

# *The Derneherald*

# The Seneschal's Podium

Greetings, Dernehealde!!

Your friendly neighborhood Seneschal here... As I hope you are all aware, I have been posting my "Seneschal's Meeting Notes" to both our Facebook group page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/dernehealde/>) and to our Yahoo email list (<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/dernehealde/info>). The idea is to hopefully, keep everyone informed on things that happen at our meetings. Please feel free to comment (helpful, or informative is best, of course) on them – especially if you remember something from the meeting that I forgot to put in my notes.

I have to say, that I am personally quite happy with the turnout we've been having at our summer meetings. So far, we have been blessed with reasonable, if a bit warm and muggy, weather for the most part.

Remember! If you have a personal banner (or even one you made with the Shire's device) please try to bring it/them to the meetings. It adds color and interest to our gatherings for onlookers and can actually help with recruitment. If you attend the Sunday fighter practices, please try to bring them then, too – for the same reasons.

Pennsic is just around the corner, so now is a good time to start hydrating. It takes awhile for your body to acclimate to an increased water intake, but it is worth it. Heat exhaustion is no fun (take it from me!). Also, start stocking up now on sunscreen!!!

Your servant,

Finche

# The Herald's Call

Tavtai morilogtun!

Hear now the drums of war approaching upon the fair and contested lands! Soon we will meet our honored enemies in both revelry and battle! Raise high with pride your banners! Our Castellan has requested that we begin to fly our banners at meetings to display our group's proud heraldry and I fully approve of this idea!

Though our minds may be upon the coming war, we know that life will continue on even after the battlefields have heard the last echo of war cries. Because of this, we must not forget that we have been issued a challenge by our great Baron and Baroness to produce scroll blanks. This will be a friendly competition with the other groups within our barony. It has been requested that an emphasis be placed on the Middle Marches' new baronial badges for awards. Images for the awards can be found at <http://middlemarches.midrealm.net/baronial-awards/awards-of-the-middle-marches>. These will be presented by noon at Red Dragon.

Additionally, as I change my purpose from pursuivant to event-o-crat, I happy would like to announce that we are indeed having an event this year! The event will be located at the Logan Conference Center in Logan, Ohio. The site is enormous and quite unique! The event will have a theme of All Souls Day and the title of the event will be Dernehealde's Haunted Tower. The event will be held on November 1<sup>st</sup> and will include Rapier, Heavy Combat, Archery and Thrown Weapons, Classes, feasting and more. The site is bone dry. More details will be coming but I will soon be putting out a call for volunteers to help make this a fun event for all involved!

Finally, I would like to put out my usual reminder that the awesome things you see happening around you do not just happen. The people that make our society are amazing people! If you have been inspired by someone or if you have noted someone working hard, recommend them for an award either at Baronial or Kingdom level! If you are unsure if someone has an award or not, come find me and I would be happy to help you check. I can also help with registration on the Kingdom awards site if that is also needed. Giving awards is a lot of fun and can let a person know that you've noticed they have been working hard or doing something that is appreciated.

Yours in Service,

Altani Unegen

# The Chronicler's Word



*Hwaet...* Elswyth of Dernehealde has retired from her position as our Chronicler, and I have gladly taken over her responsibilities. Let me introduce myself: my name is Edith de Brereton.

My hope is that during my time as an officer, I can encourage our members to contribute to our publication however they can. It would be incredible to have frequent submissions from our local members and by doing so breathe life into *The Derneherald*. This may take some time, but the SCA is what we put into it, and I know that we have some very talented members whose work everyone would love to see. With that hope I bring you this issue of *The Derneherald*. Enjoy what our shire has offered, and be sure to tell the members how much you enjoy their work!

In addition, if you have anything you would like to submit to *The Derneherald*, send me an email to [edithdebrereton@gmail.com](mailto:edithdebrereton@gmail.com). I look forward to hearing from you!

Yours in Service,  
Edith de Brereton

# From the Chatelaine



Greetings from the Chatelaine!

Don't worry, I shall be brief. Firstly, we have a new member of this office, Morgan. So if you need anything from the chatelaine you now have a second person to go through.

Second, we have a full box of Gold Key. 90% of it is for female players. If anyone has a bit of male garb to give, it will be greatly welcomed. I am looking to get three or four more male tunics, that is all I am asking. I just don't want to send anyone out in drag (unless that's what they want).

Lastly, I would like all those who have personal banners to bring them to the meetings Tuesdays. I believe that this will add to our visibility and perhaps draw in those who are intimidated by the heavy fighters.

In your Service,  
Padraig Tomasswn

# Making a Mongol Deel Using a Basic T-Tunic Pattern

By Altani Unegen (MKA  
Anne Young)

## Introduction

When I began the SCA, I was a pretty horrible sewer. I had the misconception that stitches needed to be completely small and straight, every cut had to be perfect, and that you always had to use a pattern. When I learned the basic t-tunic pattern, I thought to myself, “Even I can do that!” I learned over time that wobbly cuts and most stitches aren’t even visible and most of the time, nobody notices that much.

When I decided to be a Mongolian persona, the t-tunic was out except as an undershirt. So I decided to find a way to modify the t-tunic structure to create a less painful way to create the Mongolian deel.

As a note about the seams for the overlapping flaps: this particular instructional will not have a seam running down the center of the front. This way is great if you want a seamless design on the front and great for brocades. However, I am aware that many patterns show the seam going down the center and that period art show it there as well. I am in the process of experimenting with creating my next deel this way with the center seam but I am certain that it is plausible that the seam may have also been done the way I do it here as well. I did the instructions based on what I have used and what I know to work at this time. Feel free to modify and experiment on your own!

Also, I tend to hand sew everything. Sewing machines and I don’t get along for some reason and I feel I spend more time trying to troubleshoot them than getting sewing done. As a result, some of my instructions here will assume hand sewing but you can certainly use a sewing machine to do this.

It is suggested that you read through the instructions prior to starting as sometimes alternatives are sometimes available for when to do a step or so you can decide to alter the instructions based on your wants

## Materials

Scissors

Needle/Thread (or sewing machine if you prefer that method)

Ribbon (optional- I use this instead of hemming all the edges. It looks awesome and I find it less frustrating than hemming though I have done it both ways. If you do the ribbon, it is easier to do it with a thicker ribbon. I recommend two spools but three if the spools have less than usual on it.)

Chording or something to use as ties (Note: Try to stay away from anything slick, like ribbon or silky chord, or parachord. These don’t stay tied and you don’t want your deel coming undone the whole time. I have found that shoe laces make an inexpensive tie that stays tied really well. You can often find them in earthy tones which make them look more period.) .

Chalk pencil or something to mark your fabric with

Measuring tape

A straight edge ruler of some kind (I use my husband's carpentry square which is amazing for sewing! Plus it's made of metal which is weighty enough to hold it down to keep material flat or from blowing away with a fan or something)

Fabric (Note: if you use silky fabrics or anything that frays, you will need fray block. I recommend Dritz Fray Check which can be found pretty much anywhere with sewing supplies including Wal-Mart for about \$2-\$3. Silky fabrics are harder to work with and often you have to keep in mind which side is front or back. It's recommended unless you are experienced with silky fabrics to start with something easier for your first one like cotton, linen or wool. You will need about 3 yards unless you plan to make a longer deal with gussets, then I usually go 4 to be safe and always end up with extra.)

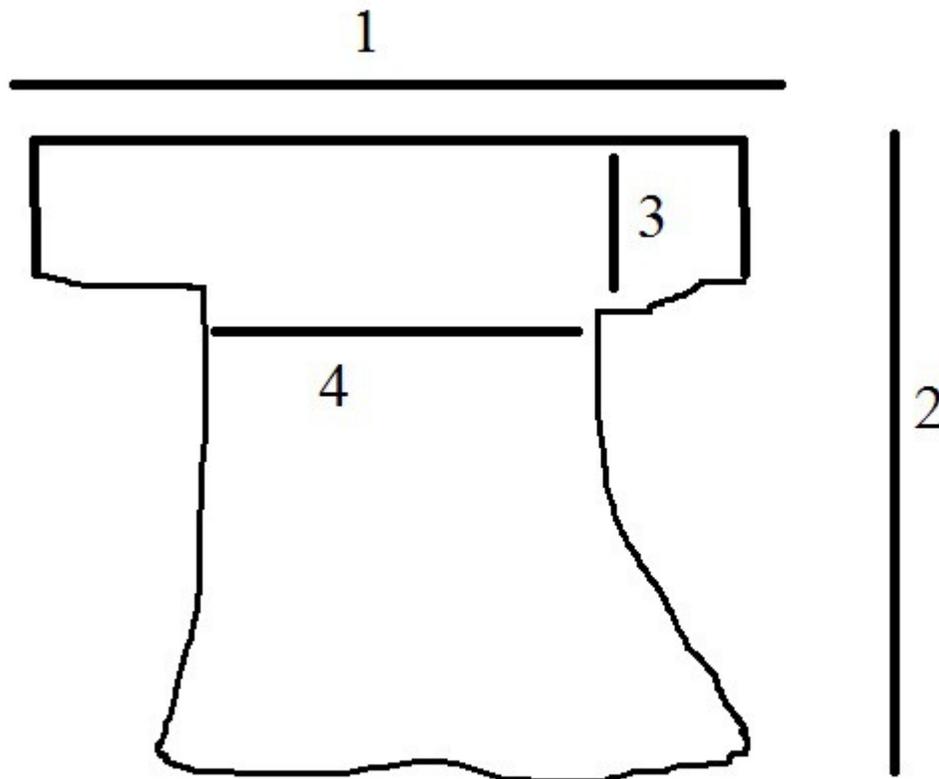
Paper and Pen

Bowl (optional)

## Ready? Let's go!

**Step One:** Draw a picture of a T-Tunic to write down your numbers.

I'm a visual person so it helps me keep my numbers straight. If you save this in a safe place and the numbers work out for you this time, you can re-use them next time. Here is an example of the diagram:



**Step Two:** Get measurements! You may or may not need help with this part. It's much easier if you do have help from someone.

**2.1:** This measurement you get from the back of the arm where you want your sleeve to end on one side, stretched out across your back to the other side where you'd like the sleeve to end there. For example, on this gentleman I've marked in red where you should measure from and to:



You can skip this step if the material you are using is already the width that you would want the garment from sleeve end to sleeve end. If you choose not to skip this step and want to do hemming instead of the ribbon, add a bit for hemming.

**2.2:** This measurement should start at the top of the shoulder and extend to the length that you want your deel to be. This part is also hard to do on your own as bending to stretch the tape to your desired length may alter your results.

**2.3:** Loop your tape measure around your upper arm. Make sure it is loose like how you would like your sleeves. Some put something like a finger between it and the arm but I just wrap it around the arm and loosen to where I would like it if it were a sleeve. Add a little for seam allowance to this number and **DIVIDE** it by two. This is the number to write down for 3.

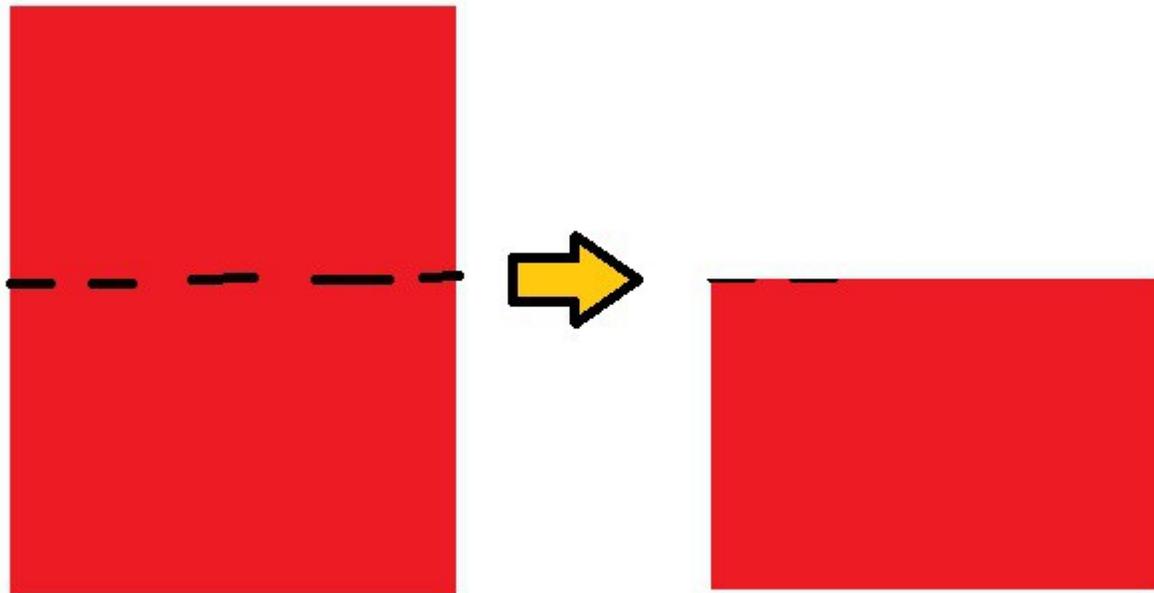
**2.4:** Wrap the tape measurer around your chest. Make sure it's at the widest part of your chest. I always loosen this, similar to the sleeve, to where I would like it if it were a t-shirt. Add a little bit for seam allowances to this number and Divide it by two. This is your number for number 4.

**Step 3:** Folding! You will now need to fold your fabric in the following way:

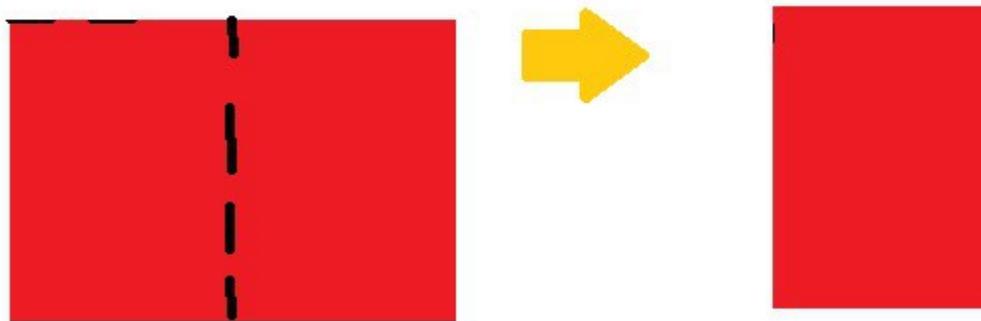
3.1: Starting with it all laying out flat it will be like this:



3.2: Fold this “hamburger” in half like this



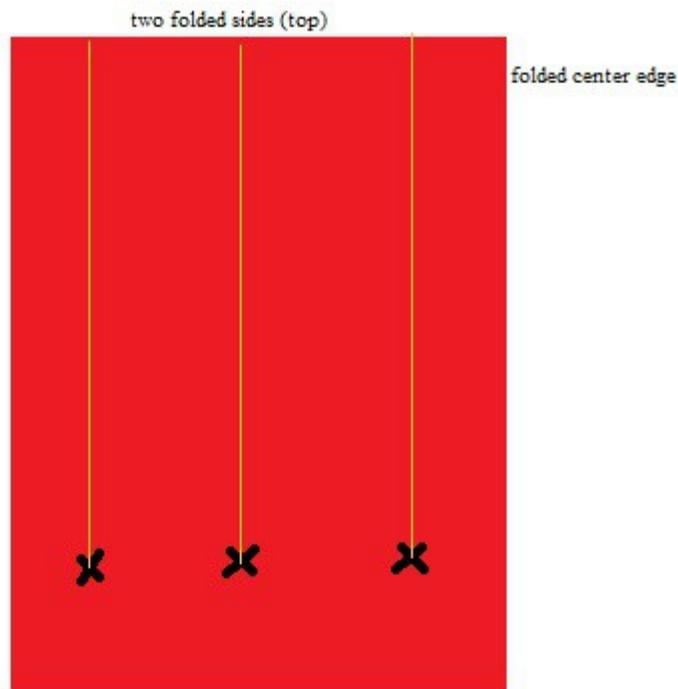
### 3.3: Fold it now like this:



#### Step 4: Cut to length.

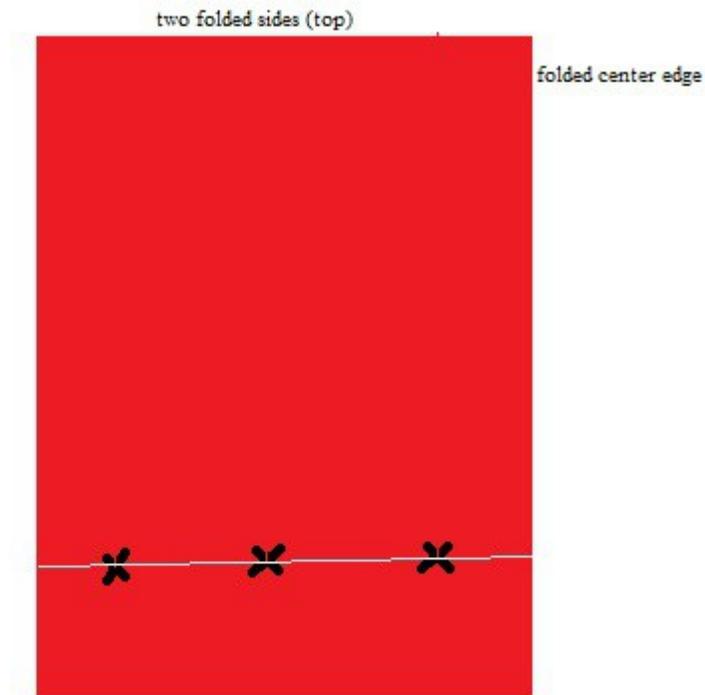
Your garment is now in quarters. For step 4 and 5 you can do either in any order but I prefer to start with cutting the length first because that's where the bulky excess is most of the time. Take your number you got for measurement two. Measure it down from the top (the top is the side with two folded edges.) Here's where the straight edge can come in handy. You will, to ensure you get a mostly straight line, probably measure from top to the desired length a couple of times so you get something like this:

Yellow lines are where you measure.  
Black 'x's is where you will want to mark as your length.



(note: you don't need to mark the yellow. That's just to show where to measure. You will need to make a mark where the black 'x's are .)

Next you will want to take your straight edge and "connect the dots" where the x's are and draw a line using your straight edge. Your straight edge should be able to span a couple of the 'x's so that if you mis-measured somewhere, it's no biggie. You'll still get a straight line. So your line will look like:



Cut on the white line. Now your deal is to length.

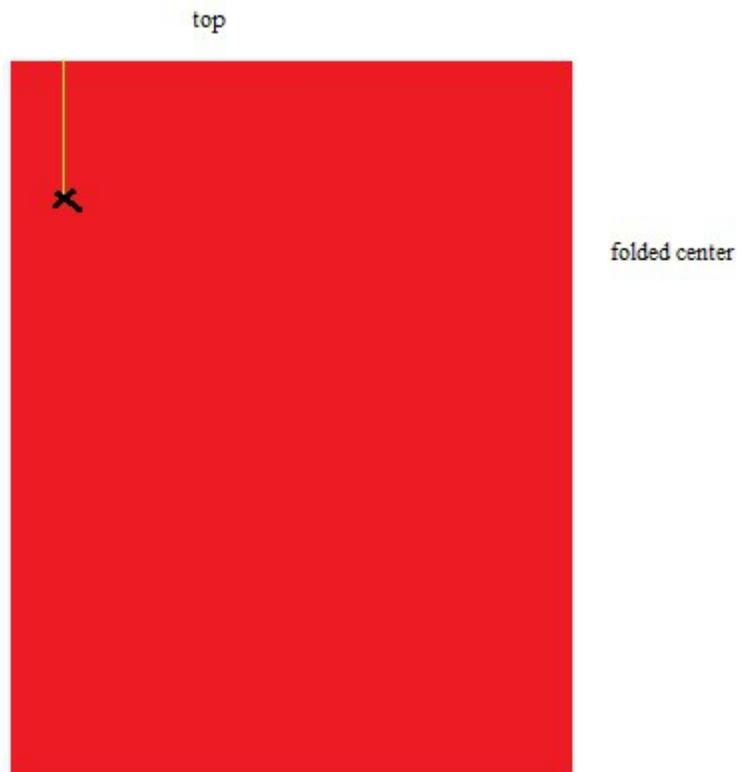
**Step 5:** Cut to width.

If it's already the width you need, yay! Skip this part!

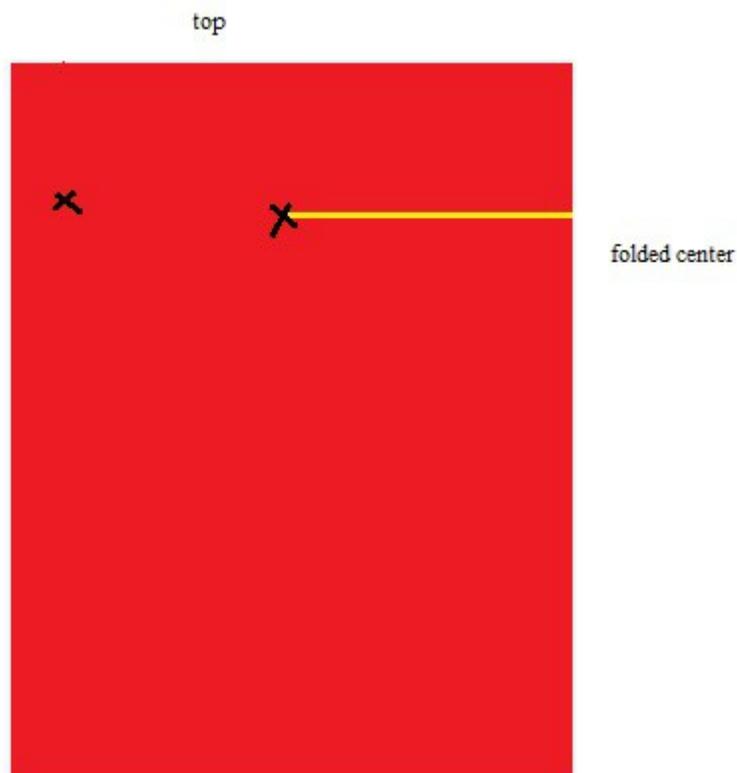
If not, take your measurements from number one and divide it in half (because your tunic is folded in half lengthwise right now). Measure from the folded side along the top (the top is the side with the two folded edges) to where you need your sleeves to end. Mark it out as described in step 4 and cut.

**Step 6:** Drawing and cutting out the shape of your deal.

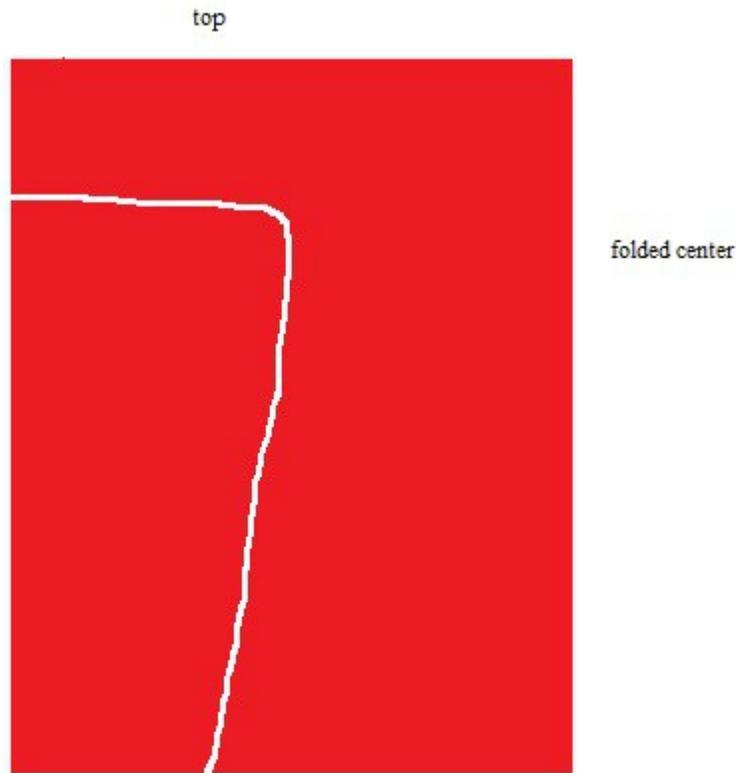
From the top, again, the part that is two folded sides is the top, measure down using number 3 as seen here on the edge farthest from the center fold. (again, yellow line doesn't need to be drawn. It's just there to show you where to measure. Black 'x's you will want to mark)



The next mark you will want to make is from the center folded side. Take number 4's measurement and divide it by two. Measure this from the folded center, preferably as even as you can get it from the black x from above but definitely try to make sure it's not above the black x's mark. It won't ruin it but just make it a pain for you later when you "connect the dots" again.



You can make a few marks like the last X but not too far down if you want a little widening of the deel. From here you can somewhat use a combination of the straight edge and artistic freedom to draw it out so that you should get marking that looks like this:



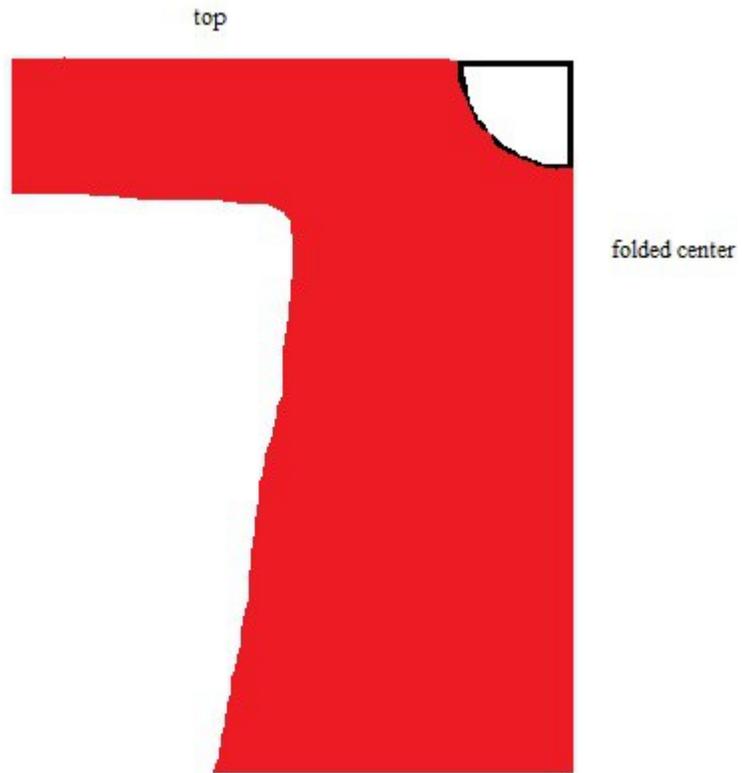
If you would like longer sleeves that taper, now is probably the time to do it. You could change this later if you would like. Most of mine are short sleeved so I generally don't worry about it. Once you're satisfied that you've got the shape you want it, cut along the line.

**Step 7:** Don't unfold it yet! You're almost to the point where you can look at it! However, now is the easiest time to also get the neck hole marked out.

This is where that odd item in the material section comes in: the bowl. It's just a suggestion but it makes it easier for me to do it this way. Since a deel opens from the front, it does not need to be big enough for you to put your head through. However, you do want it comfortable on your neck. I use a round medium size wooden bowl that I'm sure works for me because I have measured it's circumference in relation to my neck. I trace it out on a piece of paper and cut out the circle. Then, I fold the circle into quarters so that you get something like this:



Trace this out on the upper center corner like so:



Now cut out the neck hole!

**Step 8:** Marking and cutting the top front flap.

You can unfold it now! It should look like this right now.



Note: I marked on this picture about where the pins should be also just for sanity's sake.

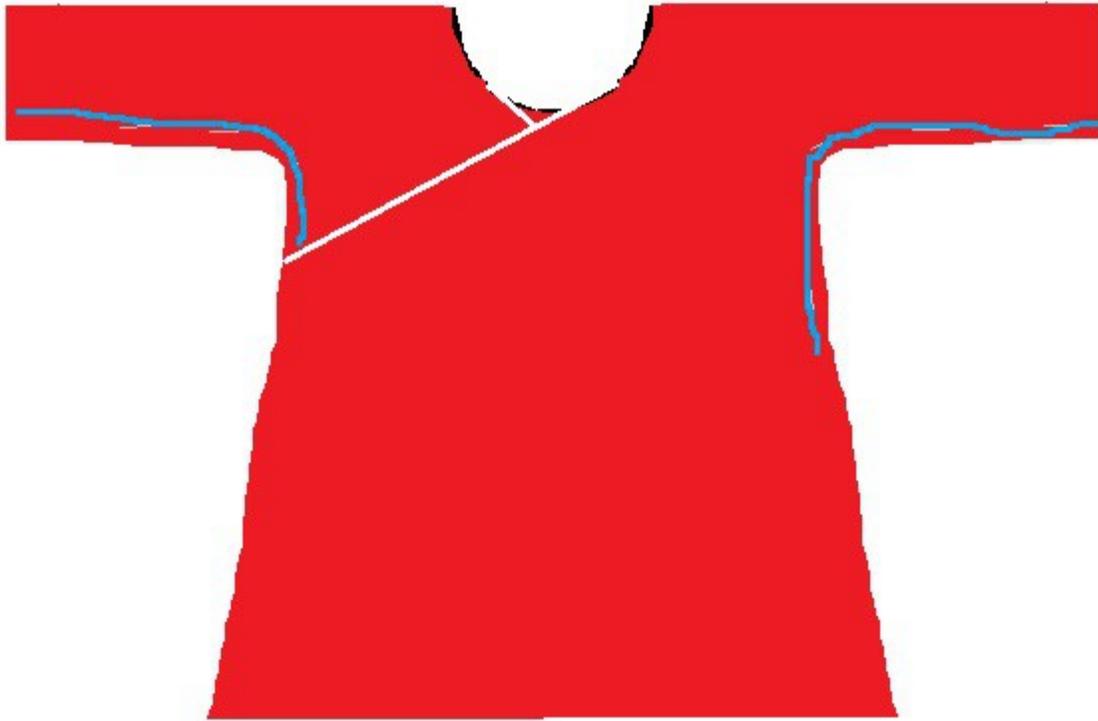
You will now want to cut out where you have marked. Do not cut the back of your tunic. Just cut the front side. To make the front of the neck hole a v shape, you will want to do similar to the other side except not all the way to the sides since it should be free from the other half of the garment anyway like in this pic. This will keep the neck hole round in the back but v shaped in the front.



**Step 9:** Sew sleeves and part of the way down the sides.

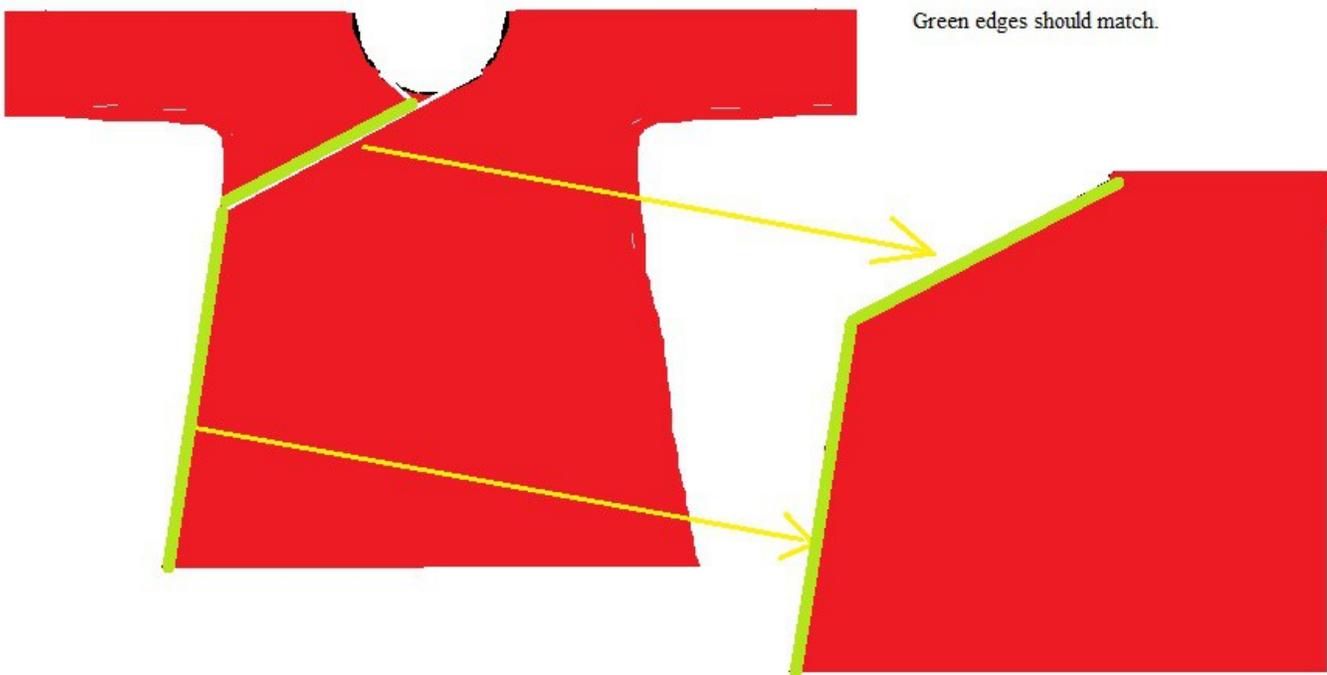
If you're using a silky material, apply your fray block to every edge now before you actually do any sewing. Be careful and test it first as it can sometimes alter colors. You only need to dab it on edges.

If you aren't already on the outside (if you have sides on your fabric) make sure it's wrong side out. Sew what's left of the right side from the end of your sleeve down to the bottom. On the other side, sew from the edge of the sleeve to about where you'd like the very top of the side slit to be. So seams should be along the lines of where on this next picture, there is a blue line.

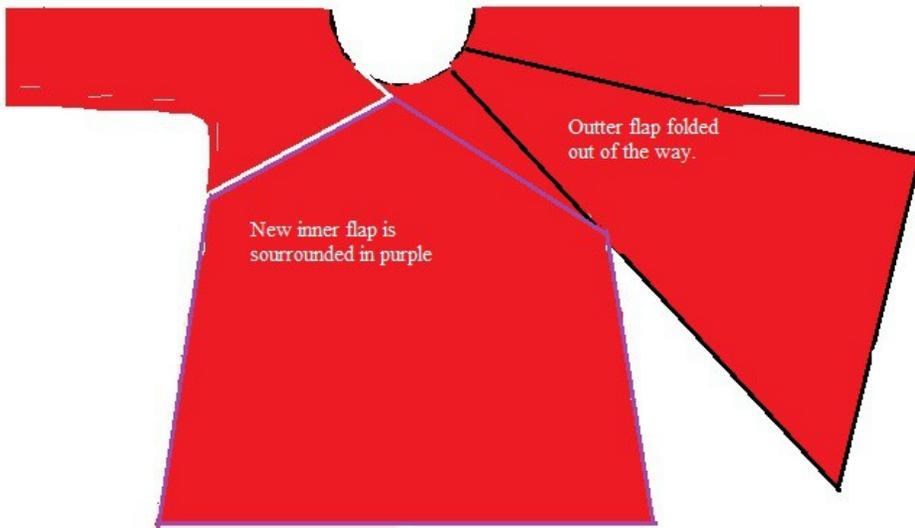


**Step 10:** Now to make the inner flap. This part is a little tricky.

Using what was left after you cut for length or if you were lucky enough to have some from cutting out the t-tunic part, lay your fabric on top of the deel. Using the existing cut, I use this to mark the fabric. Make sure it's the same length and shape as the side also. So after this first marking and cut, one side from the rectangle should match up with the side you're going to sew it to like so:

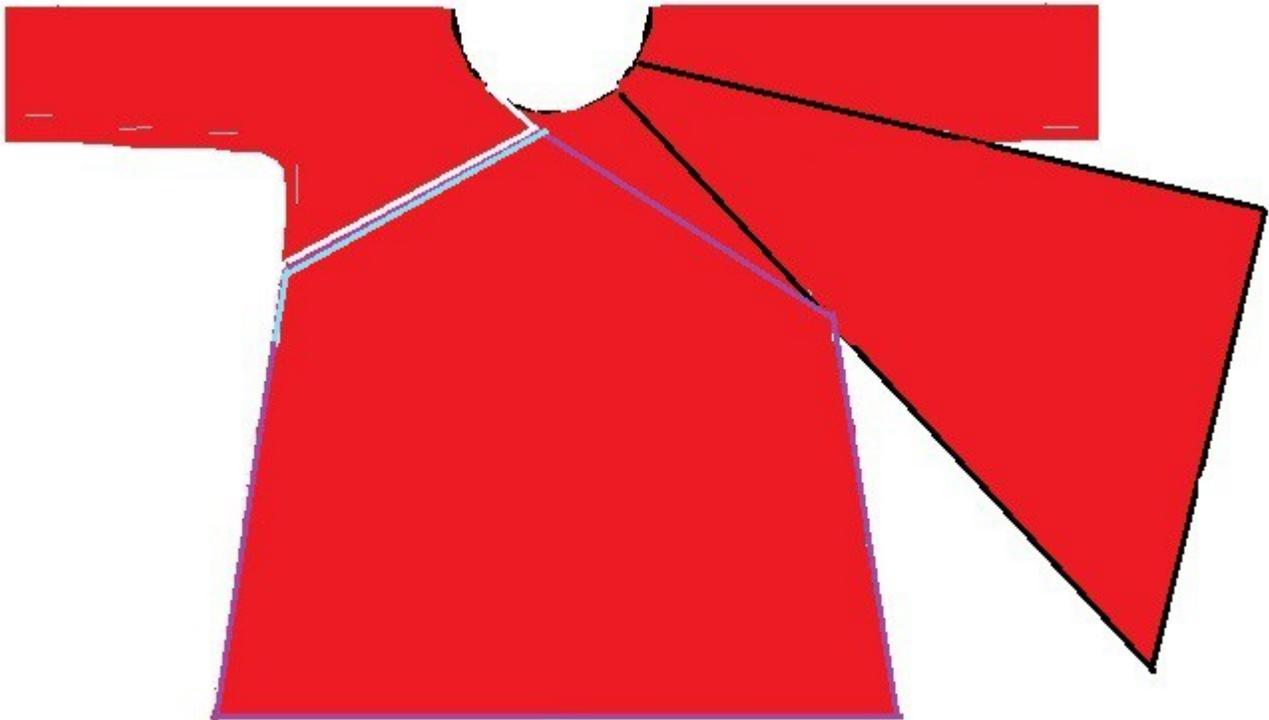


Now you will want to open the front flap to get it out of the way. You can pin or just try to keep the fabric of the inner flap you just started on cutting against the matching edges. Using your straight edge, continue the direction of the little nub of v neck that started on the cut side and continue it to the side edge which you will need to also make sure it matches the flare of the outside edge. So it should be something like this:



**Step 11:** Sew on inner flap.

Sew along where I have highlighted in blue. If you want the ties for your inner flaps to be in the seam, you can put them in on the side while stitching this part. You can add them on later also by just stitching them to the outside of the garment as I have on Step 13. There is usually four or so ties on the side. For locations, see step 13.



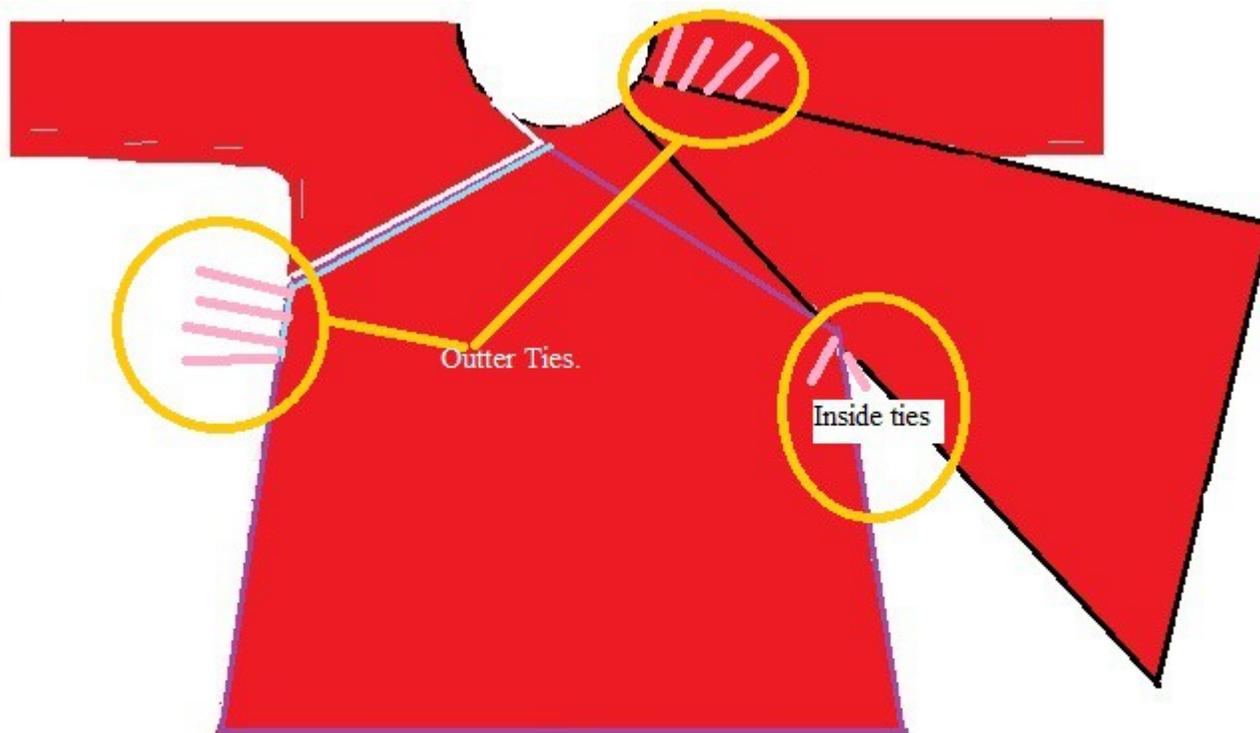
**Step 12:** You now have inner and outer flaps! Now it's time to hem or use ribbon on edges.

If you want to hem, this is the time to hem all edges. If you would like, you can fold ribbon in half over the edges, pin, and stitch.

Note: if you want a fuller deel for a longer feminine deel, measure from the top of your side splits are located down and make triangles of the appropriate length and sew them into where the splits are located. Then you should add ribbon and or hem the edges.

### Step 13: Add ties.

Generally on the outside of the garment there are four ties and then there is one on the inside to hold the inner flap in place.



Inside ties are located: one on upper outside corner of inside flap and the corresponding one is located inside of the outter flap where the seams were made.

Outside ties are located over (or in) the seam where you sewed the inner flap on the side. The corresponding ties are ties at the corner edge of the top flap and works its way down. They don't need to be spaced very far apart.

### Step 14: Accessorize!

You're done with your very first deel! Wear it with pants (or if you made the fuller longer version, you don't have to), boots, and an awesome hat! I've added some pictures of some of my deels to help illustrate what the finished products look like.

Thanks for reading! Questions or suggestions? E-mail me at [ay196310@ohio.edu](mailto:ay196310@ohio.edu).

# THE WHITE HART

## Prologue

**Note: The following text is not to be copied or published without the permission of Duke Sir Talymar (MKA George Johnson).**

The old man said, “I have a story to tell.”

The boy asked, “Is it a good story Ealdfaeder? Does it have a good ending?”

And his grandfather replied, “Ah . . . for there to be a happy ending, there must be unhappiness along the way. If you wish to understand the end of a story you must look to its beginning; and if you seek to understand the beginning of a story you must look to the end – the dragon bites its own tail – a circle without end. But the real magic is in the journey between the two. It’s not the end of the story that matters; it’s how you *get* to the end that’s important. It’s also true of a man’s life. It’s not the destination, it’s not where you end up – we all end up in the grave. It’s the journey, how you get there . . . how your life is lived . . . what you *do* along the way that matters. You remember that.”

\*\*\*\*\*

Let those with eyes to see... see, and those with ears to hear... hear, and let all the rest... simply enjoy.

# Chapter I

## Sunrise on Talford Hill

**Note: The following text is not to be copied or published without the permission of Duke Sir Talymar (MKA George Johnson).**

*Where are the horse and rider?  
Where is the mailed warrior, the hall companion?  
Where is his seat at the feast?  
Where are his boar-protected helm, the gleaming mail, and the battle-hardened sword?  
Oh where is the cup from the gift-giver's hand?  
How that time has passed,  
Laid beneath a cover of mounded earth as if it had never been.*

-Inspired by *The Wanderer*

Hweat! . . . Harken to my words! We know a thousand men died that day; or so the scop, the word-smith, the tellers of tales 'round the mead-hall's midnight fires, will say. Which side was right? Which was wrong? I stand not to judge . . . nor to glorify, but to simply tell the tale as it was told to me. A thousand men died that day. There on the slaughter-bed of the day's battle laid men, whose eyes once saw, whose ears once heard, whose mouths once tasted the joys of life, and whose arms once held loved ones. Now their eyes were blind, staring unblinkingly skyward into the heavens, their ears were deaf to the final cries of their comrades and enemies. Their mouths gaped open, only tasting their own sweat and blood. Their arms now embraced no one. O woman, when men speak of war-glories, mourn you *then* for your husbands, sons, and lovers. For when men march off to the glory of war, you . . . you will be left to mourn.

\*\*\*\*\*

The warlike warriors . . . the defeated ones . . . turned back in full retreat among the reeking corpses and heaps of the slain. The victors paused only long enough to take from their most hated enemies . . . their ancient foes . . . the precious treasures – the jewel hilted sword and scramseax, the battle-hardened ring-mail byrnie, the bright gleaming helm, and the file-hardened spear. These would be needed on the morrow . . . when they overtook the survivors.

What did the armies leave behind? Fathers and sons, neighbors and strangers ... enemies as the morning sun had risen, now all united as comrades in death. They had been left bloating in a field under a hot autumn sun far from their loved ones. Left without the drink of cool water to quench their dying thirst, left without the gentle caress of a loving hand . . . left without love's gentle words to ease their passing. They had been left to die alone . . . left to die in pain, and in that pain they had passed. There had been no time to search the field for fallen comrades . . . companions of the mead-hall, no time to give friend or foe a proper burial. So all were left for the beasts of battle – the 'corpse-gulpers' to enjoy. Left for the dark-coated raven to relish; left for the eagle, white-backed and dun-coated . . . the hawk of war to feast upon; left for the wild grey beast, the fell forest wolf, to devour. The two armies had moved on . . . they had left the dead and dying behind.

One army, under its banner of a green dragon, was in a headlong, desperate retreat . . . but not a rout. The other, riding under the banner of a white wolf had paused only long enough to strip the dead of anything deemed valuable before starting its pursuit. Only the gold rings and silver broaches . . . the fair ornaments . . . the bloody booty that could be easily seen were hastily grabbed, the rest would have to wait until later. The gore-greedy animals of war would not consume these.

This pause had given the Dragon Army time to escape. But it was only a brief reprieve from fate. For Wulfgar . . . the Wolf King . . . King out of the East, knew that the army of King Alric had been seriously wounded, perhaps mortally. Now was the time to make the kill, to deal the deathblow, now was the time to end the ages' old conflict. Now was the time for the name Wulfgar to go into history, for the bards to sing of him as the greatest of kings – victorious in battle – conqueror of the ancient foe. Now was the time to claim renown and adulation. For generations the tales of this victory would be told in the mead-halls throughout the eastern lands. Now was the time for blood, for vengeance, for land, for gold and booty. Now was his time for fame and glory!

The army of the Dragon King, Alric, had crossed the River Weolund. It had formed its ranks in the still, cold hours before dawn, and had drawn up into the battle lines they would take on the morn when they would meet the army of The Wolf, an army which even now was riding hard out of the east. The men that waited on Talford Hill were veterans.

Everyone . . . man and boy . . . had tasted battle and had thus far survived. Those who would run from defeat had already done so. Only the stalwart were left. But, they were weary, worn with the exhaustion of men who knew defeat, retreating from an army far superior in numbers; an army fresh from victory . . . inspired by victory, nay, *intoxicated* by victory.

It had only been a fortnight since Alric had crossed this very ford, banners flying gloriously in an autumn breeze, and a golden afternoon's sun glinting from spear points and warming their way as they marched singing toward their eastern foes. There had been conflict between the Dragon and Wolf for as long as any man could remember. Years of war punctuated by brief periods of peace that only waited for a new generation of boys to become men before they too were called to the slaughter. Now the conflict had flared anew. Boundaries and lands had changed hands over many years but the ancient boundary of the River Weolund seemed to be the most recognized. Both kingdoms had spilt the blood of too many young men at this ford and the kings on both sides claimed the fallen now guarded their boundaries. It was said that in the old days great warriors were buried here in their fine shining mail armor, battle-hardened swords, and bright helms set about with images of dragons, boars, and victorious warriors, all made by the mystical Wayland the Smith.

Today that balance of power was about to change. What was the full might of a kingdom two weeks ago was now a defeated army, exhausted, and greatly diminished in number. The flower of the kingdom, the entire fyrd – the levy of the land had been called out. Only those too old, too young, or too sick had been left behind. Now the old and infirm would die because of their uselessness to the conqueror. The young would be enslaved – bound to the land like sheep and cattle, to be used at their new masters' whim.

No . . . there would be no reinforcements, no help, no one coming up from behind to strengthen their lines. The men on Talford Hill stood alone. All hope seemed forlorn in the darkness, with no allies near, and only these few left to fight. Many, perhaps all, knew they would die on this hill, when the foemen came . . . at dawn . . . when the sun rose in the east.

Indeed the Eastlanders *had* come on hard – they had not even stopped to bury their own dead, unless they were of the appropriate social rank. And they certainly did not bury the dead of the Dragon King’s men. These were left on the field of battle – a sure sign of victory, an age-old symbol of the victor’s power. The army that cannot retrieve or bury its dead was surly defeated. And when other men can count the bloodied and bloated bodies, the victor has little need to boast of the battle himself. Others . . . the bards . . . the scopas . . . the singers of glory-tales . . . they would spread that king’s fame far beyond his own mead-hall.

The battles of this war had taken a different turn. Perhaps it was the surprise and swiftness of the attack of the Eastlanders that had brought them victory. Perhaps it was because their commanders were better or their war plans more aggressive. Perhaps it was the marshy terrain on the eastern side of the Weolund. Perhaps it was numbers – the Wolf’s army had swollen with allies hoping for their share of the glory and booty. Perhaps their army *was* superior, better trained . . . more confident in victory. Perhaps it was fate . . . perhaps. Whatever the reason, victory had quickly followed and the wolf banner was even now being carried to this boundary, the ford across the Weolund. For Alric, the fight was no longer one of conquest and triumph, now it had become one of desperate defense and despair.

What do men do when they have only hours left to live? Pray, curse, cry, think of mothers, wives, lovers, or children. Do they eat, drink, sing . . . or perhaps run? The soldiers of King Alric did all of these things . . . except run. They tried to rest and eat a cold, meager meal . . . perhaps their last . . . and their thoughts turned, as do most soldiers, to home. But, few thought of deserting the army; the images of rape, murder, and pillage that filled their thoughts prevented that. Individuals running home to protect their families on their own doorstep could not prevail against the onslaught of this army. Only men who stood, fought, and . . . perhaps, died as one might prevent that. Now their hope was that Wulfgar’s army would be so bloodied after this fight that he would respect the ancient boundary at Talford and return home – at least that what the King’s earls and thanes were saying. “Iron for iron and blood for blood that’s what we’ll give them! That will give them pause!” they said boldly.

King Alric had planted this banner, a green dragon on a field of red and white, amid the ruins of a circular building . . . perhaps an ancient keep, some sixty feet in diameter, which stood just below the crest of the hill that overlooked the ford. It felt like a good place to make a stand – “choose your own time and your own place to make a stand.”

Yes, that was the advice handed down from the kings of old. He was a proud man as his lineage had bred him. Yet Alric was one of those rare men who lived not to serve power, wealth or vainglory, but one who genuinely sought to serve the people . . . the folk of the land. He was a silver-hair man, short in stature, stout in frame, and strong in heart. He was a man who had reluctantly given way to the voices of the firebrands . . . the young warriors . . . the howling dogs of war, who sought glory, treasure, and a battle-name of renown. Those voices were silent now; most had died on the first day, the remaining ones, ashamed, now remained silent and sullen.

**To be continued...**

# War in the Woodlands

By Edith de Brereton

MKA Miranda Christy

The troops belonging to the Tudor king made their way through the wood, hungry and afraid. It seemed that their king would never win this war of his. The number of bodies left in Henry's control was pitiful, but he persevered as they did. Bodies thinned by starvation and dysentery trudged through the damp earth; despite their ragged appearance, there was still spirit burning in their eyes. If they were to die, it would be for England. The French could not kill their *loyalty*, though they certainly had tried.

King Henry and his men pressed on to the fields. If they would die, it would be here. A strong defense was their only hope. When they came to the clearing, tents were raised. The order was silence or death. The appointed came for confession – for every battle there was a confession – and the men came one after another to tell of their wrongdoings. Some could be heard across camp, sobs among the silence of death, for surely this was the place where men came to die.

Next came Richard of the Marsh. He had one child, a son, and a wife who had won his heart long ago. He was young; they all were young. “I confess that I have doubted my lord the King,” he whispered, and the priest uttered the words he had heard so many times before. Surely the priest had heard those words before, and he would hear them many more times before the sun rose again.

Dusk came, the time when soldiers said their best prayers and went to sleep with the hope of living to see the sun again. In the faint torch light the enemy could be seen, watching, waiting. Their numbers were growing, but there would be no battle, not on this night. Henry's words rung in everyone's ears. "I want each of you to be alert. There will be silence on this night! Know this, good men: tomorrow we will go to war, and we shall be greatly outnumbered. We shall fight like true Englishmen. I shall die in battle before I am captured and held for a ransom. We shall either die or rise victorious. The future of the crown is in our hands.

"Know that our cause is just, men! Remember the many times when England prevailed in the past, and know that glory awaits us in the future! The French want to kill you; your lives have no value to those dogs! To me, you are the best our country has, and I know that we are capable of greatness."

Sleep eluded some that night. Aching stomachs and rebelling bodies caused men to toss and turn and beg God for death. Fleeting moments of rest came... but were gone too soon. The sound of the rain beat against the tents and trees. It was calming, the rain. It reminded the men of home.

Dawn came, and with it came a messenger. There was debating, but Henry seemed to stand firm, and the French man returned to his side of the field. The men assembled.

"The French send their negotiators in the hope that we will be weak. I tell you that there will be no bargaining today! Where were their bargains when this war began, before our men were starving and wounded? Today we shall show them our might; though I would prefer to defend, we will lead the offensive. Drive palings into the ground before they have the numbers to come to us."

The stakes were planted as the French encampment sat idle. For them this was a time of waiting before a decisive victory, nothing more. The *numbers* were in their favor.

The English longbowmen took either flank at the forest's edge. The men-at-arms, those wearing plate or mail armor, were placed in the front lines shoulder to shoulder. They stood behind the line of palings, at the ready. At last it was time.

The sky was peppered with arrows shooting toward the French front. The English troops jeered and beckoned the French forward. The French cavalry charged forward, small in number but still formidable when prepared to the English forces. Arrows shot at horses rather than riders. The beasts went wild from the pain and retreated upon seeing the spikes, sometimes tossing their riders to the muddy ground. Those who managed to pass the spikes could not ride into the rugged forest terrain to pursue archers. The cavalry was reduced to nothing by the “inferior” English longbowmen.

“They're coming on foot!”

They were on foot now, thousands of them, heavily armored and determined to win the war at any cost. Such a field was not the proper size to hold such a number of Frenchmen, and indeed it didn't; shoulder to shoulder they walked, trampling their injured and their dead, too close to their allies to swing their weapons. And then there was the challenge of the mud! The soldiers sunk to their knees in the mud with every step they took; with every step the load of their armor became heavier, the day longer. The longbowmen had abandoned their bows in favor of melee weapons, and *they* were the ones waiting. If they had been in better health, they surely would have mocked the Frenchmen and their hopeless strides. The jesting would come later. It was time to kill.

French prisoners were greater in number than their captors. Henry saw this and shook his head. “Kill these men before they see that they could break free,” he told the nearby men. It was nothing less than justified slaughter.

Henry stood by to watch his younger brother escorted off of the battlefield, his groin injured. *So this is what I am obligated to do to have what is rightly mine. So many dead...*

“What do you want done with the bodies of the prisoners, my king?”

“Leave the dead where they are and send the rest back to their camps to tell of this great defeat.” The king sighed. He had lost just over a hundred men and some of his finest treasure, but there had been thousands of French deaths. He had been the victor of this battle; none would argue that. He would be remembered for his military prowess, and this blow to France would give him time to regroup.

It would be good to be home again, to dear England... his England.