



Efforts to consolidate his nation saw King Ramon I granting titles to his loyal vassals creating the lineage of Dons that exist to this day. However, not all of King Ramon's loyal knights felt capable of serving the duties of a nobleman. Four of King Ramon's most loyal knights asked to instead be allowed to continue to serve their new king as his personal champions. King Ramon I agreed to this request and named the four knights as his personal bodyguard. He placed an additional honor upon these four men by granting them a new surname to honor their children forevermore, *Hermano de los Reyes*, "The brother of the kings".

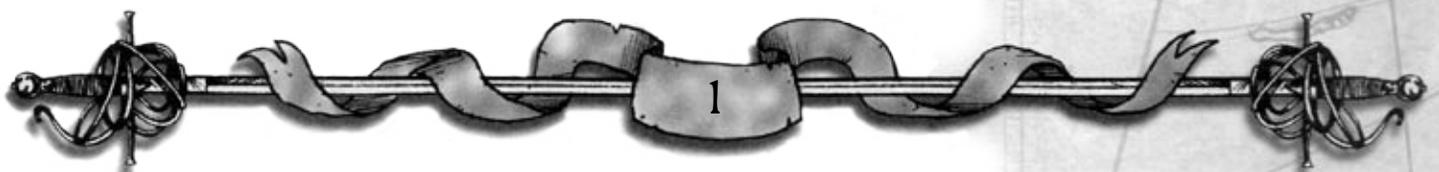
Castille has stood for centuries on the pride of its people. Even under the rule of other lords, Castellians have fought to maintain a unique loyalty to their nation and people. The loyalty of Castille is exemplified in the love the people hold for their Kings and Queens. The Sandoval Family has held the title of monarch since the hero, El Sayyid, was crowned King Ramon I in 1014. Since that time, the Sandoval family has been protected by a fraternity of loyal guardsmen.

## History of the Order

The year 1009 found Castille at the center of the Second Crusade to purge the Crescent Empire from the western regions of Théah. In this year, High King Garcia, a Crescent-infidel, was defeated alongside his armies in Malaca by El Sayyid. El Sayyid, or "The Master" was the greatest general in the armies of Castille and frequently found himself fighting on both sides of the war. His loyalty was to the people of Castille and El Sayyid cared not if the Crescent or Vaticine was in the right so long as the people of Castille benefited. The Second Crusade ended the rule of the Crescent Empire in Castille and left the nation under the banner of the Third Prophet. El Sayyid was rewarded for his efforts to the people of Castille with the crown. In Quartus 1014, El Sayyid was crowned King Ramon Sandoval, Rex Castellium.

The name of *Hermano de los Reyes* was meant to honor the men among all of Castille and represented the trust King Ramon I had in his knights. King Ramon declared that these four men and their offspring were his brothers in spirit if not by blood and they would be forever recognized as such. He asked the four men to serve him directly and to care for the things that a King was not graced with the freedom to concern himself over. The four knights summoned the most trusted of their friends and relatives to form a new personal unit of soldiers for the King. The early rule of Ramon I was filled with attempts to assassinate the King and rivals were thick in Castille. Only those men trusted and personally approved by King Ramon were accepted.

As King Ramon I was still a warrior and general at heart, it became readily apparent that he would not settle for sending emissaries to various regions. His four loyal knights were left behind at this time to protect Ramon's young wife and son from those who sought a quick end to the Sandoval line. The men who carried the name *Hermano de los Reyes* administrated the daily functions around the Capital while Ramon I was away and made the decisions as to which members of the Royal Guard would travel with their heroic king. The skills of King Ramon I allowed the leaders of his guard to use the bodyguard assignments as training missions for less experienced members of the guard. This allowed more seasoned guardsmen the freedom



to watch over visiting dignitaries and the like. This rotation of duty continues to this day.

In Decimus of 1294, King Carlos II called his guard to action. Carlos carried the reputation of a braggart and a cruel man who often ordered his troops to perform actions that justified his claims. Despite their misgivings, the Royal Guard followed his commands loyally until Decimus. On a cold morning, Carlos demanded the Captain of his bodyguard execute the King's brother on the accusation that he was in league with the Vodacce princes. The accusations were not only unlikely but also verifiably untrue. The Captain, named Arturo Sanchez, refused to follow the order. He stated boldly to the King that the first duty of the Castillian Royal Guard was to protect the lineage of the royal family, not serve as their executioners. This statement naturally infuriated the King who called for the remainder of his bodyguard to execute the treasonous Captain Sanchez. To a man, the unit stepped forward and stood at their Captain's side, boldly daring to refuse the order of their King. In unison, they repeated their vow to protect the Sandoval family with their very lives. The reputation of the Royal Guard was such that no soldier in Castille dared attempt to punish the action. The disgrace of being refused by his own guard left King Carlos unable to effect any sort of control in his nation. After seven months, King Carlos II abdicated the throne to the very brother he accused of treason. The first act declared by the newly crowned King Sancho was to grant Captain Arturo Sanchez the surname of *Hermano de los Reyes*, an honor that has not been repeated since.

In addition, King Sancho declared that from this day forth, the Castillian Royal Guard would be granted permission to be known by the name of the family they swore to protect upon death if necessary. The guard on that day changed their name to Sandoval's Guard and their mantle gained the heraldry of the royal family.

In Secundus of 1386, the White Plague returned to San Cristobal with a catastrophic effect on the Sandoval

Family. The disease struck the city rapidly and reached the royal palace before anyone was aware of its impact. King Enrique III was found dying in his bedchamber along with the bodyguard detachment. The remaining members of the royal family were found throughout the castle dead and dying along with their trusted guard. The entire nation rose in distress as they searched to determine an heir to the throne. In the commotion a Montaigne foreigner appeared taking claim to the throne. Jacques Cesar Prais du Rachtisse was a distant cousin by marriage to the King and in the wake of the plague, the closest heir to make a claim to the throne. This succession of the crown horrified the Castillian people. To surrender rule to a Montaigne who had never entered their nation pressed the people to the edge of revolution. The Vaticine Church summoned those members of Sandoval's Guard who had survived the outbreak of plague and asked for their assistance. The guard sent seven of their best men to find a more suitable candidate that was serving as a diplomat in Ussura. In the meantime, the Church did something it had never intentionally done to a Castillian King before; they refused to grant the title of Rex Castillium. The declaration prevented King Jacques from using his authority to perform any action beyond simple administration of the nation. The Members of Sandoval's Guard rushed to Ussura and recruited the young cousin of the late King Enrique to return with them and serve the nation as no other man could. The guardsmen returned to Castille with Tomás Sandoval and quietly escorted him to the palace of the Hierophant while the seven members of Sandoval's Guard reported for duty with King Jacques. There is no record of the conversation that took place between King Jacques and the guardsmen that night. All that is known is that King Jacques requested audience with the Hierophant the next morning and declared himself unfit to rule Castille asking that another be found to take his place. Jacques Cesar Prais du Rachtisse left the palace before lunch was served and returned to Montaigne where he resided for the rest of his natural life.



## *Sandoval's Guard*

In 1506, the members of Sandoval's Guard found themselves pressed to a new task. The family had suffered a series of deaths and illnesses after various outbreaks of disease. King Juan III had succumbed in Decimus 1504 only to be followed by his heir, King Pedro II in Primus 1506. King Pedro had been bedridden his entire reign and left his pregnant wife, Queen Beatriz, on the throne. Unfortunately, the Queen died giving birth to the heir and Castille found itself with but one heir to the throne, the newborn Prince Ramon in Corantine 1506. Castille found itself under the control of a regent for the first time in the Sandoval line. Don Armando Ramirez de Aldana, the brother of Queen Beatriz served as the loyal regent of the Sandoval family. His faith in the crown was linked to his service in his youth as a member of Sandoval's Guard. With one of their own ruling the nation, the guard sprang to action across Castille rooting out trouble in every form. Sandoval's Guard were zealous in their protection of the young prince, threatening everyone short of the Hierophant who so much as considered attempting to manipulate the young boy. The guard continued in their approach by training the young boy to defend himself and making certain he understood the history of his great nation and the sacrifice that his ancestors had made for the good of Castille. This education continued after the boy was crowned King Ramon V in 1517. To the credit of the guard, King Ramon V is remembered as one of the most benevolent and wise rulers in the history of Castille.

### **Duties**

Traditionally, Sandoval's Guard were assembled to serve as the bodyguard and personal military unit of the King. The Guard were expected to serve in the front line of battle at the side of the King. As King's no longer make a habit of directly participating in battle, the unit is now considered more of an honor guard as well as serving as the source of the King's personal bodyguard. The duty of the guard are divided into five duties. The priority of the duties are very strict and each member is trained to respond to any event with these in mind.

**Protect the Sandoval Line:** The first duty of every member of Sandoval's Guard is to protect the Sandoval Family. This is the original task set to the original members of the Hermano de los Reyes Guard by King Ramon I. The guard work to protect and serve the interests of the Sandoval Line by guarding the heirs to the throne, tracking the Sandoval genealogy, and monitoring everyone who has contact with a member of the Sandoval family. This order to protect the heirs stands above even protecting the King himself. The guard rationalize this with an axiom about how a captured nation can be retaken and a slain leader can be replaced so long as his son lives. There have been few cases in the history of Castille where a cousin, nephew, or brother has succeeded a King. Sandoval's Guard can proudly point to these events as being caused by events that one would call "acts of Theus." This duty has expanded in the last few centuries to include serving as champions for the family in duels, hiding family secrets, and upholding the family reputation by any means necessary (many recent scandals amongst the guard are the efforts of loyal members accepting the blame for a member of the family).

**Protect the King:** If the family is safe, the next priority of Sandoval's Guard is to protect the King himself. A minimum of four members of the guard are on duty at all times watching the King and worrying about assassins. Guardsmen patrol the palace, station themselves in the King's private chambers, and patrol the city of San Cristobal itself watching for threats to the King. This is a duty of great honor and pride to the guard. Any member fortunate enough to be granted the task will be certain to take it with the utmost seriousness. This task also falls beyond the reach of just bodyguards. Protecting the King has been interpreted by some guards in the past to include keeping his reputation intact, educating the king in the needs of the commoners, and making certain the King does not make any declarations or decisions that could hurt himself.

**Aid the King in Serving the National Interest:** There are many events that happen in a Kingdom the size of Castille. The standard authorities and government can handle many of these events. On occasion, something unusual happens that gains the attention of the King. On these occasions, Sandoval's Guard investigate the matter for the crown and determine what sort of action may be needed beyond what is occurring. Many times these delicate matters call for a member of the guard to act undercover and in secret. The phrase national interest was selected to be intentionally unspecific by the guard. This vague duty allows the members to interfere with anything they see a need to involve themselves in including rounding up a recoucadore (tax collector) that may be reporting less than he collects.

**Protect the People of Castille:** No king can rule without a people. The population of Castille are the children of the King and he is their protector. Sandoval's Guard are expected to protect the people of Castille from harm whenever possible (unless they are acting on a matter that outranks this order). This duty brings many debates in relation to the actions of the Inquisition and the population. Many members of the guard see the actions of the inquisition as overreaching their task and threatening the innocent populace of Castille. The current situation including Good King Sandoval's lack of the Rex Castillium endorsement has forced the guard to accept the actions of the inquisition for now. You can rest assured that certain members of the Guard are watching and making a list of their own should the situation change in the near future.

**Comport Yourself with Honor and Dignity:** As the royal guard of Castille, members need to behave in the appropriate manner. It would not do for people to see a member of Sandoval's Guard attacking little old ladies in the center of town. Guardsmen in the public eye are expected to be properly dressed, sober, groomed, and engaged in honorable activities. Off duty guardsmen do engage in less savory activities but can expect expulsion from duty for participating in illegal actions

and face reprimands for misbehavior in uniform. Respect is the watchword of Sandoval's Guard. Respect for their King, respect for the various nobility in the court, respect for the people of the nation, and above all, respect for the skills of the enemies of the state. Opponents are dealt with honorably. A man captured by Sandoval's Guard can expect to be escorted to a cell without being tortured or abused. A victim aided by the guard can expect to receive anything within the guardsman's power to assist them. While they may not have the style of the Montaigne musketeers, Sandoval's Guard are second to none in the question of integrity.

## Organization

Sandoval's Guard operates in a less structured format than most imperial guard units. Their origins as a military unit would suggest a very formal line of command, but the age in which the guard was founded was that of generals leading personal forces in battle. In the days of El Sayyid, the armies of Castille were built not by the nation but by the generals themselves. El Sayyid's soldiers were loyal not to Castille but to El Sayyid himself. The general did not keep a staff of officers but instead fielded a small troop of knights that were sworn to him personally and came mostly from the ranks of nobility. With few exceptions, the knights regarded one another as equals. Below the knights stood the ranks of footmen that completed the army. Sandoval's Guard are a knighthood in their own way, serving as vassals to the King.

The uniform of Sandoval's Guard is a simple affair. There are no helmets or ceremonial weaponry attached to the men. Standard members wear black tunics and pants accompanied by a scarlet sash under a scarlet tabard bearing the Sandoval family crest embroidered in golden thread. This crest is the same as that which appears on the Castillian flag. Commanders and officers (see below) differentiate their uniform by wearing crimson tabards and white or yellow tunics as pleases their taste. Members of the Royal Cadets are issued golden tabards with red trim to wear over a red tunic



## *Sandoval's Guard*

and black pants completed with a golden sash. Every member is expected to be armed and a rapier may as well be considered part of the uniform.

Command of the Guard fall to a leader who carries the title of “El Capitan”. The commander of the guard holds a position that is more prestige than power. It is a position that is granted by the previous holder of the title. Any member may be selected to serve as El Capitan with no explanation required for the selection. However, a majority of the members who have served as El Capitan hail from the Hermano de los Reyes families that descend from the original guardsmen of El Sayyid. This would include the current leader, Dorantes Hermano de los Reyes who inherited the title in 1667 from his most trusted friend Martín Ontiveros de Gallegos.

The duties of El Capitan include appearing at all formal state functions, serving as an official emissary of the King when required, presenting new members to the King for acceptance to the Guard, and assigning important missions to various members on the King’s behalf. The position is mostly a series of ceremonial tasks that is occasionally interrupted by a matter of importance. It would be entirely possible for Sandoval’s Guard to function without their leader. What they gain from him however, is an unmistakable attitude of heroic style. No member wishes to disappoint his leader and each guardsman works twice as hard to complete his assignments with a crisp and efficient style. El Capitan garners this respect because he is, in truth, an equal to his fellow guardsmen who has excelled during his career to inspire those who serve him.

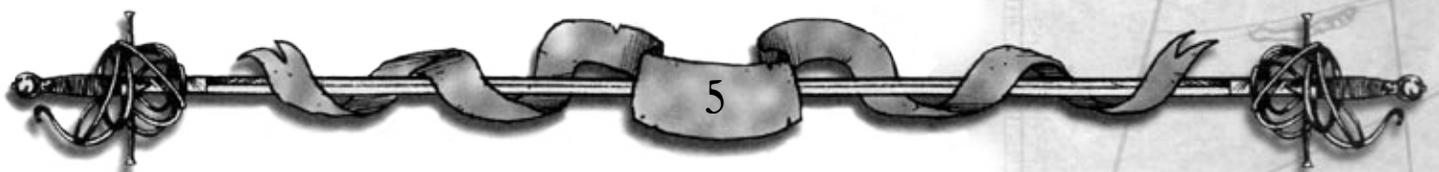
The guardsman serving as El Capitan may opt to hold the position as long as he deems himself capable of serving in the role. While the King could ask him to step down, it has never happened in the history of Castille. Most who have served as El Capitan find themselves tiring of the often tedious nature of court life and step down to return to active duty as a simple guardsman. Some

retire entirely from the position citing age and slowed reflexes as a detriment to their charge of protecting the King and his family. It is traditional for El Capitan to leave a sealed letter in the care of the royal valet that cites his selection as successor should he die suddenly protecting the crown.

Below El Capitan stand a select group of seven guardsmen known as the officers of the watch. The officers of the watch are tasked with handling the day to day needs of Sandoval’s Guard. The officers of the watch procure equipment and supplies, oversee payroll, draw up assignments for the guardsmen including deciding on the watch rotation for the King, and handle any paperwork that transpires. It is both a great honor and a great burden to serve as an officer of the watch. To prevent any member from taking on too great a burden, the officers only hold their position for a year at a time.

These seven positions are always held by senior members of the Guard and are elected by the general membership in a unique manner. Officers of the watch are elected one month after the annual celebration of the current King having ascended the throne. At that time, El Capitan and the departing officers elect a past officer of the watch to a new term to serve as an experienced voice. The general membership of Sandoval’s Guard then elect the remaining six members from amongst the senior members of the Guard based on who performed the greatest service over the past year. Members may be elected as often as every other year and there have been a few in the past who have found this bi-annual selection to have cursed their career due to their talents as quartermaster, accountant, or diplomat. Officers of the watch make a tradition of assigning those who nominated them to the worst duties they can find to repay their friends for granting them such a great favor.

Beyond the officers of the watch stands the general membership of Sandoval’s Guard. As the members



normally function in small units as bodyguards for the royal family, multiple ranks were found to be a cumbersome problem. Guardsmen may have hesitated waiting for orders rather than defending their charges. Instead all members are considered as official equals within the guard. When operating in groups larger than four, the guardsmen defer to the most experienced member unless he has asked another member to take the lead of the team. In smaller groups, guardsmen generally are paired with allies they know and make judgments for themselves deferring to whoever thinks of the best idea the fastest.

The one exception to this process is with the King's official bodyguard. No chances are taken with the King's life and the guard who are serving on his detail are given a definitive chain of command for the shift to ensure that all members of the team follow the orders that will best protect the King. The standard shift include two established senior members skilled with a blade alongside 6 younger members who have displayed the skill and tact to serve in the court.

The general membership of Sandoval's Guard begin their career in the guard as nominee. The nominee is invited to join by a member of the guard and spends his time with a different guardsman he does not know. During this apprenticeship the guardsman monitors his behavior, assesses his trustworthiness, and outright questions his dedication while they perform various missions. If at all possible the nominee is sent on short, relatively safe missions such as escorting Castillian diplomats and guarding distant cousins and servants of the King. This apprenticeship may last as long as the senior member desires to keep the nominee around but normally is a period of six months. At the end of that time, the senior member makes a report to the commanders of the watch with his recommendation to either accept, refuse, or continue to monitor the nominee. If the request is made for continuance, the nominee is assigned to another guardsman. At the end of his second probation the nominee is either accepted

or refused.

Nominees who are accepted spend an additional six months in training with retired members of Sandoval's Guard. These retired members consist of those who can no longer physically trust themselves to protect the king but are wise and willing to share their experience. The past members train the nominees in etiquette and the proper behavior of the guardsmen. After this training the nominees are presented by El Capitan to the King for his acceptance as guards. At this point, the nominee is given the status of minor member. Minor members spend the next year serving with an experienced member of the guard in various duty including guarding the King. Minor members are prohibited during this year from telling untruths, stealing, attacking anyone unless provoked and left with no option, consuming alcohol, consorting with members of the opposite sex, leaving Castille, or acting against the orders or interests of a senior member of Sandoval's Guard. During this year, they are encouraged to make their own decisions regarding their duties, undertake any education that will assist them and the Guard, attend regular Vaticine services, and develop their noble heart as best they can.

Minor members are promoted to senior members at the first election for officers of the watch that occurs after a full year of service (between 13 and 23 months normally). From that point on, the guardsman is considered a senior member and an equal with all other members of Sandoval's Guard. He is now eligible to serve as an officer of the watch as well as for nomination for El Capitan. Senior members are trusted to serve any mission that may need be performed for the King or the protection of his family. Assignments are handed out based on merit alone at this point. Those who acquit themselves with great bravery may eventually be trusted with the most important of the Guard's duties, protecting the heirs of the throne.



## *Sandoval's Guard*

The Guard has added an additional rank during the current reign. The restriction of having the Rex Castillium approve each and every member of the guard has prevented the unit from adding new membership since the death of King Salvador I. To augment the numbers, The San Cristobal Cadets were formed under the command of El Capitan. The cadets are charged with augmenting Sandoval's Guard for public appearances of the King, formal functions, and in guarding the royal palace. This official title is in truth nothing but an official excuse to bring new members into the guard. Members recruited since 1665 all still carry the title of Cadet, yet many have earned the respect of their fellow guardsmen and have been unofficially promoted to duties normally reserved for senior members. There is an ongoing debate as to whether Cadets will be required to still serve a year as minor members of the guard when Sandoval is granted the Rex Castillium. The success of the Cadets has the Officers of the Watch considering appealing to Sandoval to officially sanction the unit as a permanent attachment to place nominees during their probationary term.

### **Sandoval's Guard and the Law**

Sandoval's Guard has never been tasked with enforcing the laws of Castille, thus the Guard has no official police powers within the nation. Legal action is not their responsibility. The Guard does have the power to arrest anyone they encounter and deem a threat to the royal family and is considered to be deputized to assist every facet of the Castillian government but has no authority to enforce laws that do not concern the safety of the King or nation such as tax violations or simple theft. Any member of Sandoval's Guard acting "in the interest of the King" has total immunity for any action he takes within Castille up to and including execution of established threats.

This carte blanche ruling for members acting on behalf of the king has drawn the attention of the Inquisition who have lost a small handful of members to Guardsmen tasked with protecting the extended

Sandoval family. Neither side is entirely sure they have enough influence to abolish the other. Making the accusations necessary to turn the nation against either side could easily backfire on the accuser, which has resulted in an uneasy truce. Inquisitors watch the Guard with scrutinizing eyes searching for any heresies they can compile into a strong case. Sandoval's Guard return the favor and turn over inquisitors they uncover to various friendly authorities for any crimes they can prove.

### **The Life**

Sandoval's Guard draw their membership from the loyal peasantry and unlanded gentry. Applicants are taken throughout the year and assessed by retired members of the Guard. Applicants are expected to present three letters of reference including at least one from their local priest. The applicant is expected to provide a fourth self-written letter stating their reasons for wishing to serve. Those with acceptable references are then tested for physical fitness, martial skill and presented with an oral examination to test their education and decision making skills. Approximately thirty percent of accepted applicants eventually obtain membership in Sandoval's Guard.

An exception to these requirements are members of the Hermano de los Reyes families who apply for the Guard. The family have made it a tradition to serve the Sandoval family since the time of Ramon I and they consider it a sacred duty. Cousins in the Hermano de los Reyes families always keep the name regardless of which parent descends from the line. Any relative that wishes to join the Guard may ignore the required three letters and all testing if they have the recommendation of a relative. An unfit relative will still be weeded out during their time as an applicant but this is rare as most unfit for duty will be approached in private by relatives and dissuaded from their choice of careers. Members of the Hermano de los Reyes families account for about twenty percent of the membership of Sandoval's Guard. While any two members of these families may not be



directly related all consider on another as cousins.

Established members of the Guard spend most of their time serving a rotation of duties. Guardsmen are assigned for a portion of the year serving as bodyguard to various members of the extended Sandoval family, visiting dignitaries, and traveling ambassadors. Unlike most royal bodyguard units, the visiting ambassadors are assigned the better skilled members as protection. The guardsmen assigned to these duties are instructed to encourage their charges to suspect that they are the minor members which leads to rumors that the King's personal bodyguard are invulnerable.

The rest of the year, senior members alone or with small teams around Castille looking after the king's interests. These independent missions are so varied that members often come to relish this portion of their annual shift as a chance to travel and interact with the common folk of the land. Some guardsmen request to be stationed in their hometowns as support for the local government while others prefer to range across Théah hunting down suspected assassins, rousting political insurgents and quashing threats from foreign lands. Traditionally, in times of peace, guardsmen are afforded a month of leave to visit their family and homeland. During the Montaigne invasion, this benefit was revoked due to the increased threats to King Sandoval and the reduced numbers of available guardsmen.

Off duty members of Sandoval's Guard have the option of living in established barracks or finding their own quarters. Single members tend to opt for the camaraderie and fellowship found in the barracks. Sometimes several young members will share a small apartment for the times when a little privacy or discretion would be preferred. Established members with more than three years of service are encouraged to marry and start families. The Guard as an entity recognizes the importance of family in the history and lives of Castille and would not think to deprive the loyal servants of their unit from the pleasures of

family life. Married members will either purchase a small home in San Cristobal and live with their family or live in the barracks and visit their families during their leave. The Officers of the Watch made every effort during the Montaigne invasion to ensure that members with distant families were granted their leave in order to visit their spouses and children. To the credit of the Guard, no member complained about these members receiving special treatment over this decision.

All members of the guard are expected to keep themselves prepared for battle, in a general state of fitness, and trained in the use of both blade and musket. A high percentage of members are members of the Swordsman's Guild as well and represent all established Castillian dueling styles. Each guardsman is expected to maintain their own equipment but the King accepts the expenses for all gear and guardsmen are welcome to order any weapon that may help them better protect the Sandoval family.

## Current Affairs

Sandoval's Guard are involved in many different current events similar to any other nation's royal special units. Undercover operatives are infiltrating and watching foreign contingents, dignitaries need escorts, and the King needs his bodyguard. The recent events in Castille have created a few unique situations for the Guard. A few of the most pressing problems and foreign relations are detailed below.

The Rex Castillium issue is the most pressing threat to Sandoval's Guard. The edict that created the unit specifies that the Guard may not add a new member unless the Rex Castillium has personally approved them. The Vaticine Church has not yet granted King Sandoval this title and it has effectively blocked the Guard from replacing retired and injured members since 1665. Unfortunately, this is a matter that no one in the government wishes to address or change including Sandoval's Guard. To date, the membership has been strong enough to handle the threats to their



## *Sandoval's Guard*

King thanks to the preparations of Prince Javier. Javier anticipated the possibility of the Church withholding their consent to his rule and asked El Capitan to prepare for an extended period without recruits. In response, the Officers of the Watch increased recruitment during the final months of the reign of King Salvador I. This would have been sufficient to keep the guard at or above regular strength for at least 3 years if Castille had not been invaded by Montaigne.

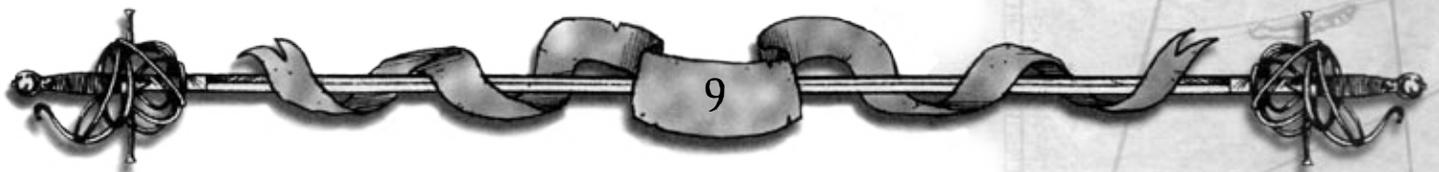
The Montaigne invasion prompted El Capitan to follow another suggestion of Prince Javier and establish the Royal Cadets as a military guard under the command of Sandoval's Guard. This unit of Cadets has become the training ground for future guardsmen and many members can expect full promotion as soon as King Sandoval gains the approval of the Church. With the war ended, several officials have begun to balk at the need to keep such a unit active but the senior members of Sandoval's Guard have developed so many uses for the cadets that losing it to military reduction could very well cripple the Guard. An unofficial and much more accurate count would place Cadets as 60-70 percent of active members in Sandoval's Guard.

A second situation lies with the most important duty of Sandoval's Guard, protecting the heirs to the crown. To date, Good King Sandoval has not yet married or produced any heirs. Prince Javier, his brother was also unwed and childless at the time of his disappearance. This spreads the claim of heir to the throne among several cousins and distant relatives. While the Guard make it their business to monitor and record the Sandoval lineage to maintain the family line, even their experts cannot agree who has the best right of succession in the family should the King perish. At least five valid candidates exist among the Sandoval cousins and there are many others who would raise a force to support their claim should a vacancy appear on the throne. This has lead Sandoval's Guard to exercise the most extreme caution in protecting the current King as well as guarding against the sort of fratricide one

normally would associate with Vodacce. A few radical members have even begun to discuss the merits of finding their liege a mistress to possibly produce an heir.

There are a pair of major conflicts within Castille that gather the attention of the Guard as well. The first being the Inquisition. As a respected arm of spiritual justice, the Inquisition falls outside the law of Castille. This has lead to a series of incidents that, while seen by the public as criminal, cannot be stopped legally. Sandoval's Guard has begun watching for such atrocities and has stepped forward twice to stop the inquisition under their duty to protect the interests of the King. This is dangerous ground and has brought the ever watchful eyes of the Inquisition to bear upon Sandoval's Guard. Both sides search for the information that will implicate the other as heretics or traitors. In the meantime, the conflict has become a cold war with each side doing it's best to thwart the other and only acting when it has undeniable proof of the other's error.

The second Castillian problem is what to do about the man known as El Vago. The vagobond has directly helped Sandoval's guard save the life of the King on several occasions including a relatively unmentioned kidnapping attempt near La Selva de Fendes where El Vago appeared with what are believed to be his sisters to save the day. To Sandoval's Guard, the common feeling is that El Vago saves lives. Often the lives he saves belong to members of the Guard. There isn't a member of the unit that wouldn't return that favor twice over. Despite this, El Vago is wanted by the Inquisition for rescuing convicted heretics as well as by the Castillian authorities for occasionally breaking citizens out of jail. These actions leave Sandoval's Guard with an obligation to assist in the arrest of El Vago if at all possible. This leaves members of the Guard with a moral question to answer. To date most members who have encountered the vagobond have "accidentally" turned their back "for only a second" when the opportunity to capture El Vago arises. Others attempt to directly attack



and arrest the man. These guardsmen are by witness description some of the worst swordsmen to have ever lifted a blade. One particular written account describes the three Guardsmen as being so foolish and unskilled with their rapiers as to have been no challenge to a small child. When questioned about the training of his men after such incidents, El Capitan normally smiles slyly and promises to look into his men's training.

When involved with foreign affairs, Sandoval's Guard are renowned for being cooperative with members of all nations. This diplomatic gesture of politeness stems from the desire to represent their king in the best manner possible. Etiquette is stressed when dealing with outsiders or when abroad. The exception to this rule is when Sandoval's Guard encounter Montaigne Musketeers. The recent war with Montaigne has left many lingering disputes between the two nations. For members of the Royal Guard, none burns as hotly as the arrogance that was displayed by the musketeers while occupying Castille. Any Musketeer that encounters the Royal Guard can expect to be delayed, questioned, investigated, inspected, asked for credentials, and generally harassed. If the Musketeer in question is in pursuit of an escaping suspect, Sandoval's Guard is totally convinced that said musketeer should not under any circumstances be permitted to succeed in his mission. Depending on the crime and suspect, members of the Guard will either make every effort to help the refugee escape or track down the perpetrator themselves and turn him over to Montaigne authorities behind the Musketeer's back.

## *Notable Members*

### **Dorantes Hermano de los Reyes,**

#### **El Capitan**

Dorantes Hermano de los Reyes was raised to protect his King. Relatives filled his head with the exploits of his ancestors and the heroics of his cousins. To Dorantes nothing could be more natural than to place himself

between danger and a Sandoval. While not the most accomplished swordsman, his strength of character and conviction to do what is right have brought him the respect of every guardsman. Dorantes never shirks from duty, never lets his guard down and never, ever makes a mistake. At least that is the impression his men get from him.

In truth, Dorantes tries to do what is right but has his doubts just like any other man. He has made some very serious mistakes but his loyal and brave men have stepped up and prevented any mishap that he may have caused. In his own eyes, Dorantes sees himself as a very lucky man that needs to work even harder. Dorantes never expected to be named El Capitan, he has held the position since 1667 when his predecessor was killed during the Montaigne invasion. When he finds a good candidate to replace himself he hopes to return to duty as a regular member of the guard and go back to protecting the Sandoval family rather than dealing with the hassles of the court and the obligations of leadership.

Two aspects of Dorantes personality make him a great leader. The first is his sense of humor. Dorantes has a very keen and dry wit. His humor is subtle enough to avoid offending most members of the Court while creating the sort of insults that one would expect of Lady Jamias Sices du Sices. This wit also allows him to see the humor in the day to day tedium that is the life of a bodyguard. He often uses it to keep his men from becoming too tense to react to trouble. Dorantes second driving issue is his failure to protect Prince Javier. Dorantes was honored to be selected as part of the detail to guard the Crown Prince. He worked hard to uphold his duties even going so far as to assist the Prince with his need to sneak away from the palace to rendezvous with his friends in the *rilasciare*. Javier vanished two days after Dorantes was sent home for his one month of leave time. Dorantes has never forgiven himself for that failure and never accepted a day off since that time. Dorantes has sworn upon his sword,



passed down from his grandfather, that he will never again fail a Sandoval.

**Dorantes Hermano de los Reyes** – Hero (7<sup>th</sup> Sea)

*Brawn:* 2, *Finesse:* 3, *Wits:* 5, *Resolve:* 4, *Panache:* 4  
*Reputation:* 54

*Background:* Obligation 2

*Arcana:* Inspirational

*Advantages:* Castillian (r/w), Montaigne (r/w), Vodacce (r/w), Eisen, Castillian Blade (Gallegos), Castillian Education, Commission (Captain), Indomitable Will, Membership (Sandoval's Guard, Swordsman Guild), Miracle Worker (3 dice)

*Bodyguard:* Interpose 5, Shadowing 4, Unobtrusive 3, Ambush 4, Cold Read 4, Conceal 2, Menace 2

*Courtier:* Dancing 3, Etiquette 5, Fashion 3, Oratory 3, Diplomacy 4, Lip Reading 3, Politics 3, Scheming 4, Sincerity 3

*Doctor:* Diagnosis 3, First Aid 3, Surgery 1

*Scholar:* History 3, Mathematics 2, Philosophy 2, Research 1, Law 3

*Servant:* Etiquette 5, Fashion 3, Menial Tasks 1, Unobtrusive 3, Accounting 3, Drive Carriage 5, Gossip 2, Hagging 1, Seneschal 4

*Sentry:* Etiquette 5, Stand Watch 4, Unobtrusive 3, Ambush 4, Hand Signs 4, Menace 2

*Streetwise:* Socializing 3, Street Navigation 5, Underworld Lore 4

*Athlete:* Climbing 3, Footwork 4, Sprinting 3, Throwing 2, Leaping 2, Swimming 2, Swinging 2, Side-step 3

*Commander:* Strategy 4, Tactics 4, Ambush 4, Diplomacy 4, Incitation 5, Leadership 4, Logistics 3

*Fencing:* Attack (Fencing) 3, Parry (fencing) 4

*Firearms:* Attack 3, Reload 2

*Gallegos (Journeyman):* Feint 4, Riposte 4, Tagging 4, Exploit Weakness (Gallegos) 5

*Pugilism:* Attack 2, Footwork 4, Jab 2

*Rider:* Ride 3, Animal Training 2, Mounting 3, Trick Riding 1

**Miguel Balaguer de Aldana,**

**Royal Cadet**

Miguel is the son of General Antonio Balaguer and was raised to become a military leader. From his earliest days, Miguel was trained in both the physical aspects of combat as well as the scholarly methods of a leader. A month after Miguel turned fifteen, disaster struck. His father was attacked during a party and killed while unarmed. His murderers escaped and were never found. The incident drove his mother to despair and she fled to a convent leaving young Miguel with no family and little money to continue his education.

Miguel spent the next four years of his life serving as a bodyguard and sell sword traveling Théah and avoiding his homeland and the grief it held for him. He continued his studies where he could afford to and prepared to defend himself with non-conventional means when necessary. This continued until the day on board a ship bound for the Crescent Empire when Miguel woke from an odd dream that compelled him to return with haste to his homeland. Miguel found himself drawn to Vaticine City and the central plaza during a parade. As the King passed in his Carriage, a dozen men leaped from the crowd near Miguel and attacked the Royal Guard. Miguel's rapier was drawn before the first man reached the guards and a short sprint and leap found Miguel between the King and six attackers. In mere moments, Miguel and the surviving members of Sandoval's Guard had dispatched the assassins. Miguel took his leave before anyone could get his name. Three weeks later Miguel found himself on the road to San Cristobal when a familiar carriage rumbled past with drivers who were obviously not members of the Royal Guard being pursued by El Vago. Miguel threw himself onto the back of the carriage and attacked the kidnappers with the assistance of the Vagobond. King Sandoval graciously thanked Miguel and went on his way. Three day later, Miguel arrived at the door to the Royal Palace and asked for permission to help protect the King.



Since that day, Miguel has been a most industrious member of the Royal Cadets. His six foot tall frame and rugged features allow him to stand out when serving in the court. If that alone did not draw attention to the young man, his habit of wearing unorthodox accessories with his uniform would. When serving in court, Miguel is always wearing an odd trinket, pirate scarf, bit of leather armor, or crescent dagger that draws attention. This has been overlooked because Miguel has become the premier protector of the King, having been on duty for almost every attack against the King since he joined the Cadets. Younger members flock to him for stories of distant lands and advice while established members of Sandoval's Guard have begun referring to him as "El Capitan of the Cadets". There is little doubt that once King Sandoval is granted Rex Castillium, Miguel will be the first man promoted to the Guard. Some even suggest he may be directly elected to the Officers of the Watch.

All these honors matter little to Miguel. He has spoken of it to no one but his dream was not one of guardianship but one of revenge. In his dream he saw the man who killed his father in the court and he came home to find that man. Serving the King allows him access to the court and the chance to find out who that man was and why his father was murdered. Miguel's odd dress code stems from wanting to be noticed by the scoundrel that took his family from him for Miguel has never seen the culprit's face and is hoping the offender will recognize him. Once Miguel has taken his revenge, he is undecided about continuing to serve the King and may return to his wandering lifestyle.

**Miguel Balaguer de Aldana –Hero (7th Sea)**

*Brawn:* 3, *Finesse:* 4, *Wits:* 4. *Resolve:* 3, *Panache:* 4  
*Reputation:* 51

*Background:* Revenge 2

*Arcana:* Adaptable

*Advantages:* Avalon, Castillian (R/W), Montaigne, Able Drinker, Castillian Blade (Aldana), Citation,

*Combat Reflexes,* *Dangerous Beauty,* *Membership: Swordsman's Guild,* *Membership: Royal Cadets*

*Bodyguard:* Interpose 4, Shadowing 3, Unobtrusive 2, Ambush 3, Cold Read 1, Conceal 2, Menace 2

*Courtier:* Dancing 2, Etiquette 3, Fashion 2, Oratory 2, Sincerity 3, Seduction 3

*Criminal:* Gambling 2, Shadowing 3, Stealth 3

*Sailor:* Balance 3, Climbing 3, Knotwork 2, Rigging 1

*Scholar:* History 2, Mathematics 1, Philosophy 2, Research 1, Theology 2

*Sentry:* Etiquette 3, Stand Watch 2, Unobtrusive 2, Ambush 3, Hand Signs 1, Menace 2

*Spy:* Shadowing 3, Stealth 3, Disguise 2, Lip Reading 2

*Streetwise:* Socializing 3, Street Navigation 3

*Aldana (Journeyman):* Feint 4, Tagging 5, Riposte 4, Exploit Weakness 5

*Athlete:* Climbing 3, Footwork 5, Sprinting 4, Throwing 2, Leaping 5, Rolling 2, Swinging 4, Swimming 3

*Dirty Fighting:* Attack (Dirty fighting) 3, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 3, Kick 2

*Fencing:* Attack (fencing) 5, Parry 5

*Rider:* Ride 3, Mount 2

*Tout Pres (Apprentice):* Corps a Corps 3, Double Parry 3, Tagging (Improvised Weapon) 5, Exploit Weakness 3

**Sandoval's Guard Brute Squads**

*Threat Rating:* 3

*Usual Weapons:* Rapiers, Muskets

*TN to be hit:* 20

Etiquette 1, Ambush 1

**Royal Cadet Brute Squads**

*Threat Rating:* 2

*Usual Weapons:* Rapiers, Muskets

*TN to be hit:* 15



## New Advantages

### Membership: Sandoval's Guard (4 points)

Members of Sandoval's Guard protect the King and his family in the name of Castille. Guard members are revered throughout the nation. *Members of the Guard have all lodging, meals, and personal supplies provided while in Castille. They may also requisition any normal personal weapons. Guardsmen may also purchase the bodyguard skill for half price.*

### Membership: Royal Cadets (2 points)

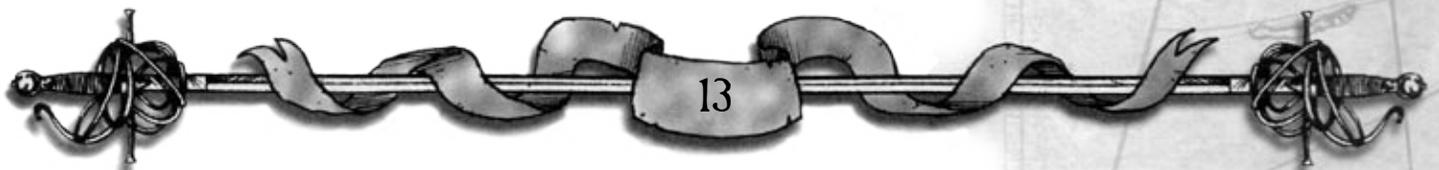
Cadets now form the backbone of the King's guardians and are quickly gaining the respect of those around the King. The Cadets are the training division of Sandoval's Guard. *Cadets are issued a uniform, provided lodging and meals during their duty shifts and are issued a standard rapier and musket. Cadets may purchase the Sentry skill for half price.*

## Secrets of Sandoval's Guard

Any organization as large as Sandoval's Guard will carry with it some secrets. The most important secret may be in the assignment of members to duty. King Sandoval is never protected by the best of his men. The most skilled members of the Guard serve as guardians to the heirs of the line leaving the duty of watching over the king to a single experienced member and a unit of minor members of the Guard. This has been a tradition since the time of El Sayyid who had never needed help protecting himself from threats. In more recent times, skilled swordsmen have been assigned to protect visiting dignitaries which leads to the belief that those watching over the King must be even greater swordsmen. This reputation is a secret that Sandoval's Guard is very careful to protect.

Another situation that has appeared recently is the issue of the title of Rex Castillium and the line of succession. The guard itself is smaller in numbers than it would care to admit because of losses from the Montaigne invasion and the inability to replace it's membership. Dorantes Hermano de los Reyes is privately negotiating with various members of the Castillian Government to change the traditional rule of requiring the Rex Castillium approval to the Guard. To date, he has met with much resistance and is seriously considering the possibility that the Guard may be forced in a few years to step down from their duties. This is not something any member of the Guard wishes and they are actively searching for any method or information that could serve as leverage against Cardinal Verdugo who has been the most vocal in blocking the title from King Sandoval. The line of succession currently ends with King Sandoval and would pass into dispute amongst the cousins should anything happen to him in the immediate future. Members of the Guard have been slowly monitoring the family for the best option should anything happen. In times past, members of the Sandoval family who claimed the throne without the support of the Guard had great trouble keeping the crown. A few members of Sandoval's Guard have even suggested finding a suitable female member of the Guard to seduce the King and secure an heir. Dorantes is normally quick to put a stop to such talk when he hears of it.

The final major secrets of Sandoval's Guard concern two notorious agents in Castille, Allende and El Vago. After El Vago's assistance in fending off an assassination attempt on King Sandoval, the Guard made it a point to find out who they were dealing with. It took three months for El Vago to make a big enough mistake to be followed home. Had the man behind the mask been anyone else, Sandoval's Guard may have dealt with them quickly and ended the legend before it could grow. Instead, they have chosen to watch the web of vagobond activity and simply send an anonymous tip to the inquisition should someone misrepresent the mask.





As it stands, Dorantes and the rest of Sandoval's Guard appreciate the help El Vago provides but members are warned not to trust the mask as it could just as easily hide an assassin using the legend to reach the King.

Allende is another whole issue. When the Brotherhood of the Coast sprang to life, The King was naturally worried about a nation of pirates on his doorstep and sent out members of the Guard to investigate. The two members sent never returned but sent a letter that was read by the previous El Capitan. All Dorantes knows about the Brotherhood of the Coast is that his predecessor assured him that the pirates had no issues with Castille and would not so long as they were lead by a man calling himself Allende. He was asked to swear that he would not pursue the pirate and has kept his word about the matter. Dorantes is unaware that the two members sent to investigate were Hermano de los Reyes cousins who recognized the pirate leader as Prince Javier. The loyalty the men have to the Sandoval family inspired them to abandon their duty in the Guard to continue to protect the exile prince. They work in secret to avoid any conflict that would erupt if it was known that Javier was alive and still had a legitimate claim to the throne of Castille.



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