

Purge of Fire

The Purge of Fire refers to the invasion of Volkrania by the beings known as the Mandragora, and the war that followed. Volkransians see the destruction of the Kratishold fishing fleet as the first major act of war. The Mandragora fleet destroyed this fleet almost in passing as they grew inexorably closer to Eriya. The Attack on Kratishold describes the actual events in full of that fateful night when the Mandragora made landfall.

With a beach-head secured, the Mandragora fortified their position and quickly began systematically eradicating any resistance. The quick-thinking by a group of adventurers meant that the lives of many refugees from Kratishold were saved by evacuation to Hammerfall Pass. The same adventurers also escaped to warn the King in Volkraad.

However, the Mandragora cut off all traffic into and out of the region. They wiped out any settlement they discovered, burning it to the ground and usually slaying anyone they found, although some people were taken as slaves. Were it not for Koshrak's View, both Shimmerbridge and Summervale would likely have been burnt to the ground. Both saw few attacks, although anyone travelling in the region would rarely make it to their destination alive. With Western Volkrania effectively under their control, the Mandragora expected to easily secure their position before attacking Volkraad and the eastern cities.

It is unclear as to how the Goblin tribes came to unite under the BlackClaw banner, and there are many theories as to what the Mandragora leaders promised the tribal leaders. Regardless of how they did it, it provided the Mandragora with a large force of infantry that began harrying the Eastlands, and provided a second front for Volkransian forces to deal with. Fearing a second Orcgate War, Volkransian military leaders chose to concentrate mainly on the threat from the East. When survivors of the attacks made known the Mandragora attack, the Volkransian forces were already committed.

Koshrak's View

The Mandragora had reckoned without the Dwarves. According to Mandragora intelligence, the Dwarves would be kept busy fighting a subterranean war with the BlackClaw Goblins and Black Mandragora TunnelRunners. This proved to be far from true. The Dwarves gleefully entered battle with the cowardly goblins and proved to be capable of taking on the TunnelRunners too. They collapsed tunnels, caused landslides, and even flooded part of their mine. Despite being heavily outnumbered, the Dwarves fought the invaders to a standstill.

Near-impregnable in their fortress and with their allies from Hammerfall Pass at their back, the Dwarves effectively contained the Mandragora: they sat back and waited. Enraged by the lack of progress, some of the Mandragora leaders ordered a surface assault, the details of which are covered in the Battle of Koshrak's View.

Volkraad

After their defeat at Koshrak's View, Wings of Mandragora closed in on Volkraad, with a large number of BlackClaw goblins at the van. The Legions of the Volkransian army raced to meet them, although they were poorly prepared and had effectively been caught wrong-footed. With no aid forthcoming from the other cities, they prepared to fight to the last.

On the banks of the Tarczy river to the north and west of Volkraad, the bridges were destroyed and a series of

earthworks were constructed. These earthworks were the last line of defence before the Volkraad city walls, and became known as The Line.

Here the heaviest fighting of the war was carried out, resulting in a months-long stalemate. While the Mandragora forces could be repulsed, the Volkranian defenders lacked the mobility for a pursuit, with little or no cavalry. Instead the Mandragora would regroup and attack another part of the Line. Even with the support of Magi from the Royal Academy and the priesthood of Pelor, it proved a nigh-impossible task to defend against these raids.

The fighting was close and bloody. Veterans talk of whole infantry squads being destroyed by eldritch fire; of fighting hand-to-hand waist-deep in bloodied mud; being showered by gory debris as magic and siege engines pummelled the line, and of fighting on the Tarczy on creaking and splintering ice when it froze.

The stalemate continued for some time, up until the Accords of Volkraad were signed. Even then, the forces of House Xeduus nearly broke the Line, as news of a Mandragora column marching from Volkraad had a negative effect on morale - rumours flew up and down the Line that the city had already fallen. As the Volkranian commanders fought to keep order, the Xeduus forces attacked, seizing upon the confusion.

While the Volkranians fought for their lives, messengers from Volkraad raced up and down the line, warning troops that reinforcements were coming to their aid. Crossing the Tarczy south of the Line and the Xeduus pickets, the Imperial Mandragora slammed into the right flank of the House Xeduus forces, sweeping aside their defences and wreaking havoc. As the two armies battled, the Volkranians regrouped and troop commanders were tasked with a counter-attack for the first time in months. They were told to warn the troops that any Mandragora dressed in a grey tabard, was an ally not an enemy.

The joint counter-attack effectively ended the House Xeduus threat, although The Remnant still continue to cause problems. The Purge of Fire officially ended with the signing of the Accords of Volkraad, although a number of skirmishes continued for several months afterwards.

The Battle in the North

Although Goblins and Bugbears dominated the BlackClaw Goblins, there was a question: why were there no Orcs in these forces? The warlike and bloodthirsty race would have been eager to sack and despoil Volkrania. Reports coming periodically from the Norland shed more light on the matter: the Norlanders were fighting for their existence in the ice-fields of Norland against Orc war-bands.

Little is known about the events that happened in the frozen north, but it is safe to say that the Norlanders won, but the cost was high - fewer than one in ten warriors survived. Many of the heroes of the Norlander battles now exist only in the song and memories of those who were there.

It is unclear as to whether this invasion was orchestrated to neutralise aid from Norland, or just a coincidence - however, Orc warbands have been seen to work with The Remnant forces since then, which implies a certain amount of cooperation between the two factions.

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