



Medieval Herald

The Official Newsletter of Men of Iron

Autumn 2023

The King and the
Carrot Farmer

Men of Iron Advancement

Household Belt Banners

Throwing
Battle Axes and Knives

Build a Throwing Target

Game of Fox and Geese



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Join the Journey!

Membership is a huge part of the journey of Men of Iron.

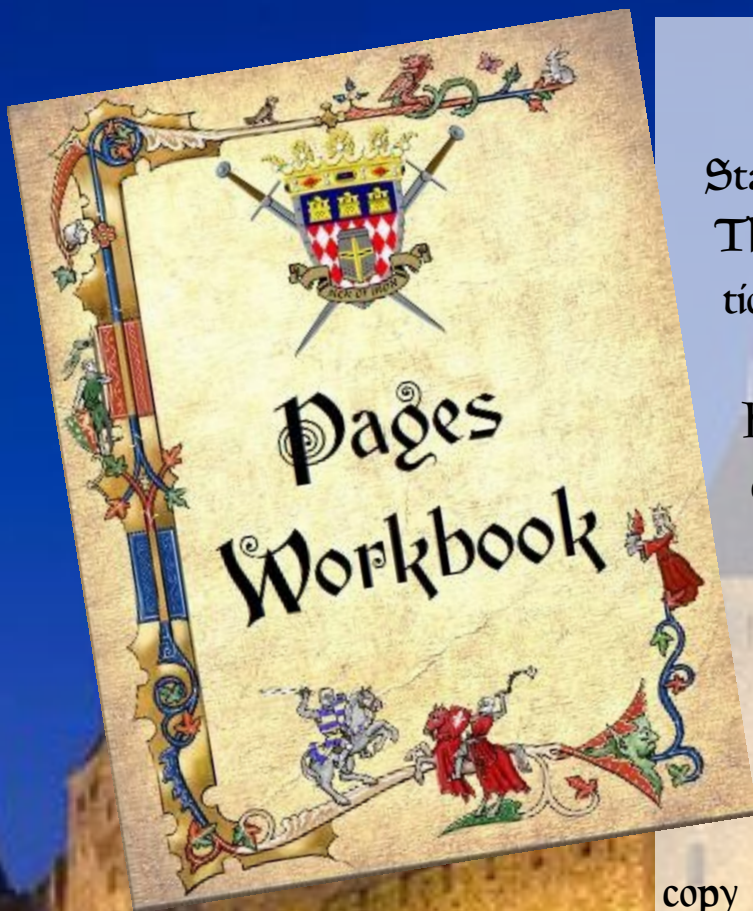
It unlocks benefits that for each person that can open a world of possibilities.

Advancement. Tournament. Challenges. All of these are within reach when you become an official member.

Beginning October 1, yearly memberships can be renewed for the coming year. Don't find yourself without it.

Full membership details can be found on the Men of Iron website at www.Men-of-Iron.org





The Pages Workbook

Start your journey to become a knight. The Pages workbook has all of the information you will need to start down that path.

How to be a greater servant, the Pages example, the rules of common courtesy, how to serve your household and more are all part of this workbook.

Visit

www.men-of-iron to find out more

And to learn how to get your own copy of the Pages Workbook!

The Household Manual

The Men of Iron Household Manual will be your guide to starting and running a household. Start up, membership, feasts, leadership, tournament, how to conduct meeting and devotions for a year are all inside.

This manual will be your go to source of information when starting up a new household.

Visit www.men-of-iron to find out how to start your own household and to get a copy of the Household Manual!



The King and the Carrot Farmer



There was once a great king who ruled his people well.

His generosity and wisdom was known throughout his kingdom and his people prospered because of his rule.

In this kingdom there was a certain carrot farmer who grew the best carrots in the land. He took great care to see his harvest was bountiful. His efforts always saw the greatest harvest. His carrots were known throughout the kingdom to be the very best of any farm in the realm because of his methods.

During one particular harvest the carrot farmer was collecting his carrots and boxing them to be cleaned and prepared for the trip to the market, he came across an unusual sight. As he approached the thing he could barely believe what he saw. It was a carrot stalk at least three feet tall.

Amazed at this sight, he excitedly began to pull on the stalk to pull the carrot up, but it would not be moved. He then ran to his barn and returned with a number of digging tools. As he began to dig, he carefully removed the earth around the vegetable until he freed the enormous carrot. With all his might he managed to remove the carrot from the hole and hoist it into the waiting wheelbarrow.

He knew that he needed to get it into his barn as soon as he could so he wheeled the carrot straight away to the barn and locked the door behind him. He stopped for a moment to catch his breath and marveled at what had just transpired.

As he went back to his harvesting chores, his mind raced with all of the possibilities that giant carrot like this could offer. He could enter it into the farmers fair and win first prize! He could sell it to a wealthy lord and command a high price for his work. On and on he thought about what to do with the carrot for the rest of the afternoon.

Just before sunset when the carrot farmer was about to finish his work for the day, he saw a procession of horses and a carriage between them traveling down the road. As he stopped to study the scene, he realized that it was the royal carriage and the king's soldiers. It was the king!

"That's it!" He thought, "I will give this carrot to the king!" And that was exactly what he would do. The farmer's grandfather had been granted the land that he now lived and worked on as a gift for his time in the king's guard as a knight. For his bravery and valor, the king gave the farmer the land as a way to honor him for his service. It had since passed to the farmer and he had never so much as seen the king but he knew in his heart it would be right to honor the king with this special harvest. So it was decided, tomorrow he would travel to the capital to present the king with this most special gift.



Early the next morning, the farmer loaded the great carrot onto his wagon and set off on his journey. By mid morning he had arrived at the king's castle. After explaining why he wished to see the king to several different guards and royal aides, he was granted an audience with the king.

The farmer pushed his wheelbarrow into the throne room, there was a combination of gasps and giggles from the courtiers that stood on either side of the room. "What is that?" "A carrot?" "Why would the king care about that?" "Why would he bring such a thing into the presence of the king?" There was much whispered debate amongst those who looked upon this lowly farmer and his carrot.

Moments later, the farmer soon found himself standing before the king. The farmer locked eyes with the king and then bowed low before him.

"What do we have here?" the king asked. The carrot farmer responded, "Your majesty, many years ago you made a gift of a farm to my grandfather who served you faithfully. My family has maintained that land since then and we have become successful carrot farmers on the land that you have so graciously given."

The king responded that He knew of the farm and knew that the best carrots in the land were grown there. He fondly recalled the efforts of the farmer's grandfather and the grant of the land to him for his service.

The farmer told the story of going out into his field to harvest and finding the giant carrot. He told how he had thoughts of making a great fortune with such a large carrot but in the end decided not to do that but to present it to the king as a way of honoring his gift of so long ago. "It is because of your great generosity that I want to gift this prize carrot to you."

The king was deeply moved. He said to the farmer, "It is my great honor to accept this carrot. This carrot was yours to do with as you pleased. You could have made a great deal of money in its sale. You could have become quite famous for growing such a fine vegetable. You however chose to give it away to me. I am honored by your gift." The whispering courtiers became dead silent as they listened to the words of the king.



The king then called for his exchequer who immediately appeared. The king then told him "On my journey home yesterday I noticed that the royal lands just to the west of this carrot farmer had become wild and overgrown. How much land is there?" After a few minutes of frantic searching the exchequer declared with satisfaction that there was 300 acres of land next to the carrot farm. "The 10 acre carrot farm was originally a part of that tract of land your majesty." "Very good." The king stated.

He then looked at the carrot farmer and said, "Because of your selfless gift to me of this carrot, I gift to you this 300 acres of royal land. Your generosity is to be commended. This land is yours to do with what you will. Clear it, raise new crops and use it well. This is by the king's command."

The exchequer could not believe what he was hearing. When he looked at the king, the king's gaze said all he needed and he began to furiously scratch his quill on the parchment he was holding. When he finished, he poured wax and sealed it with the king's seal then handed it to the farmer. It was a title deed to the 300 acres the king just gave him bearing the royal seal.

The king looked at the farmer and said "Use it well my friend!" With that the farmer again bowed low, thanked the king and exited the room.

One of the many great lords that were in the room observing the proceedings, one was dumbfounded. He like the exchequer was shocked at the king's generosity for such a seemingly low gift. He thought to himself "for a single carrot, this king gave 300 acres of land? How much more would he give for a gift of real value?" So the great lord



left the court and began searching for a gift that he deemed worthy. A week later he had found the finest horses in the land and had bought two to present to the king. When he returned to the king's court, he presented himself and his gift to the king.

The king in his wisdom knew what the nobleman was doing and saw through his scheme. "Thank you for the gift of the horses" the king said. When he began to move on to other business, the nobleman protested, "Your majesty..." The king interrupted him. "I know what you are about to say". "I know that you were here when the carrot farmer presented me with his carrot and you saw the gift I gave him. You have wrongly assumed that you would be able to present me with a much more expensive gift and in return I will give you even more than I gave the carrot farmer."

The king continued "You see, it was not the gift that I rewarded, it was the intent of his heart, his generosity. He did not owe me anything, nor did I ask. He gave it to me from a desire to honor me as his king. You have given me your gift as a means to extract something from me. His gift was a gift given out of devotion to me. Your gift was a gift given out of selfish ambition."

With these words, the nobleman bowed his head in shame and retreated from the court as he knew the king was right. The king had seen the intent of his heart.

As followers of Christ, do we the nobleman? Do we give to things for them because we want to believe that if we are we can gain the favor of the we are doing good but in re-ambition. If this is the case, we may need a heart transplant.

-how can we begin this change of heart? We can start by praying and asking that the King restore our heart to Obedience-

act more like the carrot farmer or others out of love or do we do want something in return? We good enough or religious enough King. We believe in our heart that ality we are giving toward selfish need to change our hearts. We

Why would we need a heart transplant? Because we have allowed sin to take root in our hearts. We become selfish and no longer concern ourselves with the things that matter to God. Our heart becomes hard as a rock and cannot accept the things of God. A heart that is full of sin cannot obey God. It cannot long for the things of God. It cannot hear when he speaks. It has no desire for the things of God. It cannot love others the way God loves. When this happens we find ourselves like the nobleman, serving our own selfish ambition with no regard or love for others. We may look good on the outside to others, but inside our hearts have become cold and black.

So then how can we begin this change of heart? We can start by praying and asking that the King restore our heart to obedience. In Ezekiel chapter 36, the prophet wrote this:

"And I will give you a new heart with new and right desires, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so you will obey my laws and do whatever I command." Ezekiel 36:26-27

By allowing the King to create in us a new heart that is obedient to him, we will begin to cast off our corrupt ways that have led us astray and has allowed that sin to penetrate our hearts.

You might be thinking, "But I am religious! I serve the Lord! I am a good person, go to church and do good things! How can my heart be hard?" While all of that might be true, you must ask yourself, is your heart aligned with the heart of the King? We can all benefit from a heart check.

The Apostle Paul addressed this very thing in chapter 2 of his letter to the Romans. In it, Paul explains that religion by itself apart from the Gospel is powerless to change a person's life (or heart). We might then ask the question, shouldn't religion make us better? The answer to that question is a resounding no. It is only through the power of Christ that a heart can change, not by our religion. Any religious devotion apart from Christ is powerless to correct the problem of human sinfulness.

Religious obedience is merely a thin veneer of righteousness that covers over a heart that is just as sinful as the greatest unbeliever in the world. Religion by itself is powerless to change our heart. The hearts of the religious are just like those who are non religious; they are both drawn to disobedience.

It is not merely doing the right things that matters to the Lord; it is doing right for the right reasons. When our hearts are aligned to the heart of the King, we will naturally do things that will honor the King and not ourselves.

Take the carrot farmer, he did not give the gift of the carrot to earn the favor of the king to get the land he was given, he gave the carrot to the king to honor the king for being a just and noble king. He did not expect to receive any reward for his gift, he was happy to give the very best he could out of his love for the king and his desire to bless him. It was not just a good deed, it was an act of love. Doing good deeds are not enough. Good deeds done to earn blessings, favor from others or to get rewards from God don't count as good in the eyes of God because they are selfishly motivated. Should we continue to do these good deeds then? Yes we should, but they must be founded in the right spirit.

How then can we do what is right? Listen to what the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 2:6-8:

"6 He will render to each one according to his works: 7 to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury."

It might be surprising to some to see that the person who seeks to continually do good is also described as one *seeking glory, honor, and immortality* (v 7) since we typically associate those characteristics with worldliness and pride. But the key consideration here is that the *glory* and *honor* being sought is not that of seeking approval from other people but from our Heavenly Father who judges based on the intentions of our hearts (see Hebrews 4:12).

God is not just looking for obedience; he is looking for a whole new kind of obedience. He wants an obedience that comes from a changed heart that leads to an instinctive desire to seek righteousness because we crave righteousness. This kind of obedience causes us to pursue God because we love him, not because we are commanded to. This kind of change cannot happen unless we allow a change in our hearts. Be like the carrot farmer. Cast off the ways of the nobleman.

Let us allow the King to change our hearts for greater love, obedience and service!



Sir Anthony the Valiant





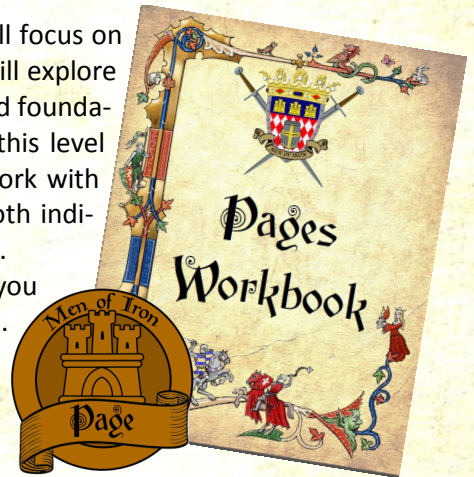
Advancement

Following the road to Knighthood

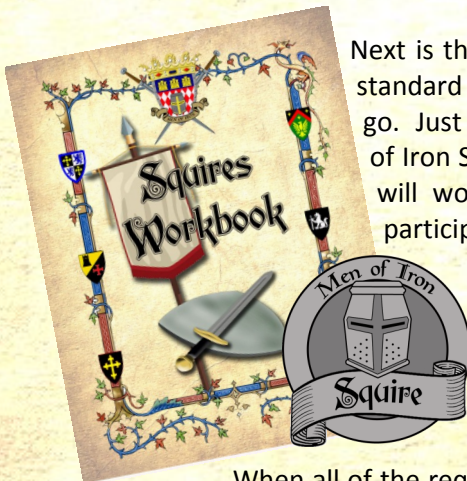
So you want to become a Knight? Good! You have chosen a worthy endeavor. The road to becoming a Knight of Men of Iron will be one of fun, accomplishment and adventure. Are you ready to begin?

Where do we begin? It all starts with becoming a and continuing as an active member of Men of Iron. Membership is important to the overall ministry of Men of Iron. After becoming a member you are well on your way to the advancement levels themselves. What is next then? Become a Page!

The Page is the first advancement level of Men of Iron. This level will focus on the theme of becoming a servant to both the men and the King. It will explore the basics of the ministry of Men of Iron and helps you develop a good foundation for your future as you press on to becoming a knight. During this level you will be introduced to the idea of selecting a mentor who will work with you to help you succeed in your quest. The two of you will grow both individually and together as you work to complete the Page advancement. The Pages Workbook will be your guide through this process. Inside you will find all of the information that you will need to complete the level. When you complete the requirements and submit the application you will receive the Pages certificate and advancement pin to place on your belt banner (more on that later).



Next is the Squire advancement. Here you will focus on the theme of being a standard bearer of the Lord, carrying the message of the gospel wherever you go. Just as in history the Squire spent his time on more martial skills, the Men of Iron Squire will develop the skills that will help make him a great knight. He will work to develop himself as a warrior by learning the skills need to participate in the Men of Iron Tournaments!



There will also be time spent learning about the organization of Men of Iron and how it works. It will be here that he learns and applies the Code of Chivalry to his life. All along the why he will continue to have his mentor working with you to help you on your journey.

When all of the requirements are completed and the Squire application is submitted, you will receive your Squire certificate and advancement pin.



After completing the Squire advancement, you are ready to begin the process of becoming a Knight of Men of Iron.

The theme of the Knight advancement is the Servant Warrior. The servant warrior is one who may not necessarily fight with a sword and shield, but more with the Sword of the Spirit and the Shield of Faith. The Men of Iron Knight is a man who fights the battles that need to be fought on his knees in prayer. The 40 days of devotion, developing your own heraldry and choosing an epithet to be called.

The Knights Workbook will outline everything that you will need to complete this advancement level.

The Knight level culminates with the Knights Ordeal and Vigil, an all night prayer vigil that becomes your first ordeal as a knight. Upon successful completion of the vigil, you are presented at court to be knighted and named. This will also be the first time you wear your arms publicly.



Upon completion of the Knighting ceremony, you are presented the Knights certificate and advancement pin.

After becoming a knight, a Men of Iron member may remain as a knight and seek no further advancement.

For those who are not yet satisfied there are two additional advancement levels beyond the knight, the Knight Baronet and the Guildmaster. These are optional levels that may be obtained, but cannot be earned unless a member has reached knighthood.

The Knight Baronet and Guildmaster are identified by a medallion worn around the neck. The Knight Baronet (silver medallion/blue ribbon) and the Guildmaster (gold medallion/red ribbon). The Knight Baronet level focuses on building Men of Iron and those within its ranks. There is no workbook for this level, simply a list of items to be accomplished. Once these are completed, the local Baron and his staff review the request to become a Knight Baronet.

The Guildmaster can only be obtained after one has become a Knight Baronet. As the name implies the person who has been named a Guildmaster is an expert or master of his chosen guild or trade. To become a Guildmaster takes much time and effort through being an apprentice, journeyman and then to become a master. Once the required assignments are completed, the Grandmaster of the Guilds will review the request to become a Guildmaster.



The Knight Baronet and Guildmaster are considered what is called a Peer. A Peer is a rank of nobility that is considered part of the body of Peers or the Peerage. In Men of Iron the members of the peerage are Knight Baronet, Guildmaster, Baron, Viscount, Earl, Duke, Archduke and Crown Prince. Those who have been entered into the peerage also may wear the corresponding coronet for their respective title.

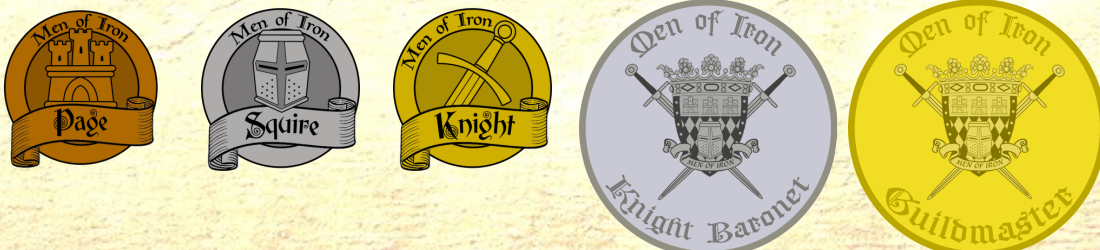


Guildmasters Coronet of the Carpenters Guild

Advancement Insignia

Each of the first three Men of Iron advancement levels have an associated award pin. The Page (copper) Squire (silver) and Knight (gold) pins are worn on a household belt banner to indicate the rank of each member.

The Knight Baronet and Guildmaster awards are medallions worn on a ribbon around the neck.





Household Belt Banners

Identity is important! Each member of Men on Iron wears what is called a belt banner. Put simply, it is a small cloth banner that is worn on the belt of his medieval garb. The purpose of the banner is to identify a member with his household and to display that members advancement level.

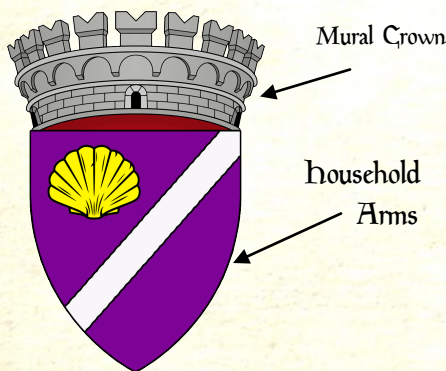
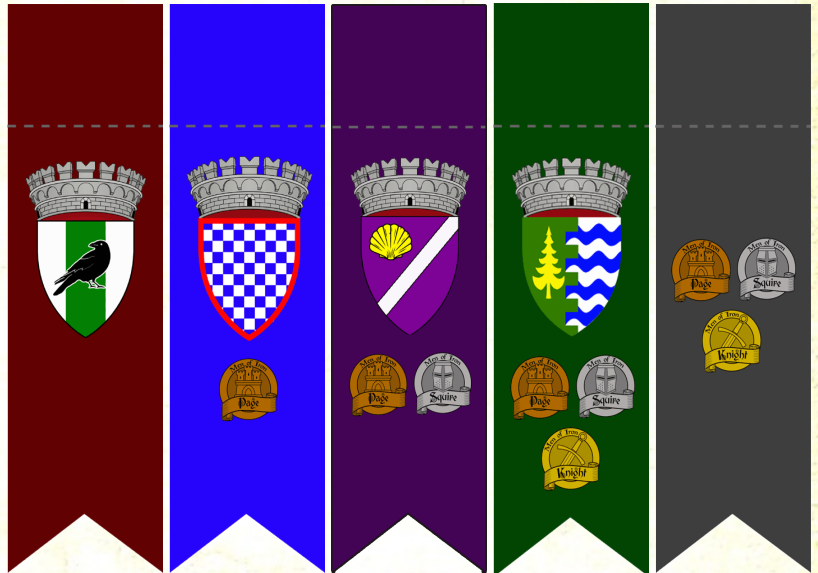
The color of the banner will be different for each household. The members household arms will be displayed above the advancement pins. The color of the banner is chosen by the household and is a complimentary color to the household arms.

So then at a glance, you can "read" a belt banner by recognizing the arms of the household and the advancement level of the member.

If a member is working on building a household and has no household available to him to be a part of, he will wear a grey belt banner with no arms. The advancement pins will be placed in the center of the banner and the layout of the pins will be the same as any other household belt banner.

In either case, as a member advances he will place the advancement pins on the banner so that he can display his rank for others can see at a glance.

Member Page Squire Knight No household



The Household Arms

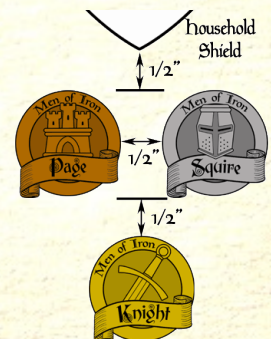
Each person who wears a belt banner displays the arms of the household that they belong to. How does one know it is the household arms? These arms are always displayed with the Mural Crown. In heraldry, this crown was always associated with a village, town or city. In Men of Iron this silver crown will always be associated with a household.

These arms can be painted, embroidered or most commonly a patch affixed to the belt banner.

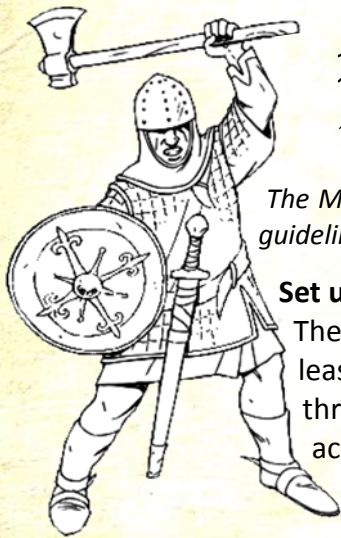
Placement of Advancement Pins

As a member advances in Men of Iron, the outward sign of this are the Men of Iron advancement pins. The Page Squire and Knight pins are affixed to the belt banner as they are earned (as shown above). When the arms are added, the advancement pins are affixed 1/2" below the lowest point of the shield, always centered.

Without the household arms the pins are centered top to bottom on the belt banner.



Men of Iron Tournament Events



Battle Axe and Knife Throwing

The Men of Iron Battle Axe and Knife Throwing Tournament event is governed by the following guidelines taken from the Men of Iron Tournament Guidelines.

Set up and Safety Considerations

The battle axe and throwing knife range can be as wide as you have targets for and at least 25 yards long with no activity behind the targets. An open flat area is ideal for the throwing range. It should be marked off by flagging tape to prevent individuals from accidentally walking through or behind the target area.

The range should be situated so that the end of the downrange area is free of any activities or foot traffic. Safety should be the largest concern when setting up a

throwing range.

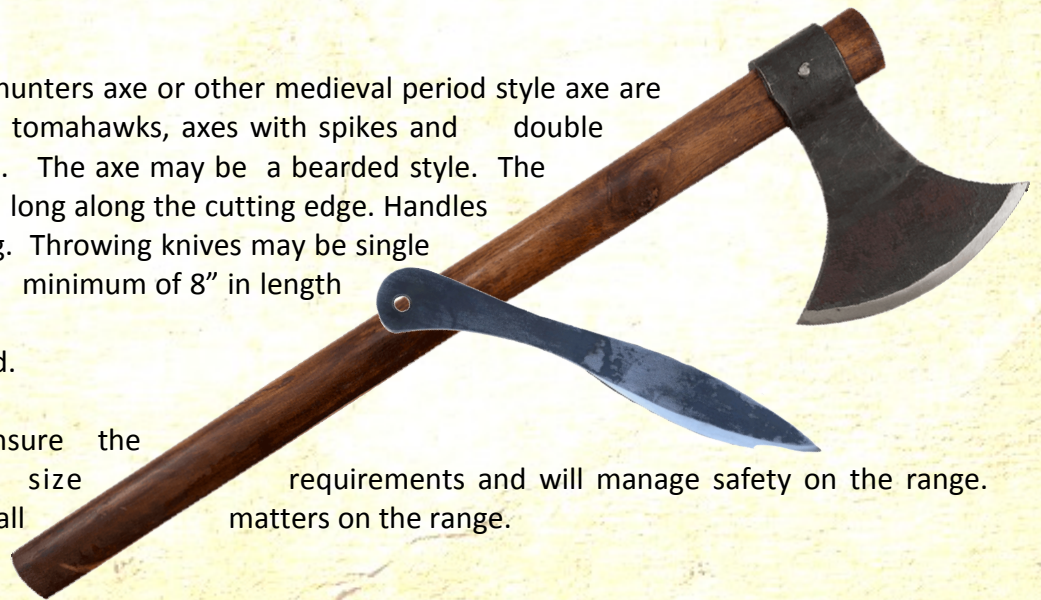
Participants who are throwing on a range with multiple throwers must wait until all throwers on the line are finished throwing and the range officer calls a cold range to retrieve their implements.

Equipment

Any Viking style axe, medieval hunters axe or other medieval period style axe are acceptable. Small frontier style tomahawks, axes with spikes and double bladed axes are not acceptable. The axe may be a bearded style. The blade must be a minimum of 5" long along the cutting edge. Handles must be a minimum of 25" long. Throwing knives may be single or double edged and must be a minimum of 8" in length and no longer than 13".

Throwing spikes are not allowed.

The range officer will ensure the implements meet the size requirements and will manage safety on the range. He will have the final say on all matters on the range.



Competition

Battle Axe- Three throws for a cumulative score. The battle axe will require a minimum distance of 25' to complete one full revolution from the throwing position. The battle axe must be thrown two handed.

Throwing Knife- Three sets of three throws (total of 9 throws) for a cumulative score. The knife must complete one full revolution to qualify.

Two practice throws are allowed for each implement.

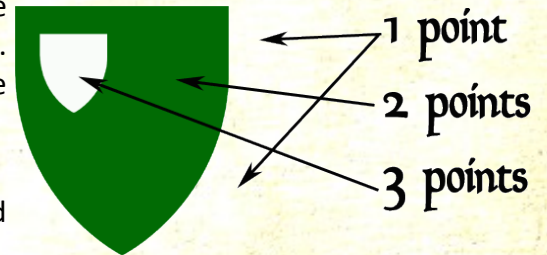
The battle axe/throwing knife must stick in the target until it is removed by the thrower to count for that score. If it falls out, the score will be zero.



If the line of the next painted shield is broken by the blade before removing, the higher score is counted. This is determined by the range officer/scoring judge.
The total of all scores will be combined for the final score.

Ties will be decided with sudden death elimination. All tied participants throw. Any throw that does not stick is eliminated (unless everyone misses, then begin over)
The person to stick the highest point will be the winner. Ties continue until there is a single winner.

For scoring, a 12" wide target shield should be painted on the face of the target 9" down from the top and centered. Then a smaller 3" wide target shield should be painted on the larger shield in any location on the larger shield. This be a minimum of 2" from any edge. This will create the scoring system that will favor accuracy.



The points will be scored as follows:

1 point is awarded for sticking the target outside the painted target shield.

2 points are awarded for sticking the shield.

3 points are awarded for sticking the smaller shield.

Tournament Card Endorsement

To earn the Battle Axe or Throwing Knife endorsement on your tournament card you must complete the following:

Battle Axe

Memorization- Memorize and quote the Projectile Range Rules.

Knowledge- Explain proper care and storage of a battle axe.

Demonstration- Demonstrate how to safely carry, pass and sharpen a battle axe.

Demonstration- Demonstrate proper throwing technique and safe handling of a battle axe.

Proficiency – Throw and stick the battle axe into the target 1 time out of 5 attempts in a one revolution throw.

Throwing Knife

Memorization- Memorize and quote the Projectile Range Rules.

Knowledge- Explain proper care and storage of a throwing knife.

Demonstration- Demonstrate how to safely carry pass and sharpen a throwing knife.

Demonstration- Demonstrate proper throwing technique and safe handling of a throwing knife.

Proficiency – Throw and stick a throwing knife into the target 1 time out of 5 attempts in a one revolution throw.



Talk to your Head of Household or your Household Marshal about completing the endorsements for the Battle Axe and Throwing Knife endorsements for your Tournament Card.

Men of Iron

Battle Axe and Knife Throwing Target

Throwing a knife or battle axe is a great way to spend the afternoon or to hone your skill and accuracy in throwing. Targets are a must for those who want to keep their skills sharp. This is especially true if you get challenged to a bead challenge!

There are two parts to this target, the stand and the face. The stand should last for many years to come if built properly. The face will need to be occasionally replaced as it wears out. One target/stand can be built for approximately \$25-30.

Here is what you will need:

Target Face

2 - 2"x6"x8' Pine
1 - 2"x4"x8' Pine
3" Zinc coated screws

Target Stand

4- 2"x4"x8' Pine
1- 4"x4"x8' Treated Pine
10- 1/4" Hex Head, 5" long zinc coated lag bolts

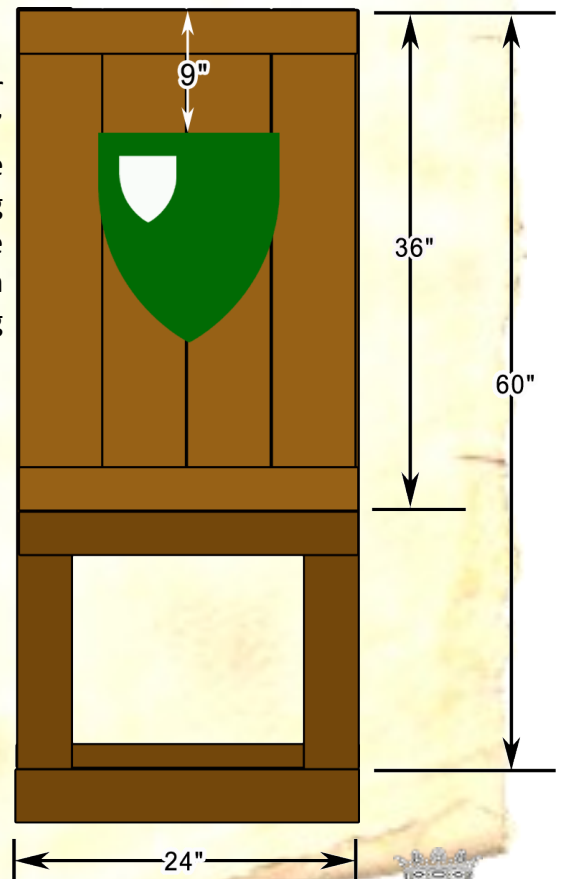
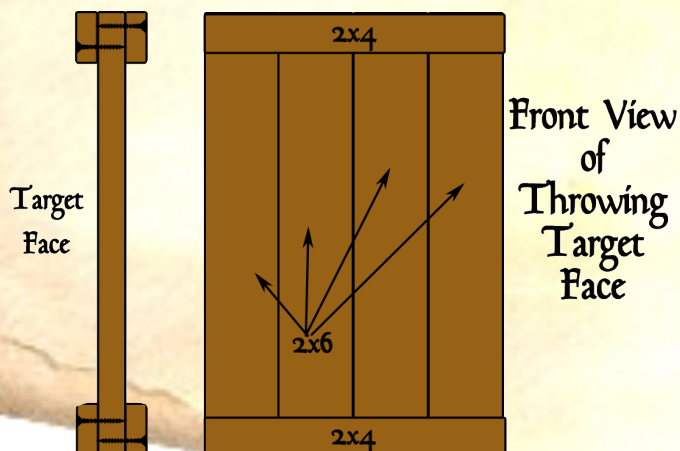
Tools Needed

Miter Saw (powered or box miter)
Impact Driver/Ratchet w/sockets
48" Bar Clamps

Drill
Drill bits

Instructions for the Target Face-

Using your miter saw, cut four 2"x6" 30" long. These will be your target face. Measure the width of the four 2x6's and cut the 2"x4" into four pieces (approximately 22" long). Lay the four 2"x6"s face down on a level surface and clamp them on top and bottom using a bar clamp. This will ensure that the joints are tight. Do not glue these together. This will allow you to replace a board rather than the entire assembly. Attach the 2x4's to the front and back using the 3" screws on the top and bottom. This will complete the face.



Instructions for the Target Stand-

Using your miter saw, cut the 4x4 in to 24" lengths. Take the 4x4's and use the lag bolts to bolt them together in a square. Place two on each joint staggering the corners. When complete, this will create a 31"x24" base.

Next cut two of the 2x4's 60" long. Cut the remaining 36" boards to 24". These will serve as the target supports. Lay the 60 boards 24" apart (figure 2) Place one 24" 2x4 3 1/2" from the top edge of the uprights. Secure the screws. Measure 36" from the top of the board and secure the lower support. These will act as supports to the target face .

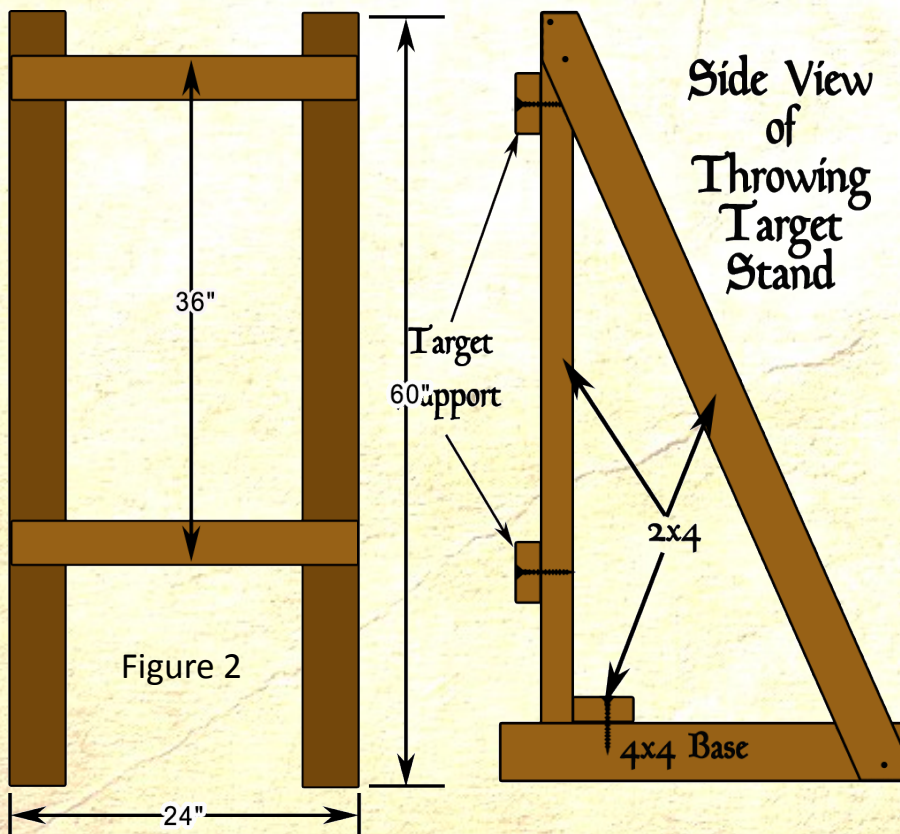


Cut the other two 2x4's at 70" long. These will create the cross supports. From the scrap of the 2x4's cut one at 24" and the others at 26". The 24" board will be secured to the top of the base to act as a brace to secure the 60" uprights the target face will attach to.

Set the 2x4 brace 3" back from the front of the 24" end of the base and attach using 3" screws.

Attach the uprights to the front of the brace sitting on top of the 4x4 base even with the edge of the base (24" wide).

Attach the 70" support strut at the top of the 60" upright. The lower end of the strut should be attached to the outside of the base and the upright.



Use the 5" lag bolts to attach the strut to the base.

can be used to brace across the support struts if needed. If you add these, just be sure to leave yourself room to attach the target face.

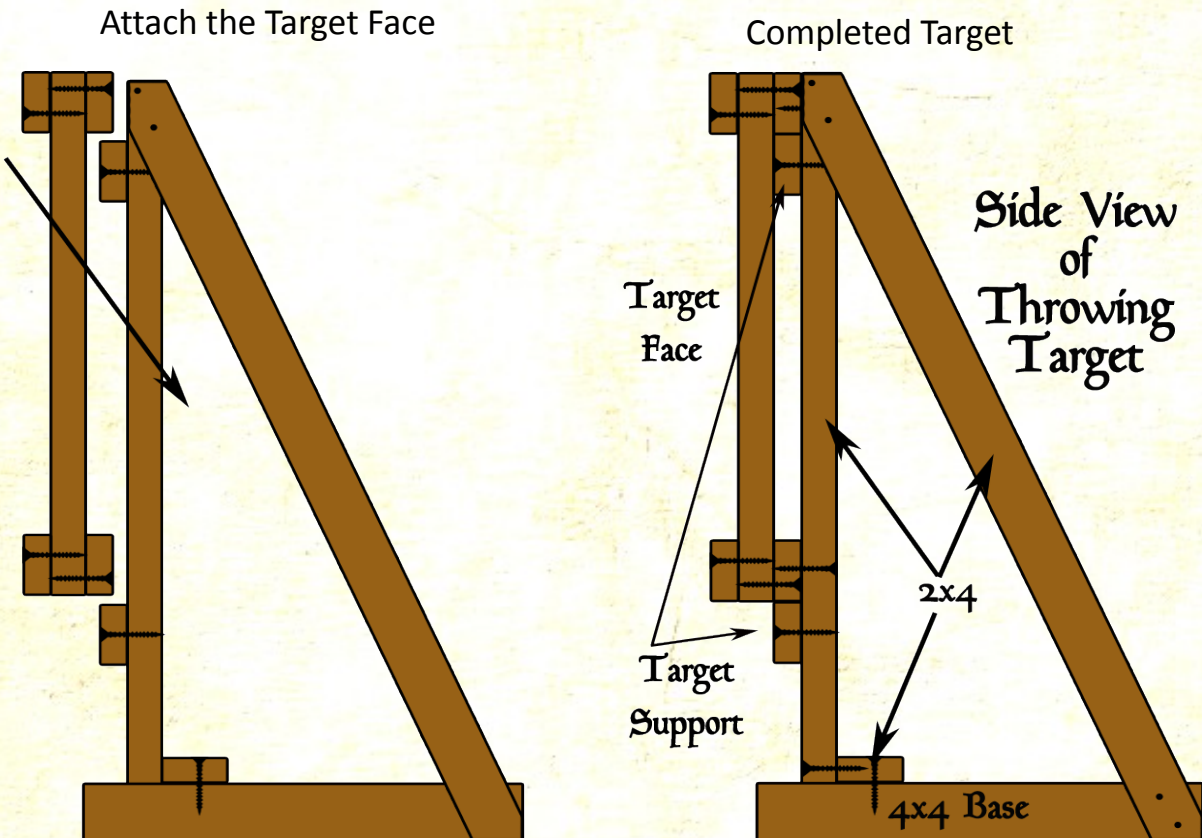
Once built, this stand should be in service at your household for many years to come.

Assemble the Target

To attach the target face to the target stand, rest the lower edge of the target face on top of the target supports.

Clamp or hold the target in place and secure from the back.

As you throw on this target the face will become fairly jagged. As long as the wood has not cracked all the way through, the target face can be flipped to present a fresh target face ready for throwing.



Painting the Scoring Shield-

After you have built your target stand and face, you will need to paint the target for scoring on the face.

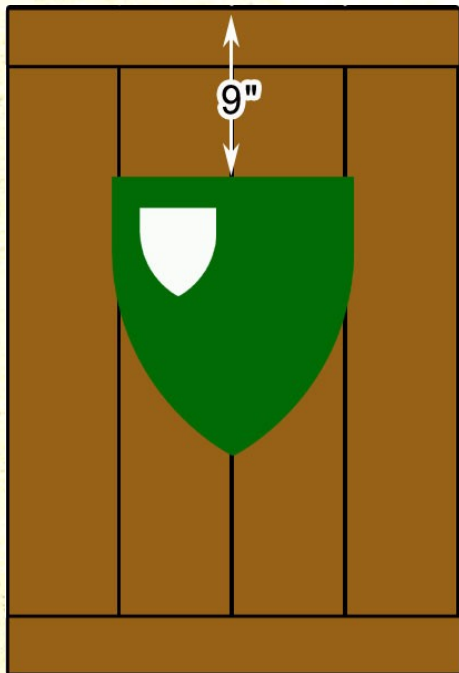
The official Men of Iron scoring target is a 12" wide by 15 1/2" long shield. This should be painted in one of the five heraldic colors, blue, red, green, purple or black. This will ensure that the target area is highly visible.

On the target shield a smaller 3" wide by 3 1/2" long shield should be painted in white or yellow. This can be placed in any location on the 12" shield but must always be a minimum of 1" from the edge.

By moving the location of the smaller shield it will create a way to challenge the members to develop accuracy in throwing rather than just sticking the battle axe or knife in the wood.



The small target shield can be located anywhere within the larger shield.

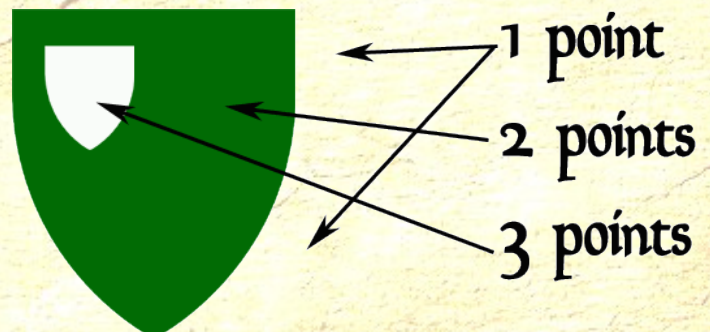


The top edge of the painted target shield will be placed 9" from the top edge of the target face and centered left to right.

Spray paint is the quickest way to paint the target shield on the target face. Prior to painting, create a cardboard stencil the exact shape of the target shield and tape in place.

Lightly spray and let it dry. Repeat this until you have a good outline and a solid color. Allow it to dry before the next step.

Create a smaller stencil for the 3" shield and repeat the process. Make sure that you allow plenty of time to let the paint dry before you begin throwing on the targets.





Knighly Games

Fox and Geese

Fox & geese is a hunt game from northern Europe. It was popular in Scandinavia and the British Isles, though examples and modifications have been played historically throughout Europe, the game eventually spreading to North America and being adopted by the native Americans.

The game is played on a cross-shaped board, known to modern players as a peg solitaire board. Thirteen geese must trap a fox on this board, while the fox attempts to capture enough geese to prevent them from achieving their objective.

History of Fox & Geese

The game seems to have surfaced in late mediaeval times. Some say that the Norse word 'halatafl' refers to fox & geese, which would mean that the game is mentioned in the 14th century saga of Grettir the Strong, though others think the word refers to a type of gaming board used for hnefatafl.

The earliest uncontroversial record of fox & geese is from the accounts of English king Edward IV (r. 1461-1470 & 1471-1483). His account books mention the purchase of two foxes and 26 geese for "marelles", probably referring to two games of fox & geese.



The earliest form of the game had a fox against thirteen geese. Later forms increased this to fifteen and seventeen geese, restricting the geese's powers of movement in order to counteract their increase in numbers. In the eighteenth century, the fox & geese board inspired the invention of peg solitaire. In the nineteenth century, the number of foxes were increased to create the game of asalto.

Later games diversified to the point that no one of these variants can claim to be the standard. Nor did any of them realize their particular aims of balancing the game with any great success. The version reproduced here, then, is the original, which is one of the simplest, and is not too unbalanced as to preclude enjoyment.



Rules for Fox & Geese

1. Fox & geese is played on a cross-shaped board of 33 points, joined by horizontal and vertical lines, and by diagonal lines in certain places (see game board on the next page).
2. One player takes the part of thirteen geese, which start the game on the bottom three rows of the board (again see board). The other player takes the part of the fox, which starts on the central point as marked.
3. The geese take the first turn, the player moving any one of them from its point, along any marked line, to an adjacent empty point.
4. The fox then takes a turn, moving in exactly the same manner as the geese. Play then alternates between the two players.
5. Instead of moving as already described, the fox may kill an adjacent goose by jumping over it onto the empty point beyond, providing that the points are linked by a marked line. The goose is then removed from the board.
6. If the fox, having jumped, is in a position to kill a second goose in the same manner, he can do so immediately. Any number of subsequent geese can be so killed during the fox's turn, if their player is foolish enough to leave them so arranged.
7. No goose can kill the fox.
8. The geese win the game by trapping the fox, so that he is unable to move at all in his next turn.
9. The fox wins by capturing enough geese to prevent them winning as per rule 8 above. In theory, four geese could trap the fox.



Strategy in Fox & Geese

It has been observed that the game favors the geese, who should win with perfect play. Played carefully and patiently, it is possible for the geese to avoid being captured by the fox.

The fox, then, must try to exploit mistakes made by the geese, sometimes looking ahead to see if there are forks and pins to be created.

Play Fox & Geese!

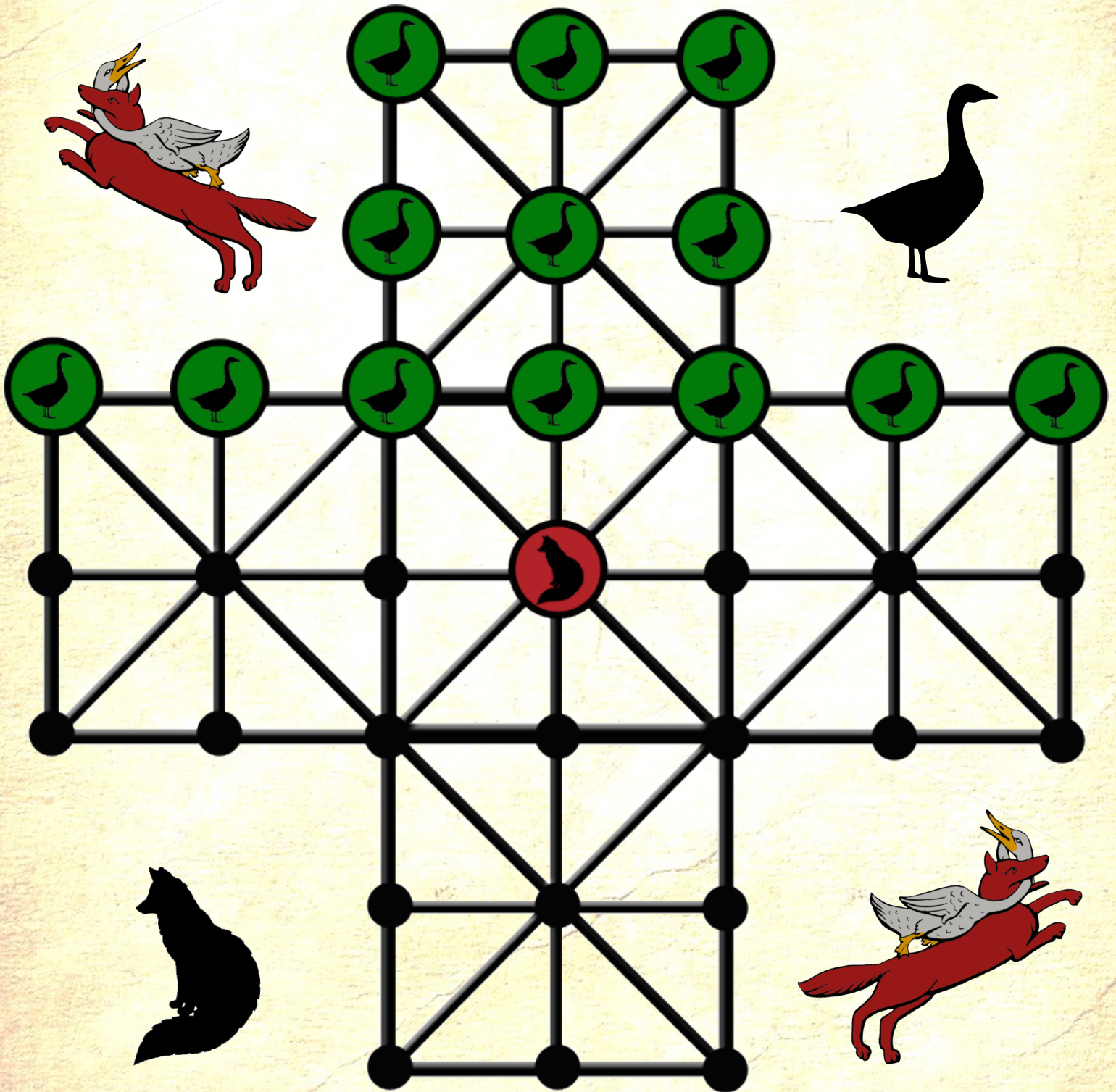
On the next page is a Men of Iron version of the Fox and Geese board. To play, print out the board and use pennies for the geese and a dime for the fox. Happy hunting!





Men of Iron

Fox and Geese Game Board





Where will you be feasting this Christmas?

Based on the tradition of the medieval Christmas celebration, each household is encouraged to host their own Twelfth Night feast. This is a most unique way to celebrate the birth of the King and to fellowship with other members of Men of Iron. Christmas only happens once a year and so does the Twelfth Night feast.

Don't Miss It!