

Registering with the INSL

This document is intended to help set the scene for new players. There is not much adventure within the next few pages, but there are lots of opportunities for Newbie characters to learn about the world they have arrived in. It is not necessary to follow this document step-by-step. As the GM, you are encouraged to take whatever information from this that would best meet your needs and use it in whatever manner helps you enjoy the game.

A GM can use this information as a way to work the character into a pending adventure. Perhaps the character meets someone during the process that they will later become friends (or enemies) with. Maybe they see something that becomes particularly important at some later date. The options are wide open for a creative GM.

Pros and Cons of Registering

The PCs may choose to register with the INSL (International Security League). There are a number of advantages to it. This packet is designed to help both players and the GM explore this scenario.

First contact with the INSL can be an intimidating thing, particularly if it occurs in the capital city of Ada-Kar, where most newbies first appear in Valhalla. The INSL Plaza is the center of activity in Ada-Kar. Some would say that because of this, it is the center of activity for the world. Whatever else comes from joining the INSL, the characters will gain new insight into the world and find possible opportunities for adventure.

Positive Reasons for Joining the INSL

Joining the INSL is not for every character. Most do join because of the advantages. To most people these advantages outweigh the disadvantages. They include:

- **Experience:** The knowledge that is gained from joining the INSL, simply by seeing what there is to see, and experiencing the ins and outs of the process is worth 1000 Experience points.
- **1000 V-Bill stipend:** This is given to all Newbies. This money is intended to keep characters from falling into thievery when they first arrive in Valhalla.
- **Free Housing:** Along with the stipend, the INSL gives a free month's lodging in a dorm-like atmosphere. This is intended to give the characters a chance to get acquainted with Valhalla and to stay out of trouble. It also has the added benefit of giving the characters opportunities to meet other Newbies. Many adventuring teams have been forged in the halls of these dorms. See the setting document "The INSL Dorms" for more information.
- **Classes:** The INSL has a number of formal and informal classes and lectures that they employ to get newbies acclimated to Valhalla. These are free to the general public but are mostly attended by the Newbies who are staying at the dorms. See the setting document "How Newbies Spend their Time" for more information.
- **Weapons Permits:** Those registered with the INSL are able to register a vast array of personal weap-



ons. Characters can get these permits only by registering with the INSL. The permits enable the character to carry their weapons everywhere in Ada-Kar and in most nations. Individual nations, however, do ban certain weapons. A prime example of this is the Kingdoms banning any TL4 or higher weapon.

- **Injections:** The INSL has championed a project to eradicate many of the most deadly diseases in existence. Due to the medical advances from Megalopolis, this includes some killers for which modern medicine has no answer. Anyone who registers is given vaccines for such diseases as smallpox, anthrax, bubonic plague, leprosy, HIV-AIDS, cholera, polio and cancer.

Negative Results of Joining the INSL

Despite all of these great reasons to join the INSL, there are things that might give some characters pause. Registering is not mandatory, so if the character is okay with not gaining the benefits, then they will not have to suffer these detriments.

- **Personal Information:** During the registration process the INSL obtains a vast amount of personal information about the character. The character can lie about many of the questions, but they have ways of determining truthfulness.
- **Biometric Indicators:** Fingerprints and a DNA sample are taken and kept on record. Should the character later commit a crime, the first stop most policemen make is to run searches for matching information. Some characters find this invasive and creepy. Note that many characters that are TZ4 or less may not even know what the INSL is doing or why.

Registering with the INSL

As the GM you can make the registration process as long or as short as you like. Keeping it short will benefit those who want to just get to the adventure. Others might want to build the setting slowly and let the story develop.

The following information is used specifically when characters are registering in Ada-Kar. The GM can, however, augment this information in order to change the location. There are INSL locations available in every major city so it is conceivable that one would be available wherever the GM chooses to start the adventure. The experience of characters joining the INSL in other locations will be similar overall, though different in the details.

For example, lower TL areas would not utilize computers or other similar items. They would still acquire fingerprints, but any of the higher-tech aspects would not apply. Similarly, a character coming into a TL 1 zone will not be connected to a lie detector machine, but could interview with someone who is using a Detect Lie spell.

The GM is encourage to improvise as he sees fit.

However you decide to proceed, the characters should be made to feel that they have accomplished something by the end of the day. They may also feel exhausted, aggravated, or dehumanized as well.

Before Registration can start, however, the character must first approach the INSL pyramid. Read the following before proceeding to registration.

The INSL Pyramid

Approaching the INSL Pyramid

The main headquarters of the INSL, including places where Newbies can register, are located in the INSL Pyramid in the middle of Ada-Kar. This is an extremely impressive structure and awes everyone who sees it.

Read the following description to all characters seeing it for the first time:

Though you caught glimpses of the INSL pyramid as you approached it, the building's true magnificence only really hits you when you turn the final corner and see it from across the grand plaza. It is the sheer size of the mammoth structure that hits you first. At one hundred stories tall, this building dwarfs all others on Ada-Kar.

The blue ray of light shooting from the top of the pyramid can be seen even in the daytime, but at night it is an incredibly bright beacon that illuminates the streets in its strange, electric glow. Shimmering like the aurora borealis, it looks like the finger of God reaching down from the heavens.

The sides of the pyramid are reflective glass, which seem to change color as the sun moves across the sky. It catches the sun's rays and the side of the building seems to glisten golden and green, like the rays of the sun on a calm sea.

Only when you are able to tear your eyes from the building itself does the rest of the scene come into view. You are standing about a half a mile from the great pyramid. The area between is a huge, open square filled with monuments, fountains, and lush landscaping.

A myriad of diverse people bustle throughout the square like bees in a hive. People of every possible nationality and time merge together, blending and separating. Children play tag on the grass as parents watch from nearby park benches. Humans, elves, dwarves, gnomes, and aliens from the farthest reaches of space all come together. Ancient Greeks hail Zulus, and Alchemists commune with robots while the pixies plot pranks from the bushes.

What confounds you even more is how normal everyone seems to find it. Everyone but you. The world seems to shift under your feet as layer upon layer of disparate visions clash in your head, a cacophony of sight

that threatens to overwhelm you.

Now, more than ever, you feel the true weight of being a Newbie in Valhalla. You are in a sea of life separated from all you once knew or thought possible. As this thought crosses your mind, you feel somehow relieved by it. All the chains and boundaries of the old world are behind you.

Ahead lies possibilities.

Entering the INSL Pyramid

The GM can allow the PCs to explore if they would like to do so before going into the pyramid to register. There are certainly a lot of things to see and do there. If you like, you can make a random encounter roll, but eventually the PCs will want to enter the pyramid. When they do, read the following:

Standing at the base of the great pyramid makes you feel small and stunned with amazement. You have never seen anything of this size and spender. You stare, open-mouthed, up at the structure, seeing how the clouds and sun are reflected on the building's surface.

"Are you looking for Newbie registration?" a voice asks from behind you.

You turn to see a uniformed man standing about ten feet from you. He is wearing a badge marking him as an INSL Police Officer. The most striking thing about him is the fact that the left side of his face is not flesh, but metal. His one human eye gazes at you in curiosity, while the other is a soulless red light.

"The entrance is that way," he says, gesturing to the side of the building.

(Assuming the characters proceed, read on.)

You enter the Pyramid and once again are overwhelmed by what you see. You are standing in a huge open room. It is filled with people, machines, and the dull din of conversation.

Humans, aliens, machines, elves, and things you can only describe as "monsters" are everywhere. Some of them meander here and there while others stand in a long line.

"Don't block the door," the uniformed man says from behind. "INSL registration starts there."

Registration

Following a brief section on entering the INSL pyramid there are two sections below: the Short Version and the Long Version. The short version will give only the basics and allow you to move on much more quickly. The long version will give significantly more detail and allow for much more role-playing. Should the GM choose to do so, he can run the PC through each aspect of the process, allowing more role-play options, though very little adventure. In such cases the GM should give the additional Experience Points for good role-playing.

Whichever option you choose, however, read the following general description of entering the INSL pyramid.

The Short Version

If you would like to simply rush the PCs through the process read the following.

You find the right line and quickly realize that this will be a long and painful process. You spend a frustrating day within the walls of the INSL pyramid. You are asked endless questions, compelled to fill out forms, given injections, and made to watch informational movies. Your fingerprints are taken, your retinas are scanned, and your DNA is taken.

Sometime during the day you are given a cafeteria lunch and are able to talk with other Newbies. While each has different stories of how they got there, they all share the same grim knowledge that they appeared to have died.

You finally leave the pyramid when night has fallen. You have in your pocket 1000 V-bills, an INSL identity card, a dorm room assignment, and a number of other odds and ends that might help you through your first days in Valhalla.

You are not sure if it was worthwhile or not, but you are glad that it is done!



The Long Version

The following is a more detailed version of what happens when the PC goes to register with the INSL in Ada-Kar. As GM, you have two options with this. The first is simply to read aloud all the items in blue. The other option is to run the PCs through it slowly, and role play the scenario. The items in black type are either going to be informational details to help the GM or role-play opportunities.

Unless otherwise noted, all of the activities here must be completed for the PC to fully register with the INSL and gain the benefits. For example, a character that refuses to give his DNA will simply be told that they can leave, but will not gain the 1000 V-bills or any other benefit from INSL registration.

After getting into line, you stand for what seems like hours. You watch the many strange people and creatures walk by, and eventually only the strangest of them give you any pause. Your senses have been overwhelmed with the bizarre.

At last the line begins to move and you are ushered into a large, dark theatre. After some time passes, a short film starts. Around you there are cries of astonishment as the newbies who have never seen a movie are awed by the moving pictures.

The movie is about weapon regulations in Ada-Kar. The gist of it is that you can carry weapons openly throughout Ada-Kar, and in most areas of the world, so long as you are registered with the INSL.

When the movie ends the lights come up and a single door opens toward the front of the theater. Everyone gets up slowly and moves to the doorway. Not everyone can get through, however, as the line starts again and you spend another hour waiting to see its end.

Allow PCs to talk to others in line and see if they can meet anyone of interest. This is a good opportunity for the GM to plant seeds for potential adventures. NPCs can be found later in this document, or on the Characters webpage at <http://valhallagame.com/characters/>.

Eventually you reach the end of the line and are brought before a large man with yellowed teeth and an unfriendly scowl. He beckons you forward impatiently and remains surly throughout the interview.

He speaks in a language you cannot understand. Eventually he speaks into a microphone and you hear his words come out in your own language, but his lips do not match what he is saying. It is like watching a poorly dubbed movie.

He tells you that he is going to ask a series of questions that require truthful answers. He explains that any criminal activity of your past life will not be punished here, but honesty is paramount during the interview.

Over the next twenty minutes he interrogates you. Sometimes he asks the same question twice, just a little bit differently the second time. He barks at you angrily when you don't speak directly into the microphone.

The machine that he is having the character

speak into is a lie detector as well as a translator. He is primarily trying to determine if the character really is a Newbie or if he is trying to fake it in order to claim the 1000V-bills. He is also attempting to determine how likely the character is to revert to criminality if left to his own devices. Lying on any of these questions will lead to additional questioning later on.

Answering questions truthfully about being a criminal or having killed someone will draw less attention than lying. Indeed, it is world law that nobody be held accountable for what they did in a previous life. Coming to Valhalla earns the character a blank slate.

Lying to the INSL during any interview will result in 1d6 additional hours spent being processed. It could also result in the INSL following the PC for a time to make sure they don't engage in criminal activities.

If you would like to role-play, have your PCs answer the following questions one by one.

Skill Roll:

- Bluff –25%: Character is able to beat the lie detector and his deceit goes unnoticed.
 - Interrogation: –0%, Investigation: –0%, (or) WIS-5) Characters from TL 5 eras or higher can make a roll to deduce that a lie detector test is being used.
1. What is your name?
 2. What was the year of your death?
 3. When did you arrive in Valhalla?
 4. What was your occupation?
 5. Did you bring any items or equipment across with you from the world of your death?
 6. How long have you been in Valhalla?
 7. Who was the leader of your country when you died?
 8. Have you ever killed anyone?
 9. What crimes did you commit in your former life?
 10. Have you already received the 1000 V-bill stipend for registering with the INSL?
 11. How old are you?
 12. What languages do you speak?
 13. Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the communist party?
 14. What was the last thing you stole?
 15. If you were to meet the person who killed you on the streets, what would you do?
 16. Do you have any weapons to register?
 17. How do you plan to support yourself while you are in Valhalla?
 18. Do you know anybody here?
 19. What is the strangest thing you have seen today?
 20. Where will you go after leaving here?

The clerk continues to type information into the computer, completely ignoring you. He processes the work for quite some time until you wonder if he even realizes you are still there. At long last, he turns to you, handing you a square piece of plastic.

“Take this to the end of the hall and turn left,” he says. “An officer will tell you where to go from there.”

You comply with the request, hoping that this is the end of the ordeal. You are crushed find that another line is ahead of you. Fortunately this one seems to move much faster than the first two.

At the head of the line a female officer with vaguely reptilian features takes the plastic card from you and runs it through his computer. Typing wordlessly she doesn't interact with you at all.

As she works you take a look at the room behind her. There are multiple stations within, each of which have a number hanging over it in what you suspect are several different languages. Inside people stand in each of these shorter lines. Some people mill about apparently lost while others move from line to line with grim determination.

Finally, the clerk hands the card back to you and says “Go to line one.”

Over the next few hours you are processed through line after line. You do not visit all of the lines, and you do not visit many of them in order. Instead you are moved haphazardly from location to location. In some of them you are simply told to proceed to the next line, while in others you are further interviewed, asked many of the same questions you have already answered, and asked to fill out and sign a large number of forms.

The majority of the clerks don't particularly like their jobs and get frustrated with doing it day after day. Some simply do it because they have to and are ambivalent about the process and deadened by their rote tasks. Other take pleasure in the discomfort of the newbies running through the process.

Any questions or complaints about the process will fall upon deaf ears. The clerks just don't care and will be as happy to let a newbie run off without being processed as they would to complete the job.

Causing a scene or being belligerent will result in the clerks kicking the characters out. If things turn violent, then 2d4 police officers will arrive to end the dispute and imprison the character.

The day goes endlessly on. After you have completed the processing in the big room, you are taken to a cafeteria and given a hot meal with a cool drink.

The GM can make the meal as strange for the PCs as he likes. Having something delicious like a cold, carbonated soft-drink available could be one way to astound lower TL characters. Similarly a nice dessert of blood pudding could make a higher TL character lose his appetite. A boring and institutional meal could also serve to make the day even more desperate and depressing, while a good, hardy meal could be the one bright point in an otherwise lousy day. Use your imagination and have fun with it.

This mealtime is also a good opportunity for the PCs to interact with other characters that the GM might want to introduce. Many characters that meet in Newbie registration have continued on to great adventures together.

Once lunch is over, read the following:

After lunch you are brought into a large room that has been segmented into small cubicles by portable screens. A woman in a white, knee-length coat comes in and asks you to roll up your sleeves. She produces a

tray of needles and vials of liquid. She explains that she is going to inoculate you against a number of diseases, including smallpox, anthrax, bubonic plague, leprosy, HIV -AIDS, cholera, polio and cancer.

Lower Tech Level characters may be confused by this. It is a good opportunity to role-play and have the doctor convince the PC of the usefulness of the injections. Some characters are afraid of this and may not want to be inoculated. This step is not a requirement for INSL registration so they can skip this if they want to. The GM should note this, however, and perhaps use that knowledge as a storyline later on. (i.e.: The characters travel to a place where smallpox is running rampant. Characters that have not been inoculated may catch the disease.)

Feeling like the day will never end, you settle into another line. Reaching the end of it, the clerk asks you to put your hands, palm down, on the counter. You hear a mechanical whirring sound and see a flash of light come from the counter's surface. Your hands feel warm momentarily, but nothing seems different when the light goes out.

At another station, you are asked to look through two short tubes that extend from a machine. The technician asks you to follow a light that moves around within. He doesn't explain why he is doing this, nor does he warn you of the flashing light that surprises and temporarily blinds you.

Finally he asks you to wipe the inside of your cheek with a cotton swab and hand it back to him. He places the swab inside a plastic bag and sets it aside.

Note: TL 5 or less characters might find all of this very strange and have no real understanding of what is going on. TL 6 or higher characters can make an INT roll in order to realize that they are collecting biometric data (fingerprints, retina scan, and DNA).

Toward the end of the day you are photographed, taken to a large room, and given a card with a number on it. You sit and wait until your number is called. You have time to talk to people while you wait. The one thing that everyone seems to have in common is how tired they are.

Eventually your number is called and you are guided to another clerk. Irritated and ambivalent, she opens a large envelope and pours the contents onto the countertop. One by one she goes over these items with you as she returns them to the envelope. They include:

- INSL Identification Card
- 1000 V-bills
- Dorm assignment (can be used for 30 days)
- Local map of Ada-Kar
- Schedule of Classes
- Employment Contact Information
 - *Merchant's Guild
 - *Adventurer's Guild
 - *Right Start Temporary Agency
- Packet of coupons and advertisements for local busi-

nesses.

The clerk hands you the envelope. "You can exit to your right," she says. Before you have a chance to reply or ask any questions, she then turns and calls out, "Next!"

You leave by the door she indicated and are surprised to see that you are now outside. The ordeal is done with no more explanation or ceremony than you experienced throughout the entire excruciating affair. You are surprised that it is now completely dark outside. Somehow the entire day was spent within the INSL pyramid. You feel exhausted and dismayed, yet completely relieved that it is done.

Adventure Opportunity

Having successfully registered with the INSL, there are immediate opportunities for adventures should the GM choose. The following are but a few options. The GM is encouraged to come up with others.

- Thieves: Everyone is aware that newbies who go through the registration process come out with 1000 V-bills in cash. Such an amount attracts many thieves who would try to steal it. Some of these thieves simply try to pick-pocket the money, while others might try open robbery. There are still other, more nefarious things that criminals will do as well. See the free gaming module [The Wicked Trade](#) for adventure options and ideas.
- Friendly NPCs: While registering with the INSL there were many opportunities for the characters to meet and mingle with other newbies. Some of these newbies could be potential teammates or lead the PCs to new adventures. Running into these characters outside the INSL pyramid at the end of the day gives these characters a chance to reconnect.
- Go to the Dorms: One of the biggest benefits of joining the INSL is the fact that the PCs will have a place to live for the next month. This is also an excellent place to meet new people and prepare for an adventure. See the document entitled "The INSL Dorms" for more details.
- Time for a Drink!: Many characters might want to go to the nearest bar and get a drink after such a long day. There are any number of options around town. The INSL pyramid is the social center of Ada-Kar and there is potentially any kind of establishment within walking distance. Such establishments, as always, can be a treasure-trove of information and adventure.

Forced INSL Registry

Characters that are caught and convicted of criminal acts are often forced to register with the INSL. In such cases they must give up their biometric indicators and submit to the endless series of questions.

These characters do not, however, gain the benefit of the 1000Vbill stipend, nor the room in the INSL dorms. On the bright side, such characters are forced to take the inoculations. This is done mainly so that these illnesses do not run rampant in prison.