

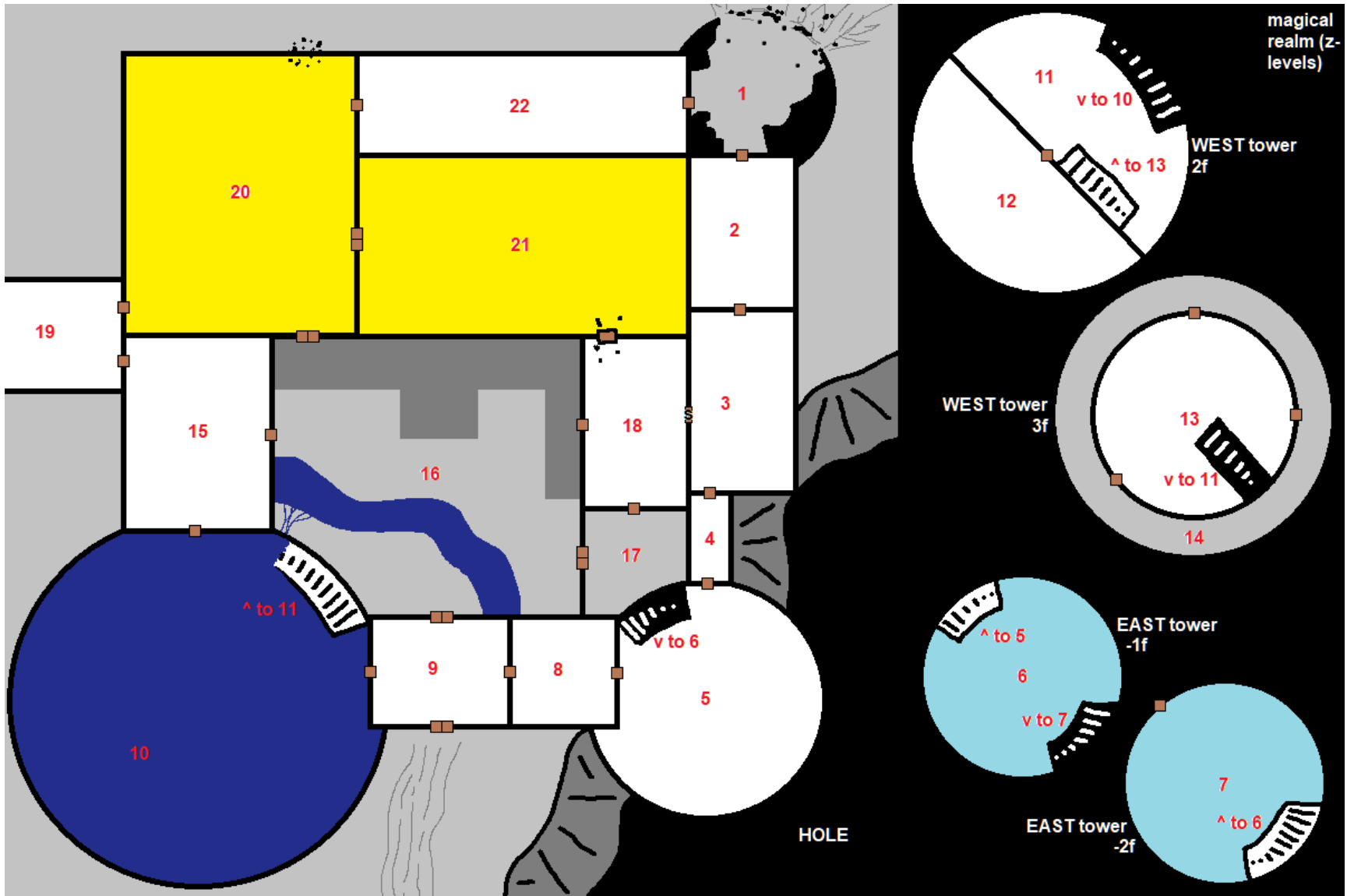
Keep 451

Keep 451 is the final strongpoint on the Wizardinot Line, marking the Line's eastern end on the intersection between it and the Infinite Chasm of Infinite Screams. It was abandoned at the end of the Hell War, though rumors suggest it was never officially decommissioned.

Like all keeps on the Line, it is a single-story affair of grim basalt with armor steel roofing and several protruding three-story towers. Unique to 451, the SOUTH EAST tower extends downward into the Infinite Chasm rather than upward, but you can't see that from this side.

If there was light in Hell you would also be able to see the great wall of the Line extending West, and perhaps the ruins of Keep 450 (which was properly decommissioned and fully demolished) a mile or two down, but there isn't, so you can't see that either.

Approaching from the rear, it is apparent that the intended entrance has been bricked over and the NORTH EAST tower has been exploded. Faint ghostlights play, ice-blue and afterimage violet, over the keep's armored rooves out the corners of your eyes——eerie and atypical, even for Hell.



FACTS

- rooms **#20 LEGION BARRACK** and **#21 WAR ROOM** are lit with normal oil lanterns set on tables or hung from wallhooks. rooms **#7 STUDY** and **#6 MORGUE** are lit by huge spooky pearls in the ceiling
 - grey areas are outside, open to elements. they are **DARK** (no sun in Hell). white areas are inside, and also **DARK**. The dark blue parts (**#10 DUSLAM POOL** and the south trench in **#16 COURTYARD**) are **DARK** and, also, frigid saltwater
 - DARKness** gives all your attacks an additional **50%** miss chance unless you can see in it for some reason.
- doors are 11' tall, 6' wide, 3" thick fire-retardant-treated oak, with sturdy black iron bands and giant pull-bars or push-pads likewise in black iron. they do not have locks unless specified. they are not entirely water- nor air-tight when closed. Nothing else is particularly built to this scale, only the doors and, i guess, ceiling height.
 - the ceilings are 12' high at the corners of rooms and vault to a solid 18'. they are 3" thick rolled homogenous armor with long, high-quality welds between panels
 - the walls are formed from interlocking 1'x2' bricks of black basalt with strong mortar. interior walls are two layers (each 1' thick) sandwiching a grid of steel bars in mortar. exterior walls are formed from two interior walls sandwiching a 5' section of rammed earth, clad with an additional single layer of brick on the exterior face
 - the floors are black basalt flagstone, nearly identical to the walls
 - all interior rooms have at least one small (6" x 12") iron-grated vent approx. 1' about floor level, with larger rooms having two typically in opposite corners. these connect to the ventilation system, which (if untinkered with) is slowly circulating air. this keeps the keep at a cozy 20 degrees, which is wonderful compared to being outdoor in Hell
 - it smells mostly of dust and ozone, faintly of corpses and seawater and urine, and also of sulfur (everything in Hell smells of sulfur)
- wizards can see that the whole place is crawling with some sort of temporal effect, sense loose necromancy, and identify leylines leading strongly to the lower tip of the SOUTH EAST tower (**#7 STUDY**) and the central courtyard (**#16 COURTYARD**)
- this is designed for a system where reaching level 2 requires recovering a mere 200 gees pee, or a "silver standard". if you're running it in a D&D where that's not the case, make all the treasure worth 10 times as much or whatever.

REASONS TO BE HERE

- The last shuttle-caravan from the barren mining colonies of Jazylmook (via the Infinite Chasm of Infinite Screams) reported seeing strange insectile creatures on the battlements. Due to concerns that these creatures might have reactivated the anti-aircraft weapons of the keep and pose a threat to shipping, no further caravans will be sent until Jazylmook has received proof against that eventuality. The Trade Commission will pay handsomely for you to achieve that proof, pacifying the creatures and spiking the cannons if necessary.
- B Coy. of the 382nd Mobile Infantry were stationed here for much of the War and——despite no record of major attacks nor the keep being lost to the Enemy——the entire unit failed to return home and was eventually declared Missing in Action. The extended family of Gunnery Sergeant A La Mode have scraped together a reward for a truthsworn affidavit detailing the fate of the company, with a substantial bonus for recovery of the Gunnery Sergeant's body if possible.

3. In the early days of the Hell War it was standard practice to bury a kilogram-weight cylinder of gold at one of the leyline nexes under the foundations of a fort, for warding purposes. These were supposed to be 'upgraded' mid-war with cheaper glass-and-salt arrangements, but 451 was built before that went into effect and there's no records of the upgrade being performed for it...at least at the local public library. Since the unit stationed at the keep went MIA and it was never properly decommissioned, the warding cylinder might still be there.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS (d6)

If all of a thing has been genocided or locked in a closet or what have you, then no encounter.

1. 1d4 **STONES COUGAR**, starving
 - a. there are an effectively unlimited number of stone cougars who might show up over time
2. 2d4 **SKELETONS WARRIOR** (first die cruel scimitars and shields, second die shortbows), bodysnatching
 - a. there are a total of 24 skeletons on patrol
3. 2d4 **DUSLAMs** (first die **BRAVE**, second die **PHALANGITE**), investigating
 - a. there are a total of 18 duslam exploring
4. 2d4 **TIMELOST ASHIGARU**, on patrol
 - a. there are a total of 12 ashigaru on patrol
5. **TIMELOST DEMON THUMBSCREWS**, confused
 - a. this is one unique guy who wanders around
6. **THE GROUNDKEEPER**, implacable
 - a. this is one unique guy who wanders around

SO YOU GOT ON THE ROOF SOMEHOW

You can pretty much clamber around up there as much as you want. None of the random encounters consider the roof somewhere worth patrolling, hunting, whatever, and most of them couldn't get up there even if they wanted to. The two potential hazards are from wandering too close to **#16 COURTYARD** (where timelost ashigaru and/or duslam may attack players with carbine and javelin, if they make themselves obvious through light or noise and the **reaction** roll suggests it); or the **southwest tower**, where duslam on **#14 BATTLEMENTS** may hurl javelins from above. The gun up there doesn't depress quite enough to blast the roof.

ROOM KEYS

#1 BLOWED UP TOWER

The tower has fully collapsed in on itself, huge basalt bricks tumbled into piles filling its former dimensions. The whole of the **NORTH** wall has been blown open, which is presumably how you got in here. Some debris appears to have been moved aside to clear paths to the huge doors, which are to the **WEST** and **SOUTH**.

If the rubble is investigated, there are a pair of legionnaire ashigaru bodies under there. Confusingly they seem to have been dead for decades, though the unit was only at the fort mere years ago and the explosion seems to have been about then too. Their armor and carbines have been crushed to uselessness but the **light** bayonets can be salvaged. They also have **3 GP** between them in pocket change and a **single** intact unlit torch.

The door to the **WEST** is stuck (spiked and barricaded from the other side) and impossible to force without complete destruction.

#2 FORGOTTEN PANTRY

It reeks of mold and mildew in here. There is residual moisture on the floor, gathered in the cracks between flagstones, not quite enough to be a coherent puddle. Wooden crates and barrels are piled in quantity along the east wall of the room, and seven small casks stand alone against the west wall in front of a large, somewhat decayed banner of the 382nd Mobile Infantry. Huge doors lead **NORTH** and **SOUTH**.

The crates and barrels along the east wall are visibly rotten through and slightly bulged, because someone stacked water barrels on top of them and one leaked. If disturbed, they burst into clouds of mold - everyone nearby who breathes, isn't immune to **poison**, and hasn't taken precautions ought to roll **STR** or be sickened, experiencing vertigo and tingling in the extremities - from now until they receive proper treatment, whenever they roll a natural **1** they are **stunned** for a round by a coughing fit.

The casks along the west wall contain **10** rations (or **5 GP** worth, sold) of cured sausages each. They're in edible condition due to their well-sealed casks and distance from leaky water barrels. Each cask weighs 3 slots—they're nice and compact.

The banner is old, beat up, and worthless aside from sentimental value.

#3 EAST GUARDROOM

Two small round tables and their associated chairs have been kicked over to form a makeshift barricade in the center of the room, facing south. A **single** unlit torch lies forgotten behind the barricade. **6** arrows are lodged in the surface in total, with black and white patterned fletching. Correspondingly, bullet impacts have chipped stone from the surface of the bricks along the south wall, and blood has stained some of the black flagstones around the barricade a richer dark—although no corpses are visible. The room is decorated by a threadbare, tapestry-sized banner of the 382nd Mobile Infantry hanging on the west wall. Firing slits opposite it overlook the Infinite Chasm; one of them enlarged to allow deployment of a searchlight which sits, broken, against the stone. Huge doors lead **NORTH** and **SOUTH**.

The banner is old, beat up, and worthless aside from sentimental value. *Under* this one, however, is hidden an undersized door to the **WEST**, flush with the wall and with a significant "lip" of stone raising it off the floor to evade passive observation.

#4 SMALL CORRIDOR

Basalt dust and chips completely carpet the floor of this tiny corridor, suggesting recent renovations. A typical huge door leads **NORTH**, while one with an aftermarket push-bar leads **SOUTH**.

The dust and chips reveal tracks if inspected. Gangs of two-to-twelve pairs of, curiously fleshless, feet have trafficked through here. There are also perhaps the impressions of some bare kneecaps near the south door, as if some of them were kneeling there and working.

Under the dust and chips, just before the **SOUTH** door, is a huge copper plate. This is because the **SOUTH** door bar, the fancy

aftermarket one, which is also shiny copper, is wired up to kill you with electricity if you touch it with insufficiently insulating hands or gloves. Doing that causes **2d6** electricity damage to you per round, and **stuns** you so you can't do anything but keep touching it. Pushing it is how you open the door.

#5 SOUTHEAST TOWER BASE

Firing slits overlooking the Infinite Chasm line the walls of this large circular chamber. Simple wooden racks and two small chests have been gathered in the center of the room. Six **SKELETONS WARRIOR** (half with shortbows, half with cruel scimitar and shield) stand hostilely about the southeast quadrant. Huge doors lead **NORTH** and **WEST**.

A *Matte Background* illusion spell hides the open stair down in the northwest quadrant of the room. For those who rely on sight, moving through there with anything less than absolute caution ought to make you tumble down to **#6 MORGUE** and roll **DEX** or take **1d6** falling damage.

The racks hold an additional **5 light** cruel scimitars, **5 2-slot** shields, and **5** unstrung short bows.

The chests are identical, roughly built, smallish——probably **6 slots** and take up one arm if you want to pick one up and haul it around awkwardly on your shoulder. Neither is locked. The one on the left contains **100** arrows with black and white fletching, and **5** bowstrings. The one on the right contains a skeletal arm folded up in there with a sword, which scythes out and attacks whatever's in front of the chest every round with a **+0** attack bonus and **1d6** damage. The sword is **DRAW THEM OUT**, name painted on tattoo-scroll illustration on hilt, a **light** cruel scimitar with one of those pinup girlies in his hilt where her clothes come off when flipped upside down. While wielded, he makes one attack each round against a random adjacent animate target, using your arm and attack bonus but not your action. He completely controls the arm he is held in; sheathing him requires a **STR** roll with your other hand, or someone else's assistance (which is, of course, risky).

#6 MORGUE

What appears to be a makeshift coronial office has been set up in this chamber, or what space in it is left accounting for the Large Machine which takes up all of the southwest quadrant and much of the adjoining two, all lit from overhead by a huge spooky pearl radiating 5600K daylight balanced light——albeit not quite as bright as what you recall of the sun. A stone stair leads **UP** in the northwest, and **DOWN** in the southeast. Two steel operating tables and four stout barrels are crammed in against the northeast wall, under the light-pearl fixture. A small wooden plaque hanging over the tables proclaims: "**WE ARE THE HOSTS / OF THE EVENTS / YOU COULDN'T PLAN**" in charmingly rustic font. A tired looking wifeman in a gore-stained boiler suit hunches over one of the tables, removing the flesh from some sort of mummy. More pressingly, two **SKELETONS WARRIOR** stand next to her wielding bonessaw and viscera tray (as cruel scimitar and shield).

The wifeman is **BONE TITAN ANGELOS**, and the body is a timelost legion ashigaru which was gathered by skeletons. Angelos is removing its flesh so it can be animated later. She will call off the skeletons if her **reaction** is anything but instant hostility, or conversely will scream for lagometrobolomolokassar if attacked.

The Large Machine is resplendent with levers, buttons, dials, and gauges of unknown purpose, built into the wall and floor, and hums and whooshes quietly. In actuality, it is the HVAC system for the keep.

The light-pearl is **1'** in diameter, **6 slots**, and worth **120 GP**. Angelos will not be enthusiastic about parting with it, she needs it for her work.

Two of the barrels contain already-flensed skeletons, ready for animation, the other two are empty. If she's in a good mood and you promise not to tell lagometrobolomolokassar, Angelos will sell you a skeleton for **20 GP**.

#7 STUDY

The floor of this brightly-lit room has been cut away in the center to make space for a chair set into a large and complex gyroscopic arrangement, mated to the controls of some sort of enormous gunne—the effect of the whole being that the weapon can be pointed outwards from the tower in any direction from slightly above parallel elevation to straight downwards, and at any lateral degree other than directly into the cliff face. More recently, someone has constructed a large mahogany desktop with tasteful dark stain around the controls; affixed a light-pearl to the ceiling in the center of the room; and set a nice wine rack, armoire, bookshelf, and pair of cots against the walls. Probably the old wolfman sitting at the gun-control-desk with his feet up, reading a book, had something to do with that. He is flanked by two **SKELETONS WARRIOR** bearing decanters and servings tray (as cruel scimitar and shield). Besides him, a stair leads **UP** in the southeast corner, and a small hatch of seemingly solid steel leads **NORTHWEST**.

The old wolfman is **IAGOMETROBOLOMOLOKASSAR THE UNBOWED**, and this is his study. He has not ordered these skeletons to kill anything, so they aren't hostile unless he is.

The gun is one of the anti-aircraft cannons of Keep 451. It remains fully usable despite the aesthetic modifications. Triggering it fires a head-wide jagged bolt of pale pink light into the blackness with a resonant **KTHOOM**, perhaps immolating a hellkite or petitioner. The gun fires its bolts from 20x1cm cobalt-impregnated polyurethane disks, of which there are **7** in its ready magazine; they take up **1/3 slot**, are worth **10 GP** each, and fire the same bolt as the gun if an electrical charge is passed through them. The bolt deals **4d6** direct damage plus another **4d6** damage in a **15'** radius with a **CHA** save for half. If fired without a directing barrel of exotic alloy it has a **50%** chance of detonating instantly rather than projecting forwards. Timelost bodies possess sufficient electrical charge to detonate the disks on a **1-in-6** chance each round they are in contact with them.

The wine rack holds **10** identical unlabelled bottles of deep red liquid. **6** are bottles of cheap but pleasant-drinking malbec with no resale value, **1** is a bottle of 1856 Bordeaux worth **100 GP**, and the remaining **3** are necromantic potions of (respectively) *bones to indestructible jelly*; *fold your bones*; and *debone*. Iagometrobolomolokassar cannot identify them, he just has which place each was in memorized.

The armoire holds a spare set of wizard robes in satin black (**+1 MD**), about **4 slots (40 GP total)** of fine clothing in the style of the Necromancer Kingdoms, and **30 GP** walking-around money. If investigated smartly, a false back may be discovered hiding another **400 GP** in gold bars——Iagometrobolomolokassar's retirement fund.

The bookshelf holds four shelves: The top shelf is schlocky timetravel adventure fiction; the upper shelf a collection of rare religious texts from varied faiths; the lower shelf arcane textbooks; and the bottom shelf introductory "how-to" books for various hobbies such as guitar-playing, crochet, and bushcraft. Someone with familiarity could assemble a **2-slot** collection worth about **60 GP** from each of the middle two shelves.

The light-pearl, as the one on the floor above, is **1'** in diameter, **6 slots**, worth **120 GP**, and needed by the room's occupant.

The hatch to the **NORTHWEST** is sealed from this side with one of those big vault door bars that you have to turn. If opened, it is about 8" thick, solid armor steel. It leads to a small, square stone passageway which continues into the cliff face and away from Keep 451. Presumably it surfaces in a hidden location somewhere behind the Wizardinot line and can serve as a safe exit.

#8 SOUTH CORRIDOR

Two small tables stand in the center of the room, stools and crates drawn up beside them for seating. A game of poker sits laid out as if the players expected to return any minute, though now under a layer of dust. An empty **oil lantern** rests in the middle of the table along with the pot and players' stacks of coin——**16 GP** in total. A legion **infantry carbine** (two hands, d10 damage, holds 5 rounds, is loaded with 5 rounds) rests atop a canvas tarp covering one of the crates. Doors lead **WEST** and **EAST**.

The tarp is a sturdy 9'x9' sheet of waxed canvas with brass eyelets every three feet along each edge. The covered crate is stenciled **EMERGENCY FUEL** under it. It's nearly empty but still contains **6** flasks of kerosene, each sufficient to power the lantern for **3** hours (or for use as an impromptu incendiary weapon).

#9 GATEHOUSE

Debris from shattered furniture, brackish water, and a thin film of algae line the floor of the gatehouse; the latter two more prominent around the western half of the room. An enormous clam shell, about three meters square and a little over one tall, sits closed in the southwest corner. The double-door to the **SOUTH** hangs open, apparently broken open from outside at some point in the past. A matching, still closed and unbroken double door leads **NORTH**, while single doors lead **EAST** and **WEST**.

If nobody has done anything about it, there is the sound of intermittent combat from the **NORTH**.

The clam is veeeery strong and must be pried open with three simultaneous successful **STR** checks or the application of strong heat. It is a duslam body bag or coffin, containing the corpses of two **DUSLAM PHALANGITE** along with their shields, (ceremonially snapped) pikes, and a pair of golden medallions worth **40 GP** each. Attempting to provoke or loot the clam prompts a **DEX** check unless you are a duslam or it SNAPS YOU UP. There is no air to breathe inside the clam.

#10 DUSLAM POOL

A thin lip of flagstones extends only a foot or two from each doorway into this vast circular room making up the base of the keep's southwest tower, giving way to a massive pool where someone has, apparently, dug out the entire floor and filled the resultant pit with water. Doors lead **NORTH** and **EAST**, and a curved stair ascends **UP** from the surface of the indoor lake to the next level of the tower along the northeast wall.

The duslam have dug a **20'** deep pool filled with brine into the floor here. Four **DUSLAM BRAVE** are hanging out here at any given time, illegally. They're not looking for a fight and will flee on negative **reaction** rolls or if they think any phalangites are around to catch them in trouble.

In the pool are some nubby bits of hellcoral (bone white, deadly palytoxic) the duslam are trying to transplant here to grow houses, a 3-slot (**60 GP**) pearl the braves were kicking around like a ball, and **24** loose hellbalone shells (iridesce grey-to-red, each worth exactly **1 GP**) they were betting on their little ballgame with.

Upon close inspection, the northeast wall has been damaged slightly, allowing some of the water from the pool to drip through it to fill the trench out in **#16 COURTYARD**.

#11 DUSLAM BARRACKS

A wall running northwest-to-southeast bisects this layer of the tower into a semicircle. Pieces of mismatched furniture——cots, chairs, low tables, benches, gun racks and armor stands——have been piled high here into six irregular, hollow shapes. A door leads **SOUTHWEST** through the wall, a straight stair leads **UP** from the southeast toward the center of the room along the central wall, and a curved stair leads **DOWN** along the northeast curve of the wall.

The irregular furniture piles are duslam phalangite bivouacs, intended to mimic the shape of coral. They mostly fail at this but... maybe if you squint. If attention is paid to them, equipment is easily visible through the gaps in four of the six: a **heavy** pike and **4-slot** shield each, along with a total of **35 GP** in hellbalone shells gathered in seagrass wicker pouches.

If there are still **DUSLAM PHALANGITE** in the adjoining room to the **SOUTHWEST**, they may hear commotion in here and investigate should any occur.

#12 FIGHTING POSITION

A wall running northwest-to-southeast bisects this layer of the tower into a semicircle. Firing ports line the semicircular exterior wall, and the room is otherwise clear of furniture. A door leads **NORTHEAST** through the interior wall. Hanging next to the door is a large, apparently blank canvas covered with clear waterproof lacquer.

Two **DUSLAM PHALANGITE** are typically stationed on lookout here. One is equipped with a **clacker shell** and the other with a **blowing conch**, in addition to their normal pike and shield. These are expertly crafted noisemakers which are worth **5 GP** each and *very* loud, enough so to prompt the arrival of **2d4** additional **DUSLAMs** (first die **BRAVE**, second die **PHALANGITE**, from the 18 listed on the random encounter table) within **10** rounds of their deployment.

The 3-slot canvas is a masterpiece work of art painted in colors only shrimps can see, and is worth **300 GP** to anyone with supervision (or **250 GP** if cut out of its frame to reduce it to 1 slot) but just about nothing otherwise. Wizards may roll **INT** to notice a hint of the colors if inspecting it closely.

#13 TURRET

The center of the tower's top is taken up by a chair set into a large and complex gyroscopic arrangement, mated to the controls of some sort of enormous gonne——the effect of the whole being that the weapon can be pointed outwards from the tower in any direction and elevation from about 30 degrees below parallel to straight upward. Doors lead outward to the **NORTH**, **EAST**, and **SOUTHEAST**, and a stair leads **DOWN** to the southeast from directly under the gonne-chair.

The gun is one of the antiaircraft cannons of Keep 451, in good working order. Triggering it fires a head-wide jagged bolt of pale pink light outward into the dark with a resonant **KTHOOM**. It depresses enough to hit the ground about a hundred meters beyond the wall, but not enough to fire on the fort itself. The gun fires its bolts from 20x1cm cobalt-impregnated polyurethane disks, of which there are **7** in its ready magazine; they take up **1/3 slot**, are worth **10 GP** each, and fire the same bolt as the gun if an electrical charge is passed through them. The bolt deals **4d6** direct damage plus another **4d6** damage in a **15'** radius with a **CHA** save for half. If fired without a directing barrel of exotic alloy it has a **50%** chance of

detonating instantly rather than projecting forwards. Timelost bodies possess sufficient electrical charge to detonate the disks on a **1-in-6** chance each round they are in contact with them.

If there are still **DUSLAMs** on the battlements that all the doors lead to, they are on guard and will investigate any commotion caused in here by, say, swiveling the gun around (or firing it).

#14 BATTLEMENTS

The faint ghostlight flickering and crawling over the armored rooves of the fort is especially visible from this ascended position. It seems especially focused around the western central section of roof, just north of the tower. An enormous gonne barrel, a hundred and sixty millimeters if it's one, protrudes from the domed turret of the tower. Doors lead in to the turret from the **NORTH**, **EAST**, and **SOUTHEAST**.

Two **DUSLAMs BRAVE** and two **DUSLAMs PHALANGITE** are stationed on guard here, though not especially alert unless previously drawn by movement or noise.

#15 GROUND ZERO

Flickers of blue-violet lightning flash periodically in this chamber, arcing around an area in the approximate center of the room. They outline a spherical area about **10'** in radius, centered around what appears to be some sort of elaborate brass censer without base nor chain, frozen perfectly in the process of exploding itself apart. Also within the area are four hogboblin legionnaires near the center of the sphere in poses of shock and surprise; one man-sized, orange-carapaced decapod at the southern edge of the sphere in a pose of curiosity; and the... *outline...* of a misshapen, demonic figure in the dead center, holding the exploding censer. Doors lead **WEST** from the northwest corner of the room, **EAST**, and **SOUTH**.

If nobody has done anything about it, there is the sound of intermittent combat from the **EAST**.

The sphere describes the immediate area around where **TIMELOST DEMON THUMBSCREWS** originally set off the **time bomb**. Putting any part of your body into it sticks you in time, permanently. Hopefully it is obvious you shouldn't do that. Perhaps powerful magic could save you. *Removing* something from it, if you can do that without entering the area yourself (through telekinesis, a long pole, or whatever), produces a strange effect——the thing removed leaves behind a shimmering afterimage, an *outline*, exactly like that of the demonic figure. Creatures thus removed from the effect are **timelost** just like the legionnaires and demon Thumbscrews and such are.

#16 COURTYARD

The courtyard has been marred by two deep trenches, one along the north and the northern part of the east wall, and one diagonally from south to west slightly away from where the curved wall of the southwest tower bulges into the yard. The southwest trench is flooded, while flickers of blue-violet timelight shimmer in the darkness of the north trench. The ground between them is churned to mud by combat.

Anyone visibly (for example, carrying a light source) entering the courtyard from outside of the northern trench ought to be **reacted** to by legion snipers, and fired upon if the reaction indicates they are noticed.

The courtyard is the site of a protracted and bloody, if small and largely self-contained, trench war between the duslam and the hobgoblin legion. Periodically, duslam bob up from the southwest trench and lob javelins towards the north, or legionnaires pepper the surface of the flooded trench with bullets from their trench's firing step.

NORTH TRENCH

The trench is carefully dug and reinforced, with a grenade sump and south-facing firing step. A handful of jagged-spined javelins are lodged in the ground and rear face of the dugout in places, irregularly. Double doors lead **NORTH** from the western part of the trench, and a regular door leads **EAST** from where the trench dog-legs against the northern part of the eastern wall.

There are eleven **TIMELOST ASHIGARU** plus **PRIVATE CASSIDY** (as **TIMELOST ASHIGARU** but a skeleton; they were killed by the wandering **SKELETONS WARRIOR**, resurrected by **IAGOMETROBOLOMOLOKASSAR THE UNBOWED**, recovered by the wandering **TIMELOST ASHIGARU**, and reenlisted at the terminal in **#20 LEGION BARRACK**) in the trench. At any given time, half are manning the firing step peering nervously into the dark to the **SOUTH**, and half are milling about in the trench. If anything is sighted outside the trench (and a reaction indicates it is not ignored), at least one legionnaire will fire on it!

The center dugout holds an ammunition cache of approx. **180** .30-30 cartridges in twisted waxed paper packs of 20 per, in an open ammo tin, in the bottom of a muddy crate, along with the detritus and unlucky candies from many already-consumed ration packs. The timelost guys are getting real low on supplies.

NO MANS LAND

The ground between the trenches is muddy and miserable, counting as **difficult terrain**. A door leads **WEST** from the west end, and a wide gate leads **EAST** from the east end to a smaller courtyard...a courtette, if you will.

Crossing no man's land, perhaps predictably, is viewed as a threatening action by whoever mans the trench one is approaching. Crossing it lengthwise exposes one to more sporadic fire from both trenches——perhaps one attack from each side.

Wizard vision can be used to pinpoint the nexus of leylines approx. 6' below the surface of the center of the courtyard. Digging there (which would be exceptionally dangerous, if the war is still on and either or both forces still on edge) reveals the intact, original warding cylinder for the fort; a kilogram-weight (1 slot) cylinder of pure gold inscribed with warding runes and worth **600 GP**.

SOUTH TRENCH

The trench is roughly dug, more like a deep ditch, really, and completely flooded with brackish water to nearly the level of the mud around it. Barbed spearheads and orange-carapaced rostrums bob occasionally upwards through the surface of the water. A double door leads **SOUTH** from the area of raised ground behind the flooded trench.

There are eight **DUSLAMs BRAVE** (to pop up and hurl javelins across no-man's-land) and four **DUSLAMs PHALANGITE** (to repel assaults) in total in the trench, all mostly submerged unless actively launching a javelin——Legion rifle fire has made them cautious——though at least one maintains a lookout at all times in case of assault. If anything is sighted outside the trench within javelin range, they will sound the alarm and consider (via reaction) hurling javelins at it.

#17 STABLE

The blackness of open Hell air looms above this small courtyard, or “courtette”, if ya nasty. A quaint little stable stands in the middle——not quite a separate structure, more of four roofed stalls leaning against the eastern wall. Three are empty, while the third holds **A BIG LIZARD**. Resting against the exterior wall of the stable are a water barrel, a trough of old, bleached bones, four sets of riding gear (big lizard saddles, bits and bridles, jackboots with spurs), one **medium** cavalry sabre, and a bit of board hastily painted “**ASVAB 30+ REQ. FOR SAFE LIZARD HANDLEING. ESP. IF HUNGRY. SEE GUNNY**” in bold red. A sizeable gate leads **WEST** to the larger courtyard, and a door back into the keep lies in the **NORTH** wall.

If nobody has done anything about it, there is the sound of intermittent combat from the **WEST**.

The lizard is an abandoned mount. A telltale blue-then-violet timelight plays over its scales, but lizards don't have exceptionally strong senses of temporal location anyway, so it doesn't seem that bothered. It *is* extremely hungry, and certain to attack anyone edible if not fed before being released. Once fed, it is reasonably well-trained and behaves, pending a positive **reaction** check which can be retried once per **ration** fed to it——though it won't fight independently.

#18 WORKSHOP

A forge sits in the northeast corner, an anvil, bellows, toolrack, and quenching trough next to it. A work table for more delicate operations stands in the center of the room——over it, some sort of armature bristles with mechanical arms and precision manipulators. A simple, conspicuously man-sized wooden door has been roughly constructed in a hole in the **NORTHERN** wall. More typical doors for the keep lead **WEST** and **SOUTH**. Another smaller (which is to say, normal-sized) door, but one with typical construction, sits about a foot off the ground to the **EAST**. A rubber plate-stacking aid stands next to the western door, holding **14** 20x1cm disks of porous black plastic..

If nobody has done anything about it, there is the sound of intermittent combat from the **WEST**.

The work table armature is probably **8 slots** and worth **30 GP** if you can dismantle it without breaking it. On the table itself is a tube stand holding just two vials, each of which is labelled ‘**GHOSTS**’ with masking tape and contains a single sip of something, to the eye, quite like mercury. Drinking one doesn't do anything appreciable immediately, but the next time you make an attack roll you must roll **CHA** or miss instead as you are startled by the gruff voice of a veteran legionnaire harshly criticizing your form echoing around the inside of your head. Regardless of the result, gain a permanent **+1 to-hit** afterward; the criticism happens every time you make an attack, though it isn't as jarring after the first time.

The black plastic disks in the rubber plate holder are ammunition for the fort's main guns. They take up **1/3 slot**, are worth **10 GP** each, and fire the same bolt as the gun if an electrical charge is passed through them. The bolt deals **4d6** direct damage plus another **4d6** damage in a **15'** radius with a **CHA** save for half. If fired without a directing barrel of exotic alloy it has a **50%** chance of detonating instantly rather than projecting forwards. Timelost bodies possess sufficient electrical charge to detonate the disks on a **1-in-6** chance each round they are in contact with them.

#19 WEST WALL

A small, unfurnished corridor originally providing access to the wall leading west towards Keep 450. Stairs lead **UPWEST** to the crenellated walkway along the top of the wall. Slumped on the stair is the corpse of a hobgoblin in company-grade officer's dress uniform, badly burned. Separate doors lead **EAST** from both the **NORTH** and **SOUTH** sections of the east wall.

The officer is identifiable by their dogtag as **Captain Dis Snake**. They are still clutching **CROSS POLARIZATION ARTIFACT**, a light officers sabre of (now charred) ebony wood. While held the sword hums high pitchedly, the blade disappears except in peripheral vision, attacks with it deal **2d6** damage which bypasses all damage reduction or immunity, and if pushed slowly but firmly into any non-adamant material it wrenches free from its wielder's grasp and cuts a man-sized hole over the course of **1 turn**. They were killed by **TIMELOST DEMON THUMBSCREWS** upon discovering him mid-infiltration, before the **time bomb** was set off.

#20 LEGION BARRACK

This room is lit by **8** oil lanterns hanging from hooks on the ceiling and walls. Bunk beds, personal chests, and banners fill nearly every open space in this large hall——enough sleeping spaces for over a hundred legionnaires, though very few of them seem to see regular use. Eight **TIMELOST ASHIGARU** are seated on the floor in a broad circle, guns leaned together in a tipi shape, playing a game of cards. In the northwest corner next to it stands a cogent lectern, its surface glowing softly amber. A section of the north wall is obviously newer than the rest——a sally door bricked over. Doors lead **WEST** from the southwest corner and **EAST** from the northeast corner, and double doors lead **SOUTH** and **EAST** from the southeast corner.

If nobody has done anything about it, there is the sound of intermittent combat from the **SOUTH**.

Twenty-odd of the personal chests contain objects; letters from home, girlie mags, trinkets, tchotchkes, keepsakes, and so on. In total there is **76 GP** in legionnaire personal back pay in there, an unlicensed revolver (a **light** ranged weapon dealing **1d8** damage) and **10** cartridges for it, and an even-more-unlicensed fragmentation grenade (deals **4d6** damage to everything within **15'**, then another **2d6-DEX**-halves to everything within **50'**).

The lectern shows a simple header and prompt: "**HOBGOBLIN ENLISTMENT TERMINAL / ENTER YOUR NAME**". There is a keyboard you can pull out from under it. Entering your name reveals a second prompt: "**ARE YOU SURE? Y/N/Q**". Typing 'Y' here enlists you in the hobgoblin legion, tells you "**WELCOME PRIVATE / PLEASE COLLECT YOUR EQUIPMENT FROM THE ARMORY / STAND BY TO RECEIVE SIGNING BONUS**" and pops a little compartment in the lectern open for you to retrieve **3 GP**. The lectern contains a total of **90 GP** to dispense like this, or can be broken into with some effort.

#21 WAR ROOM

This room is lit by **8** oil lanterns hanging from hooks on the ceiling and walls. A large table in the center holds a big map of the surrounding region of Hell along with several military documents in folders around the edges. The keeps and walls of the Wizardinot line are marked out carefully on the map, and little miniatures of hobgoblin legionnaires placed lovingly along it. Separately, a rack near the door holds a single **heavy gonne**. Standing around the map table are four **TIMELOST ASHIGARU** along with one burlier fellow wearing a chestplate marked with the bursting bomb of a legion senior NCO.

The burlier legionnaire is **TIMELOST GUNNERY SERGEANT A LA MODE**.

The documents on the map table are mostly useless, logistics and pay records, but a dedicated search (1 turn or an **INT** check) reveals a seemingly-forgotten intelligence report with worrying implications, reporting intercepted Hellish communications regarding Infiltrated Saboteurs and Experimental Temporal Weaponry.

The **heavy gonne** is a squad automatic weapon, something like a Vickers gun only with a more conventional trigger layout, no tripod, and no water jacket. It has a 200-round cloth belt (currently empty, takes **1 turn** to load up to **50** cartridges into the belt) and is chambered in .30-30 for standardization with other legion arms. It weighs **3 slots** and deals **2d10** damage, using **[best]** cartridges with each attack.

#22 STORE ROOM

Piles of ancient wood and time-dissolved canvas line the north and south walls of the room to several feet of depth, some shapes peeking from within suggesting that they used to be crates and coverings. Heavy doors lead **EAST** and **WEST**. The door to the **EAST** is spiked and barricaded from this side.

If the piles are dug through, it is apparent that the effects of the **time bomb** on the crates that once comprised them were inconsistent. Anyone doing so becomes aware it would take like, **6 turns** to search this place fully. Each turn spent searching uncovers a random one of (remove from list once rolled)...

1. Nothing!):
2. Nothing! :(
3. In a large, intact crate stenciled **COMESTIBLES**: **72** retort pouches of freeze-dried cheese and vegetables, each one a **ration**——a total of **10** slots packed efficiently like this, worth **36 GP** total.
4. In the bottom of a crate which seems to have been decomposed unevenly in layers, stenciled **AMMUNITION**: **5** keyed tins with peel-away tops, each containing **200** functional .30-30 cartridges for legion carbines, revolvers (they're big revolvers), and squad automatic weapons in **1 slot/20 round** paper packages. The layers above these 5 in the crate are present, but eaten away with corrosion and useless. This is a total of **1000** rounds or **50** slots, and worth **100 GP** if sold.
5. In a large, intact crate stenciled **SIEGE EQUIPMENT**: An entire light catapult, disassembled and flat-packed for storage. Worth about **50 GP** if you dragged it all the way home somehow. Way too big to carry.
6. In the ruins of an entirely rotten through crate which can barely be read **ARMS**: A matching set of prosthetics in gleaming stainless, with sensory pads and electroactive polymer muscle fibers. They could be applied by any competent surgeon at the cost of your normal person arms, and give **+1 STR** and **+1 DEX** to anything where you only use your arms and hands (surprisingly few things, really; you're using your chest, back, and shoulders for most things you think you're doing with an arm). These are worth probably **250 GP** each, they're super high-tech. They take up **2** slots each if you hold them in your normal arms instead of replacing such.

BESTIARY

STONE COUGAR

HD 2 HP 10 AC 10 Special takes only 1 damage per die from cutting weapons, arrows, et c

STR +1 DEX +1 INT -2 CHA -2

Attack +3 melee claw 1d4+1+**poison** (STR or paralyzed for 1d6 rounds) **AND** +3 melee bite 1d4+1

Imagine a big cat, its make of rocks. But still alive and has rock organs and stuff inside. Local fauna. They've broke in since there's nothing to eat around here. Each will pick a target and attempt to paralyze or otherwise incapacitate them and then drag them away. They won't try to eat undead or anything that smells too much like a demon. Their freak stone eyes are sensitive to the infrared spectrum but completely blind to the shorter wavelengths like blue and violet. Effectively this means they can see in the **dark**.

SKELETON WARRIOR

HD 1 HP 4 AC 12 (got holes in them) **OR** 14 (got holes in them, 2-slot shield)

STR +0 DEX +0 INT - CHA - (mindless)

Attack +0 melee cruel scimitar 1d6 **OR** +0 ranged shortbow 1d6

Completely fleshless, with cold white pinlights in their eyes. Unthinking servants raised by Iagometrobolomolokassar. Most were the corpses of the 382nd, but some few were prior acquisitions imported from his previous haunts. They have been instructed to kill anything alive in here that isn't Iagometrobolomolokassar or Bone Titan Angelos, and otherwise to defend themselves, and to bring corpses back to **#6 MORGUE** for processing, and to listen to Bone Titan Angelos (they naturally listen to Iagometrobolomolokassar, since he's their animator) and carry out those instructions instead of rolling **reaction**. The ones with shortbows carry 20 arrows each. They can see in the **dark**.

BONE TITAN ANGELOS

HD 1 HP 4 AC 12 (rubberized leather work outfit)

STR +0 DEX +1 INT +1 CHA -2

Attack +1 melee scalpel 1d6 **OR** +3 ranged (10') molotov cocktail 1+1d6 fire+**DEX** or catch fire

A tired-looking, mousey wifeman in a thick rubberized-leather work outfit which has been thoroughly stained with gore. She is Iagometrobolomolossokar's servant and flenses the bodies into skeletons for him to raise. She is loyal to him because he took her in as an exiled necromancer-school dropout, but she is also overworked and exhausted. She knows a lot of necromantic magical theory, but is unfortunately talentless at the practice. She carries three molotov cocktails and a zippo in her satchel at all times in case of emergencies. You'd be surprised how often it's worked out for her. Besides that she has in there a letter to her parents (unsent) asking if she can maybe move back into the guest bedroom for a couple months while she figures stuff out, and **9 silver pieces**.

IAGOMETROBOLOMOLOKASSAR THE UNBOWED

HD 4 HP 25 AC 13 (2-slot ribcage-themed chestplate +1) **MD 5** (wizard robes)

STR +0 DEX +0 INT +3 CHA +2

Attack +4 melee disintegrating touch 2d6, disintegrates your armor on misses that still hit AC 10 **AND** by spell

Spells

Animate Skeleton——Permanently animates up to **[sum]** HD of skeletons. Requires proper flensing or the skeletons will be trapped inside their corpses and unable to move.

Implant Fragmentation Core——Turns **[dice]** target head-sized or smaller objects into fragmentation grenades, which detonate when jarred, heated, or pressured dealing **[sum]** damage in a 20' radius, **DEX** halves.

Final Destination——Transports caster and up to **[sum]** targets who can see them to opposite ends of a demiplanar nightmare world battle arena with plenty of chest-high walls and floating platforms and such. The caster may define up to **[dice]** advantageous terrain features, traps, and so on, though all must be avoidable.

Puppet Corpus——Puppets up to **[sum]** HP of creatures by moving their bones around against their will, for up to **[sum]** rounds. Controlling puppeted creatures requires the caster's action, and they use the caster's **INT** in place of their **DEX** and **STR** for puppeted actions. They may roll **STR** each round to negate the effects for that round only.

Matte Background——Creates a permanent, static illusory image comprising up to **[dice]** color groups (black, white, grey, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet) and covering up to **[sum]** 5' squares.

Historical Restoration——Restores up to **[sum]** non-resistant, living targets to a point in their pasts, up to: **1 MD** - minutes ago; **2 MD** - days ago; **3 MD** - months ago; **4 MD** - years ago. Relevant to this adventure, the **4 MD** can de-timelost folk who aren't actively hostile.

A bent, white-haired wolfman in rich emerald satin robes with black detailing about the cuffs and closure, and a large violet spider shimmering at his throat. He starts sentences in a frail, unsure manner but grows sonorous and authoritative as he gets going. He is an accomplished necromancer (and published author) here on working holiday, pursuing independent research on temporal phenomena as a personal hobby. He feels a parental responsibility towards Bone Titan Angelos but doesn't particularly value the lives of anyone else besides her and himself and is entirely unmoved by sympathy. He can see leylines (that's why his study is where it is) but doesn't know about the warding cylinder in **#16 COURTYARD** and could use some cash to pay the mortgage on his mistress's dacha back in the necromancer kingdoms. He is unwilling to have his anti-aircraft cannon decommissioned (he's always wanted one of these! what if he needs to use it someday!), but would be willing to sign an official treaty of some sort that guarantees he won't shoot at commercial shipping with it if such were suggested. He wears wizard robes (**+1 MD**) over a **2-slot** ribcage-themed black steel breastplate (**+1, total of +3 AC**), has a glimmering fist-sized violet glass spider affixed to the skin of his neck (**+7 HP**), and habitually carries two skulls at his belt which he has enchanted with **2MD** *Implant Fragmentation Core* spells.

DUSLAM BRAVE

HD 1 HP 4 AC 12 (plated back) **Immune** critical hits (they bounce off the rostrum)

STR +0 DEX +0 INT -1 CHA +1

Attack +0 ranged (30') or melee javelin 1d6+**poison** (shellfish toxin; **STR** or gain one **shrimp trait**)

Bright orange; ten long frontal limbs, of which they use the lower six for walking and the upper four as arms; long, jagged rostrums which protrude spikelike from their brows; armored exoskeletons and a long, trailing tail studded with pleopods... shrimps. They're man-sized shrimps. They speak no language but their own, and interpret or express pantomime strangely due to being evolved shrimps who live in Hell. Duslam may execute the **caridoid escape reaction** in emergencies, propelling themselves 60' directly backwards rather than moving normally. They only do this if the way is clear, because smashing into a wall like that would suck. Braves carry three javelins each, plus a sea urchin containing **1d20** hellbalone shells (like abalone, but iridesces from grey to red) worth **1 GP** each.

d6 Shrimp Traits (reroll duplicates. if you have all 6 you have turned into a duslam)

1. grow whole bunch of extra limbs down your front. eventually you'll learn how to use them but right now they just get in the way. **halve** movement speed
2. blood turns gooey and seleniumious. **immune** to cancer
3. eyes turn black and bulge way outta your head. brain shrinks and heart moves to inside skull. **-1 INT** but can **see in the dark**
4. big flipper tail. you can do the **caridoid escape reaction** thing and in fact must roll **CHA** or do it automatically when surprised or scared. if you slam into something like that both you and it take **2d6** damage
5. body shrimp-shaped and covered in orange plates. **+2 AC**, can't wear armor anymore tho
6. giant exoskeletal spike pierces brow. **immune** to critical hits

DUSLAM PHALANGITE

HD 2 HP 9 AC 16 (plated back, 4-slot shield) **Immune** critical hits (they bounce off the rostrum)

STR +0 DEX +0 INT -1 CHA +1

Attack +2 10' reach loooong spear 1d6+**poison** (shellfish toxin; **STR** or gain one **shrimp trait**)

As above but bearing a massive shield and pike. The phalangites are the formal fighting force of the Duslam. They do not carry javelins (they're heavy infantry) nor any cash (they're on duty).

TIMELOST ASHIGARU

HD 1 HP 5 AC 14 (hobgoblin ashigaru munitions plate)

STR +1 DEX +1 INT +0 CHA +1

Attack +3 ranged infantry carbine 1d10 **OR** +3 melee bayonet 1d8+1

Hobgoblin ashigaru from the B Company of the 382nd Mobile Infantry. Ice blue lightning creeps slowly over their skin, bright enough to leave afterimages in your vision. A demonic saboteur's **time bomb** has rendered these poor souls temporally unstuck time-ghosts. On negative **reactions**, they see intruders as demonic assaulters and are unwilling to negotiate. Neutral and positive reactions indicate passivity - they stare straight through you, unseeing. Their **reaction** result ought to reset if they haven't seen any party members in an hour or so, as the skeins of time are unstable. They each carry **2d20** cartridges for their rifles, but if slain their bodies have been already dead for **1d100** years and the volatile compounds in hobgoblin powder eat through the brass and are useless beyond **10**. The rifles themselves are lever-action with a 24" barrel, weigh 1 slot, hold 5 rounds in a tube magazine, and are typically carried loaded with 5 rounds. The legionnaires wear dog tags with their name, serial number, and so on, making identification possible.

TIMELOST GUNNERY SERGEANT PISCEUS A LA MODE

HD 3 HP 15 AC 15 (hobgoblin samurai munitions plate)

STR +2 DEX +1 INT +0 CHA +2

Attack +6 ranged +1 revolver 1d8+1 **OR** +5 melee saber 1d8+2

A burly timelost hobgoblin in heavy munitions plate, their chestpiece marked with the bursting bomb (it looks like a pineapple) insignia of the legion's senior NCOs. All the above **timelost ashigaru** stuff applies to them as well. They were the second-in-command of B Company, after Captain Dis Snake——whose corpse lies in **#19 WEST WALL**.

TIMELOST DEMON THUMBSCREWS

HD 6 HP 28 AC 10 Immune fire, electricity, poison

STR +1 DEX +0 INT +0 CHA +3

Attack +6 15' reach *whip of nightmares* 1d4+1+**fear** (**CHA** or flee for 1 minute, save renders immune for 24 hours, doesn't work on robots) **AND** 15' cone *black flamethrowing bracer* 2d6 fire (**DEX** half)+fills area with acrid smoke obscuring sight beyond **5'**

A squat and horrible creature, like a wax statue of someone's fat uncle that was both sat on *and* strategically burned with a barbecue lighter, plus a few additions: Wings like a great vulture, a face like one of those dogs that can't breathe right, and a quartet of steak-knives protruding from under his upper lip. It wears an ornate iron bracer about its left wrist which hisses red-hot at the end closest to the hand, fading to sooty black at the crook of the elbow; and in the other hand wields a coiled length of shadow trailing particles like burnt paper. Besides these weapons and a brass scroll case worn on a chain about his neck he is naked. Blue-violet light plays uneasily over its skin. It speaks disjointedly due to **timelostness**, though is better-accustomed to it than the hobgoblins and can see other people just fine. Inside the scroll case are orders from near the end of the Hell War, detailing its mission to infiltrate the fort and detonate the **time bomb**. He is aware of the other residents of the Keep and may be willing to bargain or demand the party get lagometrobolomolokassar to "fix its time problem". One must pass a **save** against the *whip of nightmares* to wield it, and the *black flamethrowing bracer* causes **1 fire damage** per round when worn by anyone with a hand on the arm wearing it (and would immolate that hand when triggered).

A BIG LIZARD

HD 3 HP 18 AC 16 (big lizard scales)

STR +5 DEX +0 INT -2 CHA +0

Attack neck frill dance (all paying attention roll **INT** or **stunned** 1 round) **AND** +3 melee bite 1d6+5

Something like a komodo dragon, only six-legged and a little higher off the ground. These were sometimes, if uncommonly, used as mounts by hobgoblin legion cavalry in the Hell War. One in good condition is worth an easy **35 GP** back home. It'd be twice that or more, but they're technically government property and notoriously difficult to fence.

THE GROUNDKEEPER

HD 8 HP 46 AC 18 (made of armor steel) **Immune** fire, cold, poison, bullets, normal weapons, decompression, stuns, splash damage from explosions but not direct brisance

STR +10 DEX -5 INT - CHA -

Attack +3 melee silver sword 1d10+10 **AND** +3 melee right hand 1d4+10

A titanic construct, 9' tall at the shoulder with a searchlight for a head and a **heavy** silver sword mounted in place of its left hand. It is currently in 'active' mode and thus **invariably hostile** to all who aren't active-service members of the legion. It determines this through numinous means so simply stealing a dogtag or saluting it isn't enough to pass. It booms things like "ALERTA ALERTA ALARUM" and "SEARCH PATTERN ACTIVE" and "RESUMING PATROL ROUTE" and "INTRUDERS DETECTED TERMINATING" and "LEGION TRUTH RECOGNIZED" and "GOOD DAY CORPORAL". It is under orders not to damage the fort and walks very, very slowly.