's allies. The rookery relies on such allies for direction in battle, acting like the lowest-ranking soldier among them. A rookery that has no commander does its best to fulfill what it understands to be its duty or mission.

A clockwork rookery is 35 feet high (Athletics DC 20 to climb). It has three levels, each with a 10-foot-high ceiling, plus a crenelated rooftop set with animate arbalests—much like arbalester

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homunculi—all around. The lower level features a reinforced iron door that its crew can bar from the inside. The middle and upper levels have arrow slits, and a ladder that runs through the middle of the rookery connects all levels. A trapdoor, which can also be barred from either side, allows access to the roof. Creatures inside the tower or on its exterior move with it as if it were a vehicle.

By Hook or By Crook: The sturdy construction of a clockwork rookery keeps it from collapsing when rendered inoperative. Once inert, a rookery becomes stationary like any regular tower, but with enough resources and expertise, a salvaged rookery can be made operational again. The difficulty of repairing a damaged rookery makes rulers very protective of these prized siege engines, so it is typical for a squad of soldiers to accompany a clockwork rookery into the field.

Built for Civilization: A cadre of artificers and clerics devoted to Erathis, goddess of civilization,

CLOCKWORK ROOKERIES IN EBERRON

In the EBERRON® setting, House Cannith's skilled artificers create clockwork rookeries—fortifications related to the floating fortress of Argonth. The forces of Breland and Aundair frequently field such towers. Warforged usually make up the crew of a Brelish clockwork rookery.

A variant of the clockwork rookery is the bone belfry, which the forces of Karrnath use. Undead troopers man the Karrnathi belfries, and the *harrier rooks* are shadowy bats. Some belfries fire bolts of necrotic energy rather than arbalest bolts.

Clockwork Rookery		Level 15 Solo Brute
Gargantuan natural animate (construct)		XP 6,000
HP 600; Bloodied 300	AC 27, Fortitude 29, Reflex 25, Will 27	Initiative +7
Speed 6	Immune disease, poison	Perception +12
Saving Throws +5; Action Points 2		All-around vision
TRAITS		
⚙️ Harrier Rooks ◆ Aura 5		
The aura is lightly obscured to enemies.		
All-Around Vision		
Enemies can't gain combat advantage by flanking the rookery.		
Juggernaut		
The rookery ignores difficult terrain and provokes no opportunity attacks. It cannot squeeze or grab.		
Instinctive Warfare		
A rookery that starts its turn dominated ignores the condition long enough to use <i>trample</i> as a free action. A rookery that starts its turn stunned ignores the condition long enough to use <i>arbalest volley</i> as a free action.		
Living Vehicle		
Creatures can enter the rookery's space by climbing onto it (DC 20) or moving through any of its entrances (one at the base and one on top). Creatures in the rookery's space move with the rookery as if it were a vehicle.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
⬅️ Arbalest Volley (weapon) ◆ At-Will		
Attack: Close burst 20 (enemies in the burst); +20 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d10 + 7 damage.		
MOVE ACTIONS		
⬇️ Trample ◆ At-Will (1/round)		
Effect: The rookery moves up to its speed and can move through enemies' spaces during the move. Each time the rookery enters an enemy's space for the first time during the move, it makes the following attack against that enemy. Enemies already in the rookery's space when it uses this power cannot be targets of the power.		
Attack: Melee 0 (enemy in the space); +18 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 2d12 + 7 damage, and the target falls prone.		
Miss: The rookery slides the target up to 4 squares to a square adjacent to the rookery.		
Str 25 (+14)	Dex 10 (+7)	Wis 20 (+12)
Con 22 (+13)	Int 4 (+4)	Cha 5 (+4)
Alignment unaligned Languages understands Common		

created the first clockwork rookeries to expand the civilized domains in the aftermath of Nerath's fall. A clockwork rookery has only the faintest trace of sentience, so it needs a crew to direct and maintain it. In addition to its magical mechanisms and the supplies its crew requires, a rookery usually carries ladders, planks, ropes, and grappling hooks for use in a siege.

Roving Sentry Towers: As design of the rookeries progressed, their primary use shifted from siege toward securing dangerous borders. In particular, a lord who can afford a clockwork rookery may send it to reinforce a garrison until a permanent fortification can be built. As an added benefit, the spiritual rooks of a clockwork rookery can carry messages as a homing bird might.

Infernal Embassy

Few war machines inspired greater fear in the hearts of the dragonborn of old than an infernal embassy. These enormous, flying tetrahedrons bear the fiery mark of Asmodeus upon their faces, heralding not only physical destruction, but also corruption of the soul.

Portals to the Nine Hells: An infernal embassy isn't exactly a building. A more accurate description would be that it is a living portal containing a rip in reality that leads straight into the Nine Hells. Once summoned, the embassy relies on conflict to bring forth more devil legionnaires, increasing the hold of the Nine Hells upon the world as long as enemy forces exist to fight. The embassy is a one-way portal, so devils brought to the Material Plane are stranded here. Having nothing to lose, they fight as zealots.

When an infernal embassy is destroyed, it collapses in upon itself, leaving no trace behind aside from a lingering evil that can taint the immediate area for generations.

Legacy of Bael Turath: Only an extremely difficult and bloody ritual known to a select few of Bael Turath's leaders can bring one of these edifices to the

natural world. Rumor holds that the Grandmaster of the Iron Circle is scouring the former holdings of Bael Turath in search of this ritual. If the secret of the infernal embassies falls into the hands of the Iron Circle's forces, they might become unstoppable.

Infernal Embassy	Level 22 Solo Artillery	
Huge immortal animate (construct)	XP 20,750	
HP 840; Bloodied 420	Initiative +18	
AC 36, Fortitude 34, Reflex 33, Will 33	Perception +18	
Speed 4, fly 4	All-around vision, blindsight 10	
Immune disease, dominated, poison; Resist 15 cold, 15 fire	Saving Throws +5; Action Points 2	
TRAITS		
☀ Baleful Presence (fire) ◆ Aura 5		
Enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to saving throws. Devil allies that drop to 0 hit points in the aura explode, dealing each creature adjacent to the devil 15 fire damage.		
Action Recovery		
Whenever the embassy ends its turn, any dazing or stunning effect on the embassy ends.		
All-Around Vision		
Enemies can't gain combat advantage by flanking the embassy.		
Juggernaut		
The embassy ignores difficult terrain and provokes no opportunity attacks. It cannot squeeze or grab.		
Living Vehicle		
Creatures can enter the embassy's space by climbing onto it (DC 20). Creatures in the embassy's space move with the embassy as if it were a vehicle.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
☼ Hellish Meteor (fire, force) ◆ At-Will		
Attack: Area 2 within 20 (creatures in the burst); +25 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 2d12 + 18 fire and force damage.		
Miss: Half damage.		
Effect: Four legion devil legionnaires appear in unoccupied squares in the area and act immediately after the embassy in the initiative order.		
Str 20 (+16)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 24 (+18)
Con 26 (+19)	Int 6 (+9)	Cha 6 (+9)
Alignment evil	Languages understands all	

Legion Devil Legionnaire	Level 21 Minion Soldier	
Medium immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 800 each	
HP 1 , a missed attack never damages a minion. Initiative +13		
AC 37, Fortitude 33, Reflex 32, Will 32	Perception +11	
Speed 7 , teleport 3	Darkvision	
Resist 15 fire		
TRAITS		
Squad Defense		
The legionnaire gains a +2 bonus to all defenses while it is adjacent to at least one other legion devil.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
⊕ Longsword (weapon) ◆ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +26 vs. AC		
Hit: 14 damage.		
Str 14 (+12)	Dex 12 (+11)	Wis 12 (+11)
Con 14 (+12)	Int 10 (+10)	Cha 12 (+11)
Alignment evil	Languages Supernal	
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, longsword		

Predator Chariot

Goblins are consummate beastmasters who breed animals and monsters for their vile purposes. One such experiment warped steel predators into living vehicles known as predator chariots. The chariot consists of an enclosed carriage with two doors that its crew can bar from the inside. The carriage has two arrow slits, plus space for warriors to ride atop it.

Inspired by War: According to hobgoblin warcasters, the first predator chariots were created deep within the Chernoggar breeding pits in honor of Bane. Specially bred steel predators, stunted by magic and tinkering, were attached to metal carriages covered in vile runes. Their chariots turned out to be far more maneuverable than any similar, horse-drawn vehicle.

A Predator's Mind: The steel predator is only faintly aware of the predator chariot to which it is attached. Constant handling is needed to keep the chariot in line. If left unattended for too long, it begins to act like a savage beast.

Predator Chariot	Level 16 Elite Soldier	
Huge immortal animate (construct)	XP 2,800	
HP 320; Bloodied 160	Initiative +15	
AC 32, Fortitude 29, Reflex 28, Will 27	Perception +12	
Speed 7	Darkvision	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1		
TRAITS		
Juggernaut		
The chariot ignores difficult terrain and provokes no opportunity attacks. It cannot squeeze or grab.		
Living Vehicle		
Creatures can enter the chariot's space by climbing onto it (DC 15) or entering through one of its two doors (one on each side). Creatures in the chariot's space move with the chariot as if it were a vehicle.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
⊕ Slashing Fury ◆ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d10 + 7 damage, and the target falls prone.		
↓ Predatory Dash ◆ At-Will		
Effect: The chariot moves up to its speed. Each time the chariot moves adjacent to an enemy for the first time during the move, it makes a <i>slashing fury</i> attack against that enemy.		
↖ Resonant Roar (thunder) ◆ Recharge ☼ ☼ or if the chariot takes lightning or thunder damage		
Attack: Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst but not in the chariot's space); +19 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 2d8 + 15 thunder damage, and the target is deafened and dazed (save ends both).		
Str 24 (+15)	Dex 21 (+13)	Wis 19 (+12)
Con 24 (+15)	Int 8 (+7)	Cha 6 (+6)
Alignment evil	Languages understands Goblin	

War Willow Treant

A few treants agree to carry allies into battle. Regardless of the type of tree it resembles, such a treant is called a war willow.

Blood-Rooted: War willows root near humanoid and elven villages. They prefer the elves, who treat them as honorary elders.

Sylvan Team: A war willow develops strong rapport with the soldiers who ride into war among its branches. Most are masters of ranged attacks.

War Willow Treant	Level 17 Elite Soldier
Huge fey magical beast (plant)	XP 3,200
HP 336; Bloodied 168	Initiative +11
AC 33, Fortitude 30, Reflex 27, Will 28	Perception +15
Speed 8 (forest walk)	Low-light vision
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
☼ Wrathful Roots ◆ Aura 3	
The aura is difficult terrain for nonflying enemies. Enemies must make a DC 23 Acrobatics or Athletics check to stand up in the aura.	
Living Vehicle	
Creatures can enter the treant's space by climbing onto it (DC 15). Creatures in the treant's space move with the treant as if it were a vehicle.	
Threatening Reach	
The treant can make opportunity attacks against enemies within 3 squares of it.	
Wooden Body	
Whenever the treant takes fire damage, it also takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⬇ Slam ◆ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +22 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 16 damage, the treant slides the target up to 2 squares, and the target falls prone.	
⬇ Trample ◆ At-Will	
Effect: The treant moves up to its speed and can move through enemies' spaces during the move. Each time the treant enters an enemy's space for the first time during the move, the treant makes a <i>slam</i> attack against that enemy.	
Str 26 (+16)	Dex 12 (+9)
Con 24 (+15)	Int 14 (+10)
Wis 25 (+15)	Cha 10 (+8)
Alignment unaligned	Languages Common, Elven

About the Author

Claudio Pozas is a freelance artist and writer whose recent design credits include *Heroes of Shadow*™, *Heroes of the Feywild*™, and many contributions to *Dragon*. He lives in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with his wife, Paula; his son, Daniel; and his pet dire tiger, Tyler.

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