Order of H'Pak – "The Basics" – by Baak'lor – January 3, 2002 (Updated Nov 7, 2002)

Since some of us have already been through what I would call "Myth Boot Camp", I thought it would be good for those of you joining the Order to learn The Basics of what it's all about.

I intend this to be an "open" document, which means those of us who are the founding members (aka The Core Four) can chime in at any time. I will refer to the game as "Myth", even though we will be playing "Myth II".

"Who are The Core Four?"

Baak'lor (aka Baak) – *Maroon/Red*
Kaor (aka Kaor) – *Green*
Two Saks (aka TS) – *Blue*
Nokilli (aka NKI) – *Purple*

One of the most important things you'll need to do before joining the Order is to pick your Player Name, and a color (players are actually two colors: primary and secondary, but you'll need to pick a primary color you want to stick with most of the time).

You Player Name can be virtually anything (as you can see above). With the colors, we'll have to experiment since conflicting colors (those that are too similar to each other) can cause odd color substitution – and confusion. The rules on this are: (1) Your color can't be **too** dark (someone will tell you if it is); (2) Black and Gray are forbidden; (3) If your color conflicts with an existing player's color, you will have to change it. You'll get a chance to fiddle with the color thing once you get the game and go on-line (see more below).

In e-mails regarding Myth we often use our Player Names, so be prepared to do so.

"What the heck is an Order, anyway?"

An Order is just a group of Myth players – basically a Team. Our official Order name is the "Order of H'Pak" (pronounced AYCH'pack), and our Order Badge is "~OoH~".

The true origin of H'Pak is shrouded in much mystery. Our best information suggests that it refers to a team designation given to some of us in High School when playing various sporting events against a team of older brothers and their friends. We were named the "H–Pack" and – as we generally kicked their butts – it became a badge of honor.

Many Orders in the Myth Community play competitively on-line in "Ranked" Games. We tried Ranked Games for a while, but for the most part found them far less satisfying than playing within the Order. We play "Unranked" Games and keep track of some of the simpler stats ourselves.

This has evolved into two Awards that can be won each Match (a Match is a collection of games played in one night or more than one night in a row). The first is the "Sacred Sword & Axe", which is awarded to the Team that wins the most Team Games in the Match. The second "Shield of Honor", which is awarded to the single Player that wins the most FFA (Free For All) Games in the Match (more on this later).

Because these awards behave much like "skins" in golf, there can be new winners each Match. We just play for fun anyway, but the Awards give it that little competitive incentive to make things interesting, especially with the Team Games. Cumulative stats are only valued for those trivia buffs (such as myself).

"How do we play this game?"

First you have to buy a copy of the game. The latest version of Myth II is contained in "Myth Worlds" or the earlier "Myth: The Total Codex". Myth Worlds contains Myth II and several 3rd party maps. The Total Codex contains Myth: TFL (Myth I), Myth II, the Myth Manual (a **must** read), the Strategy Guide (another **must** read), and a collection of 3rd party maps. Search on eBay and various Game Trading sites – can be anywhere from $5 to $15 (originally $20). All the "extras" beyond the game are freely available, so all you really need is the Myth II CD.

Update: The following refers to "bungie.net", the original Myth II on-line server which is no longer in service. There are now two new Myth II servers: Marius Net and PlayMyth.net. Most of the information here is the same and differences are outlined in other documents.

There are several ways to play Myth: You can play Solo games by yourself on your own computer, or you can play Solo *or* Multiplayer games over a network, like the Internet. When you play Solo games on-line, you can either play by yourself (a bit odd) or you can have other players join you to defeat the enemy – this is called "Co-op".

When playing on-line you can either play on a private network or "bungie.net", which is our preferred arena. When you login to bungie.net, you show up in one of several "rooms", each filled with any number of players waiting to create or join new games, and any number of games already in progress. You can find other players by name (using Find) or if you have mutually agreed you can "buddy" each other (illegal in some states), or look up those other players in your Order (which is what we'll end up doing):

I went to a **crowded** room on purpose to show you what's going on. Generally we pick the least crowded rooms, as they tend to perform better.

On the top left you see the room name, **Murithemne** (which comes from the Myth II Solo Campaign), and just to the right of it you can see there are 48 players and 9 games in this "room" (this is crowded).

On the left are all the players in the room, and if they are "grayed-out" that means they are currently in one of the (9 in this case) active games – which appear on the right. You can see me (Baak'lor) on the left.

I stayed on for just a little while to see if people were chatting, and finally got a little bit of chat (sometimes there is a **lot** of chatting). You can see Arzenic and Ramirez sending each other a "hello". When you're in a room like this any chatting you do is "public" (you can ctrl-click on the person you want to talk with privately and the messages you send will only appear for them (with a red background) – but beware, sometimes the ctrl-click goes off! – better to wait until you're inside a game for any "private" chatting).

On the right you can see there is currently only one "open" game right now (open games will appear closest to the top). Anyone can "Host" a game by pressing "New" and then going to it, but I don't recommend this until you've played a bit as there are certain protocols people will expect you to follow and you may get overwhelmed as a beginner.

You can sometimes get an overall feeling of the game by the title. "All Welcome" suggests a good open, friendly game. Often the Host will change maps or settings if requested nicely, but the general rule of thumb is if you want to play something *specific* then you should Host that particular game. When joining a game, remember that no one knows who you are, so say "Hi" when you get in the room and chat a bit if it feels good.

There's a feeling to this that you just pick up on pretty quickly.

There's a bunch of other info on the game as well in the right of the screen. Games already in progress (Closed) are grayed-out and show the approximate amount of time remaining to play (e.g. ~12 Minutes). This same indicator shows the "ping" time (network packet turnaround time) of the Host (~290 ms in this case) anything under 400 ms is good, the lower the better.

The Game Type is "Last Man on the Hill" (see the Myth Manual for game types), and the map is "The Badlands" (one of the "standard" Myth II maps that comes with the game).
There are already 3 of 8 players in the game and they are waiting for others to join – note this doesn't necessarily mean they're going to wait for a total of 8, they can start with any number of players and generally it just depends on the map, etc. (you can have a max of 16 players in any game). The current game is set to last 10 minutes.

If a game appears RED on the right of the screen it simply means you don't have that particular map and/or extra plugins (see later in this doc) and thus you can't join. Also the Host can put a password on the game so that only certain players can join.

Now let's say I want to see what other rooms are available. I just click on the little up/down arrows to the right of the current room name at the top of the screen, and I see this:

You can see there are lots of rooms to choose from! The lower "half" of the rooms are normally "Ranked" (and will be again soon) – don't worry about those for now – we'll be playing in the "Unranked" rooms anyway, as there's less blood and entrails on the walls.

By the way, you can see above that Murithemne is grayed-out – this means you can't go to it until the number of players drops a bit (actually you can, but don't tell anyone! ☺).

When you get onto bungie.net, you can look for people by name using the Find button (see the first screenshot), or the Buddy tab, or the Order tab. This makes it **easy** to find your friends anywhere on bungie.net.

IMPORTANT: When we're playing and somebody "drops" accidentally (their ISP drops them or their computer hiccups or **whatever**), bungie.net tends to lock that player out of the room they were in, and won't let them back in for 5 to 10 minutes. What we do in this case is the rest of us move to a **new** room and the Host starts the game again there. This means that you need to get comfortable finding other players on bungie.net so you can find us in case **you** are the one who gets bumped off! ☺

"What is a Plugin?"

Here's where the terminology gets a bit funky – multiple definitions for the same or similar things.

The easiest way for me to think of a Plugin is that it is **anything** that you can put in your Myth "Plugins" folder (typically C:\Myth\plugins). Normally it is a 3rd party map (and there are literally *thousands* of these), but it can also be "modifications" such as the unit-modifying plugins that we have come to love: ***The Sak Cannon*** and ***Rocket Dwarfs***. This is part of the beauty of Myth: the game is *completely open!*

When you get the Total Codex, you'll have a CD, which contains several really good 3rd party maps, including a couple of our favorites: ***Picket Fences*** and ***Hedgerow***.

To use a 3rd party map (we'll just refer to them as maps from now on) or other plugin, all you have to do is copy them into your plugins folder and then start Myth in Multiplayer Mode (see the Manual).

I have created a vast collection of these plugins (now spanning 7 CD's) known as "Baak's Myth II Library". I don't know if I have the resources to send all the CD's out to everyone – we may need to work out some form of chain-snail-mail or something. At any rate, you can **always** download *any* maps and plugins from The Mill using their Search:

The Mill: http://fileball.net/mill

There is a limit to the number of plugins (maps and other plugins) that you can load at one time, which is why we have come up with the "Battle Plan" on the Order of H'Pak web site – this shows the next scheduled Match date/time and more importantly, all the plugins that we will be using for that Match. I do my best to have this updated by the Thursday night before the next Match (normally played Fri, Sat or Sun), and I send an e-mail message to everyone telling them to check the Battle Plan.

The Battle Plan: http://www.orderofhpak.com/BattlePlan.html

On the left is the name of the plugin as it appears in your plugins folder, followed by the CD location (Total Codex or one of Baak's CD's), followed by the full compressed file name (compressed as .zip or .sit (requires free Aladdin un-sit software to open)).

Now for the final bit of plugin terminology: the ***mesh***. A Myth II "map" can contain one or more "meshes". A mesh is a different set of units, game types, #players and/or slight modifications to the "stuff" that appears on a map, while using the same physical map.

For example, one of the maps we are currently playing is "***A Borderland Odyssey***" which contains *seven different meshes*:

The Battle of Evermore – 2 teams	Creep on the Borderlands – TFL – 2 teams
The Battle of Westermark – 4 players	Creep on the Borderlands – Mii – 2 teams
Nemedian Chronicles – 4 players	Clash on the Borderlands – 2 teams
	Aqualonian Killing Spree – 4 players

Typically meshes are distinguished by having "Light", "Dark", or "Artillery" (sometimes called "Slugfest") units – but not always. You can start to get an appreciation for the diversity of this game when you realize that by adding **other** plugins (The Sak Cannon or Rocket Dwarfs) the way a map "plays" can *completely* change. Also the fact that there are 1,000's of **maps** means there are that many more **meshes**!

Now you can see why it takes a little practice to Host games! As Host your job is to set up the mesh, game type, options, etc.

Meshes that are designed for "2 team" play typically have **many** more units to control (25-50). These are the "big battles" that we like to play for the honor of:

The Sacred Sword and Axe of Shaal'a Manx
http://www.orderofhpak.com/ShaalaManx.html
(go here to see the Current Bearers of the Sword and Axe and the Shield of Honor)

FFA (Free-For-All or Every Man/Woman for Themselves) games are played on maps (see how this is interchanged with "mesh" – typically people refer to them as "maps" even if they are technically "meshes") with 3 or more starting positions.

When more players join than there are positions, then they are "randomly" formed into teams – unless they have already teamed up before the game starts.

When you are "Team Captain" you are responsible for picking the units your team will play with (called "Trading" units – only works on maps that allow this, which is 95% of them), and "divvying" them up. You have control of giving/taking units from any of the players on your team at any time. You also have a responsibility to coordinate things, give "orders", take suggestions, etc.

All of this becomes second nature after playing a few games…

"What is a Myth II Film?"

One of the neat things about playing Myth is that your games can be "saved". When you play multi-player games on-line, you can save a "recording" or "film" of the game to view at a later time. The best thing about the films is that you get to see what's going on **everywhere** on the map – all the movements and "chat" of **all** the players (friend or foe) is there for all to see.

This is great for several reasons: (1) It's fun to go back and watch really good games again and again; (2) It's educational to try and figure out opposing player/team strategies; (3) It's fun for Baak to put the pictures, comics, and Slide Shows on the web site.

All you have to do is put the saved film file(s) in your "recordings" folder and then click "View Films" from the Myth main menu. There is one slight trick to this: you **must** have the map and any other plugins (such as The Sak Cannon or Rocket Dwarfs) that were used in the game you are viewing in your plugins folder or Myth will **crash**! ☺ Also remember you can only load so many films in the recordings folder at a time.

I created a special Renamer that renames the files to something much more meaningful, and I am nearly complete with the Cataloguer aspect of the Renamer for the **really** fanatic Myth Fan (read: **all** of us). The Cataloguer lists all the information that can be extracted from the film including full player names and full mesh names as well as **all** the plugins used for the game.

I try to save every film during a Match, and it's good to have others do the same in case one or more of us get bumped before we can save the game (TS is currently backing me up, but anyone can save the games locally as well).

Sometime after a Match I zip up the latest films and post them on the web site under the Hall of Records along with a brief (lol!) Summary of the games. We're currently a week behind (go to the main site and look under Hall of Records):

Order of H'Pak web site: http://www.orderofhpak.com/

We have amassed nearly 1000 films in a little over two years! ☺

So as soon as you get the game you can check out any or all of our films so far! Yowza!

"What is the "Game of the Week"?"

At TS's suggestion, we now have a "Game of the Week" – a highlighted game from the most recent Match (not necessarily the last week). I also keep up the Summaries of **all** the games in all our Matches.

Go check out the latest Game of the Week (GOTW):
http://www.orderofhpak.com/GameOfTheWeek.html

And especially the GOTW Archives for every match all the way back to August 13, 2000:
http://www.orderofhpak.com/GameOfTheWeekArchives.html

This will also give you an idea of the diversity of this game!

Browse around the site while your there!

And most of all ***HAVE FUN!!!***

--Baak