

AN INTERVIEW WITH

# Unknown Soldier



Map Developer

Unknown Soldier is best known in the OT community for his map development.

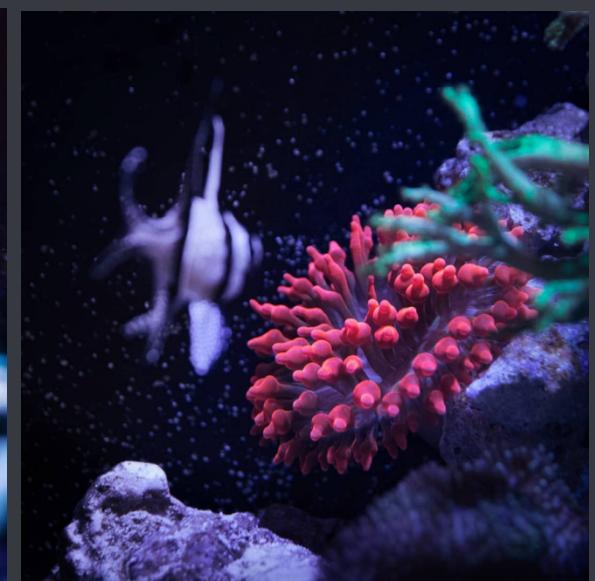
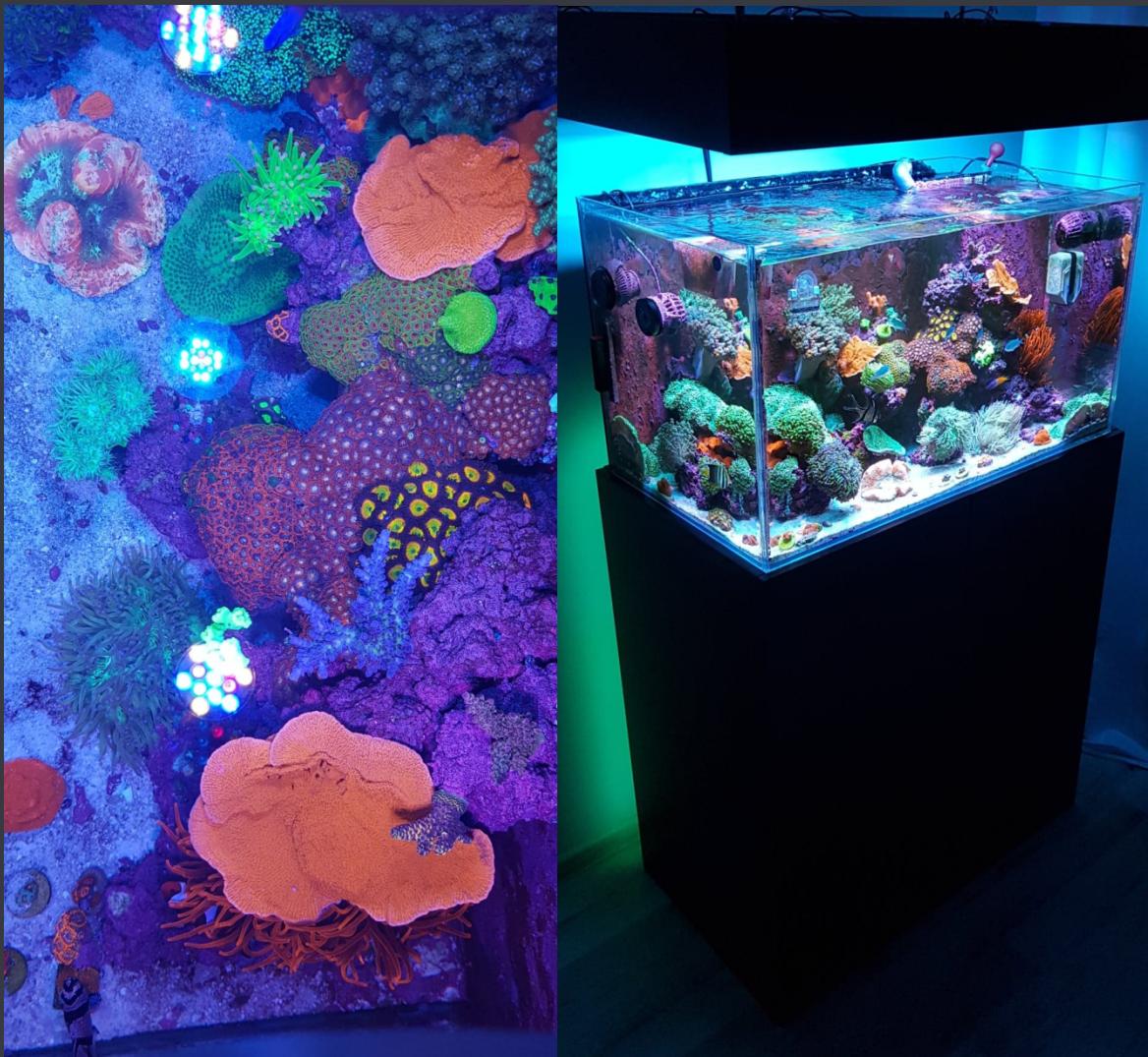
by [OT Academy](#) and [OTserverlist.me](#)

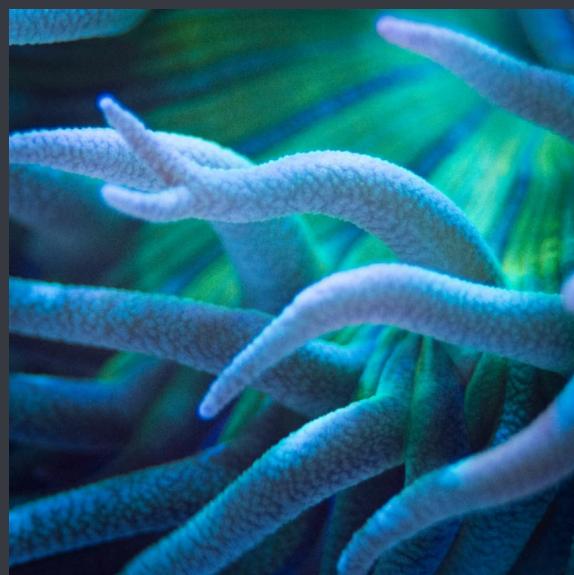
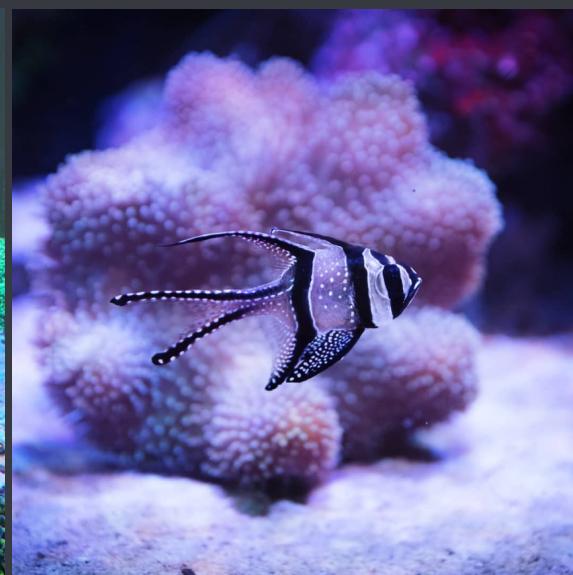


Could you please say a few words about yourself? How would you describe yourself as a human being, maybe a few words about personality and private life (without many details and sensitive data unless you don't mind). What are your skills? What can you do and how do you evaluate the level of individual skills?

**Unknown Soldier:** Hi everyone, my name is Mateusz, I am 31 and I come from Poland.

Since I am a graduate in geodesy and cartography, I work as a geodesist, or I guess that more unofficially you could say I am a cartographer, because I cart maps professionally. However those are not the kind of maps that you probably think of as your first thought. My job is to introduce measured electrical utilities to the existing maps. I am a reefkeeper as a hobbyist, which means I have an aquarium with live corals, fish and invertebrates, those are very visually pleasing sights to me.





Currently a little bit suspended, but my other hobby is landscape photography, I still really enjoy visiting nature, away from crowds, and appreciate fresh air and beautiful sights. Recently I don't carry my DSLR with me as often as I used to, but I'm still in love with landscape photography. I'd like to present to you some of my works.





I would say I appreciate beauty, and from an early childhood was familiar with maps which had affected my profession, so combining both – appreciation for good visuals and working with maps, with a little addition of creativity can lead to the need for creating visually pleasing maps, which is my other hobby. It all kind of works together as you can see.

I also like food and rum...

Can you tell us how your adventure with Tibia and Open Tibia started? Do you remember the moment when it got you interested and what were your beginnings as a Tibia player and member of the Open Tibia community?

**Unknown Soldier:** It was 2004 when I had created my first account in Tibia, following my whole neighborhood, it became our first MMO game, and then I guess in 2005 I had discovered Open Tibia. A friend of mine started his first open tibia server, it was called Survival I bet. In Tibia I was progressing with a little pain, very slow leveling, many deaths, wasn't that good at all, but I loved the game, and since I found out that there are some tools to run your own Tibia, I grabbed the opportunity. In 2006 I shared my tiquanda map on OTfans, and got some offers for a position of a mapper, I accepted one, and that was the beginning of my first project. Since then I was mainly mapping, Simone Map Editor was my primary tool back then.

I've known you for a while now and I know that you mainly do mapping. Can you tell more about how you work on your maps, how would you describe your own style, what do you think sets you apart from other mappers? What work / part of the map are you most proud of - can we see it?

**Unknown Soldier:** Right, it's mainly mapping, or game world designing as some would say, this gives me the most opportunities to express my creativity, I love fantasy worlds and I have a constant need of creating something. I couldn't just do nothing, if not Tibia, I would be creative somewhere else, like creating maps for Heroes of Might and Magic as an example, but I guess RME, and Tibia in general, are the best tools that let me express it.

In my case a good piece of map often starts in my head, I think of a location that I want or need to create, so the most important thing is to find a theme/pattern for the location, match it to the creatures that will be there, so I think of colors, assets that I will use, shape of the corridors, rooms or caves, I don't draw anything on paper or anything like that, that doesn't help me at all. Then I think about how it would work together as a fully playable location, cause I guess it is worth mentioning that 100% of the locations that I do, they are meant to be played, not just for show-off. When I have the general idea of what I will be creating, I start RME and draw the first shapes, create walls, place some assets to see, if this vision works in Tibia, not everything that looks good in your head will look good in the game, unless you do some custom sprites and play with lighting, but I don't do that. I work on this pattern until it satisfies me, and only then I continue and create the whole thing. After that it is just a flow, it just goes automatically.

The process of course is not always the same, sometimes I just want to try some new sprites, test some colors and combinations when I am bored. When I happen to create something interesting this way, by a mistake so to say, I am thinking if and how I can use it somewhere in my map. It was exactly what happened when creating a jungle city with new 12.90 sprites. Turned out to be satisfying to me, so I continued.

And what I think sets me apart from the rest? I think it would most likely be the care for the minimap, and the planning of the game world. I have noticed I care about these things more

than most people, but I think this is very important if you want to create an authentic, interesting and big game world that will be more than just another hunting place to gain another level. Of course I am not saying I am the only one that cares about this, but we are a minority. The pieces of my map that I like the most would be the elven city, underworld and lich crypts, aqueducts, falcon bastion, and also the jungle city, I don't have any particular one of them that I like the most. You can watch them in my Otlad mapping thread, or just a small preview later in this interview.

**Do you have any tricks you can tell us about mapping? What do you do to keep yourself motivated to continue mapping (which many people find boring)? Are there or have there been any other artists / mappers who have influenced your style and how do you create your maps? If so, could you list them and describe how each of them influenced you?**

**Unknown Soldier:** I don't have any magical tricks to be honest, or maybe one – patience, if I can call it a trick. In my case if I would be mapping just to finish the project ASAP, I guess the map would be a crap and I would really hate to do this, and since I am working only when I really feel I want to, it changes the perspective and creates content that satisfies the creator, and with higher possibility the players as well. That's why patience is so important. Maybe I am just pretty average at being a mapper because of that, I couldn't be doing that constantly, however that is applicable to most of us in my opinion.

The motivation comes automatically, sometimes I don't create anything for many months, and sometimes I am like a machine gun doing piece by piece. I guess this is the thing with creativity, that's why it needs patience, you cannot map everyday for a very long time, I am thinking about months or even years, because in the end you wouldn't take any pleasure from it, and the result will be you burned out. I am not in a rush, I prefer slow and quality work that I enjoy, rather than making anything just to, I don't know, bring the post counter up or start a server as fast as possible at all cost.

Mapping can be boring, of course, not every part of the map is what you enjoy, you have to do things you don't like, that's obvious. The best parts to map are the single hunting spots, they are fast and often gives good results, the worst are all the things in between them, so creating the whole world like all the roads, paths, fields and mountains, because they seem to be the most difficult part of designing a map (but only then if you try to create quality content). And believe it or not, it consumes hell a lot of time just to design a piece of map, probably I wouldn't agree with that if I didn't try.

During my mapping experience there were many people that inspired me, it would be pretty difficult to mention all of them, because I just can't remember whose work certain piece is (in some cases at least), but the names I can certainly mention are (in random order) Andréew, Peroxide, Eiserne Festung, Shirako, Habdel, Neon, 2Rec, Mackan, Blackstone and you Cwiras, you all made numerous dope map pieces and I find some of them one of the best that was ever created. All those screenshots are great pieces to learn and inspire from, because it is not only inspiration, it is also an amazing opportunity to gain more skill as a game world designer. Sorry if I missed any names, it's not because someones' works

were worse, it's just because of my bad memory for names. I wish I had written the name of the creator on each picture I saved to my hard disc...

**Have there been any projects in your history with Open Tibia? If so, could you tell us about them?**

**Unknown Soldier:** In 2006-2008 there were 2 servers that I was running with a friend of mine, Yamakasi and later on Vendetta, I was the mapper there, they were quite small projects, about 50 people online, that was also our maximum capacity due to pretty poor internet connection and PC. The engine was Yurots, and mapping the whole world took maybe 2 or 3 weeks, so more or less the same as a good and big location now.

Later I worked on a new project, which was never released, I did some mapping there, but it ended pretty quickly.

By the way, my nickname back then was Jedi, if there is someone who remembers, let me know ;)

**Have you ever worked as a mapper for money? If so, could you tell us more or less what the salaries are in this area and what does this job look like in your opinion? What do you think about mapping for money in general and on the other hand about making maps available to others for free?**

**Unknown Soldier:** I haven't worked for money, so I am not able to tell you anything about this. I think both – mapping for money and free map sharing could be good things, depending on what you need. If you need some unique content then you can hire a mapper to do this for you, seems like a good deal for both sides, but again, I don't know the wages. On the other hand, there are some free maps, they might be interesting from the point of view of someone who isn't interested in anything unique and aims for short-term fun servers, then you might get a decent map for free and be able to have fun on it. But the piece would probably be used by many other people, so the map, even if it is good, will lose its value, if you would see the same piece of map again on another server, I guess it won't bring any good emotions.

The other side of the money aspect is the term OPEN Tibia, these both terms might be in conflict with each other. I understand both sides, you want to have unique content but you are not able to do everything alone, but on the other hand, no one would want to work hard for somebody else for free, so in the end I have no problem with that at all. In my opinion it is good to have such opportunity, you can basically order anything if you pay, however I hope it won't expand too much, in the case of maps it is cool, also in case of some other game-play features, however I wouldn't want it to be some kind of pay-to-win community, if you want latest engine with all features like bestiary or exaltation forge then you have to pay, I wouldn't want to see this.

Are you currently working on any project(s)? If so, please tell us as many details as possible about it, what your work looks like there - what are your duties, what are you responsible for, what is the project about, what we can or will be able to find interesting in it, is there something that distinguishes this project among others? Can you show a few or at least one picture from this project where we can see your work?

**Unknown Soldier:** Yes, I am working on a project right now, it's going to be a custom RPG server with rather low rate experience, with the latest creatures and items, currently 12.90. The base client will be OTC (based on 10.98 protocol). What is important to me regarding the rates, is that I don't want it to be too boring, which happens with low rates pretty often, so for example endless grinding on low levels just to see one more number is not what you're going to see, I respect your time, you won't be forced to kill rotworms for an hour to gain one level. The map of course is going to be 100% custom, not even a single location is going to be taken from another map, not even an edited version of someones' map piece, not on my watch :) Since I am a mapper, I think that the strength of the server will be the map, you will travel through various kinds of terrains from grassy fields, forests, through drylands, desserts and mountains to the jungle, in most of the cases with unique design, explore huge number of unique dungeons and caves that you won't find anywhere else, solve many puzzles, tackle numerous quests and kill dozens of unique bosses. Besides, you will be able to explore many of these locations in the early stages of the game.

You will see classic Tibia items, but with a bit of customization to give some freshness to it and make you analyze your statistics a little more before each battle. Creatures are going to be mostly vanilla as well, but in this case there will be more customization, not everything you will find will be familiar to you, especially bosses that will be mostly custom. There will be just a little more features over classic Tibia (10.98), I don't want to overwhelm it with additional, often pointless features, just to list another thing on the server description.

It's been a very long time already since I started, but I prefer quality over quantity. Although, it will be a pretty big world that will be constantly improved and expanded. You can always see the map progress and all the fresh locations in my thread on Otland <https://otland.net/threads/the-unknown-mapping-thread.253932/>

As you can see, I rely on things that are familiar to every Tibia player, but I want to create a totally new experience with a new, huge and detailed game world, completely new quests, and carefully selected features, all wrapped in a tasty Tibia experience. I'd like to create a place with unique atmosphere available for everyone, with no payments required. For me, being able to create such a game world is what I love doing, and seeing players enjoy the game will be the greatest reward.

**What are your plans for the near and far future? Are you planning to continue being a member of the OT community and further develop your skills?**

**Unknown Soldier:** I am focusing on my project now, it will take good amount of time before I will be able to put the server online, and thus I am not going anywhere, I will stay in the community as long as I will have a need for being creative, it could be a while ^^. Unless

something bad happens to it, but let's not be pessimists. Hopefully my skills will evolve during that time, it happens automatically anyway. Besides my server, I'd like to assist in some other projects, however I am not able to right now due to the lack of time, but I don't know what future brings, I'd like to be a part of any other cool project at some point. With all of these, I don't also want to sacrifice a good personal life outside the computer, healthy balance might also play a role in creating, I suppose.

What do you think about the current situation in the OT community? From the perspective of a mapper, developer and player. Can you tell us what your predictions are for the future of this community and OT servers?

**Unknown Soldier:** I really like that the community is still evolving, creating OTA was a great move in my opinion, following recent trends in gaming, it was inevitable. This provides a more direct opportunity to communicate fast with others, I am not very active on such platforms, but that's typical of me, however I feel more involved in the community since OTA exists, and I really appreciate that, I wish all the best to OTA.

As a mapper I am happy to see that the works of other mappers are still being published in the showoff, I just wish there would be more :) I really like to watch all those 1vs1 and other contests regarding the mapping, I really enjoy such events. From the perspective of a player, I don't have any particular observations, other than variety of servers available for you to play, the amount of good servers is constantly increasing which is great, and the quality of some is just insane, however this makes things more difficult and demanding from a perspective of a developer, which in the end costs more time, effort and possibly money but pays off with decent game server, players are the winners here, competition is always good for „customer”.

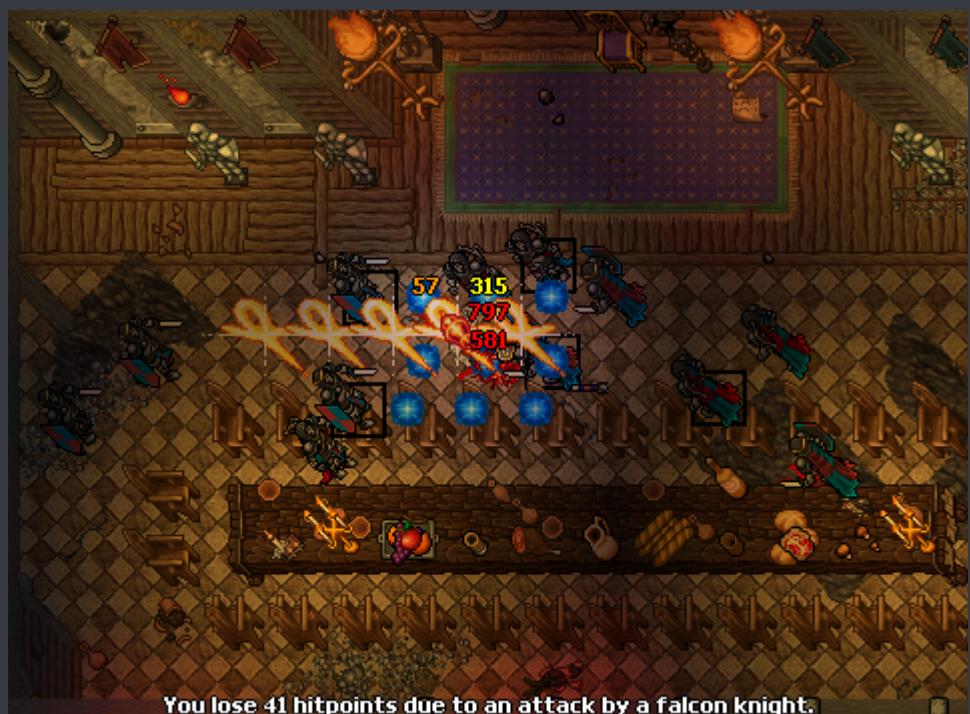
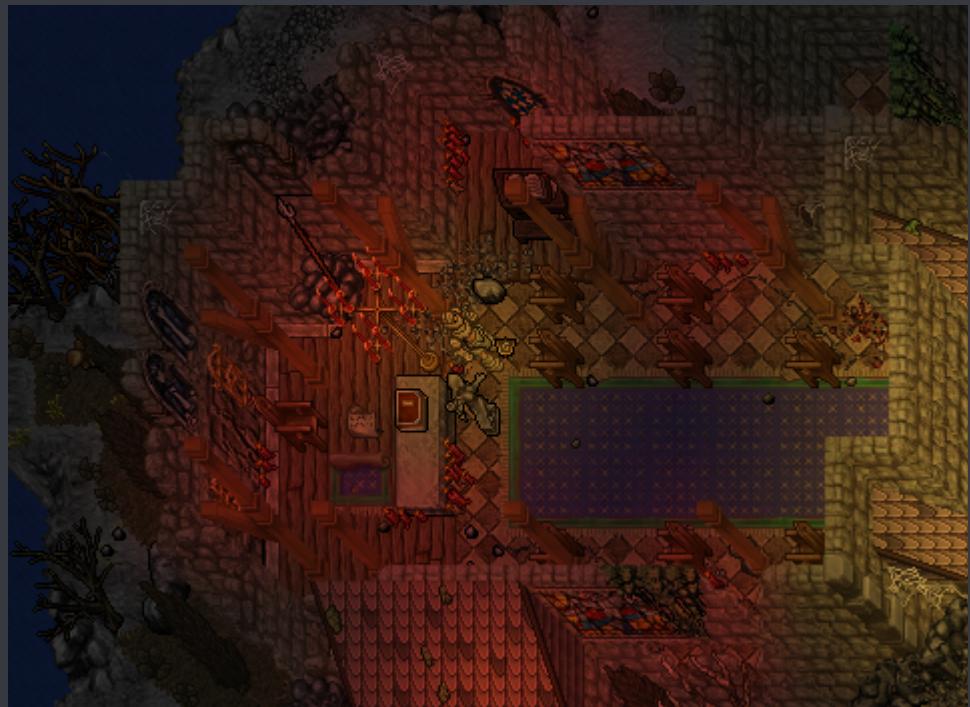
In general, I am positive, not trying to overthink or analyze the situation in the community too much.

Where can we track your latest work? Can you provide any links to your portfolio or places where you post your work?

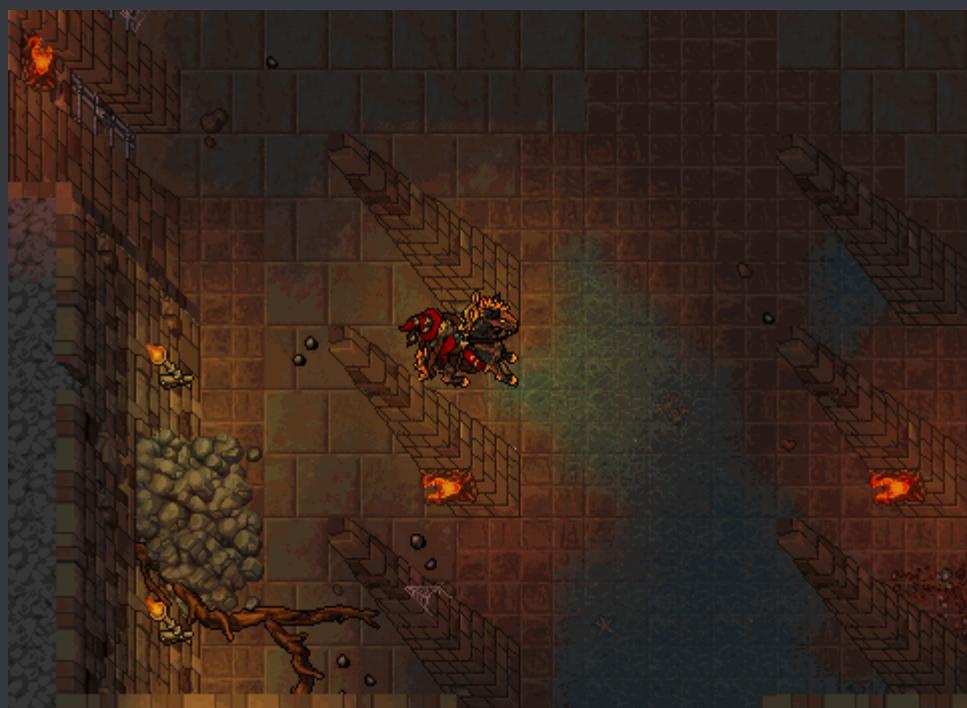
**Unknown Soldier:** I am always publishing my work on Otland, as well as OTA, so if you would like to follow my works, I encourage you to stick around. Here is some short preview. Those are all locations that you are going to see on my upcoming server.

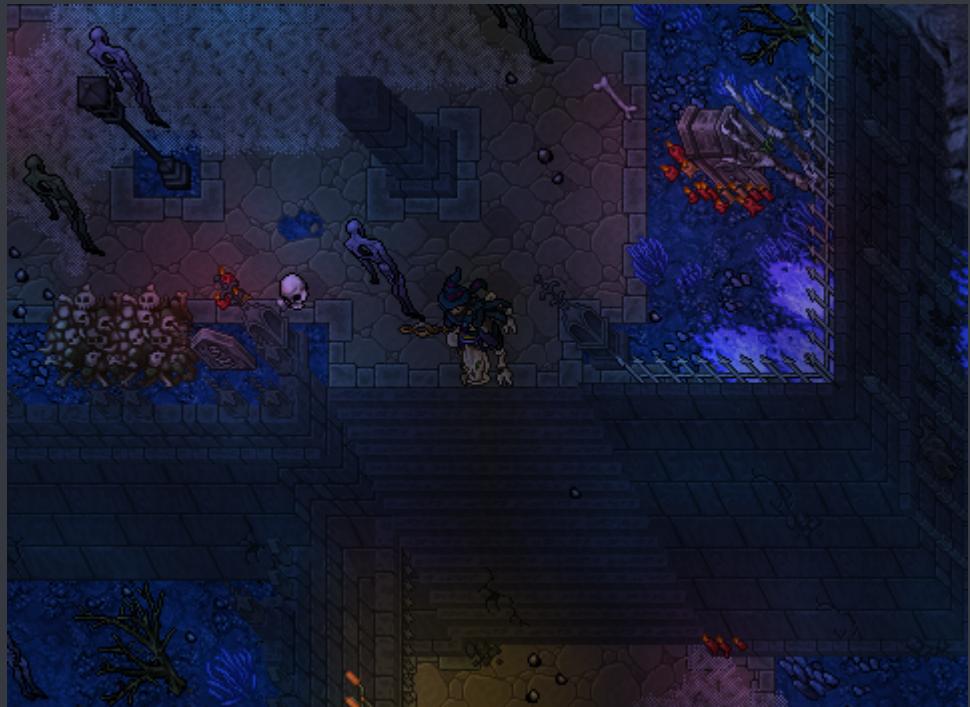


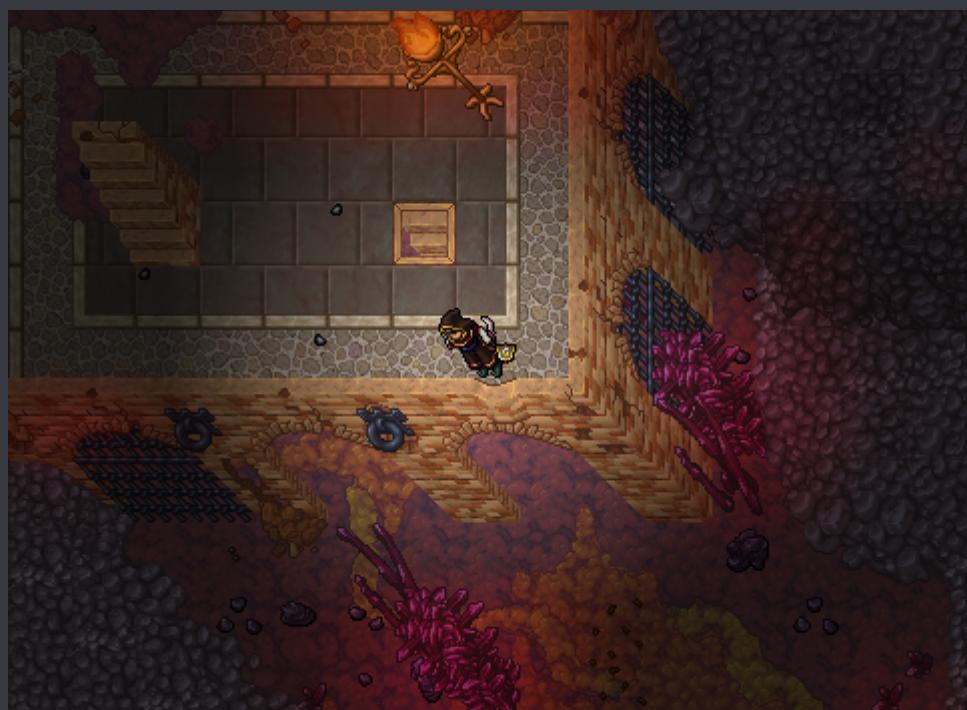


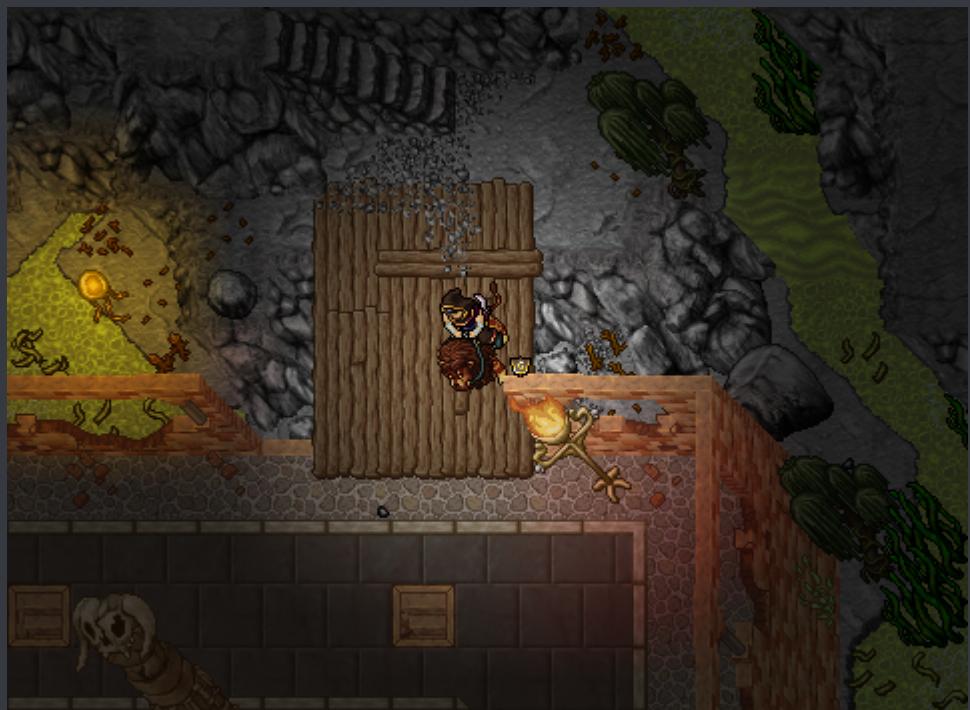


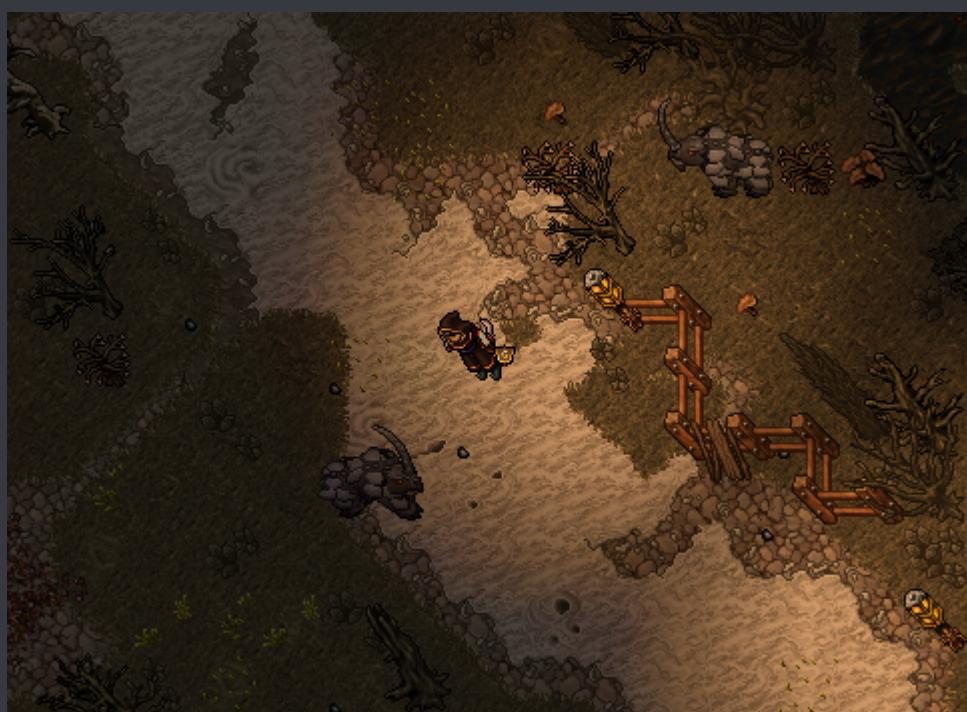
You lose 41 hitpoints due to an attack by a falcon knight.

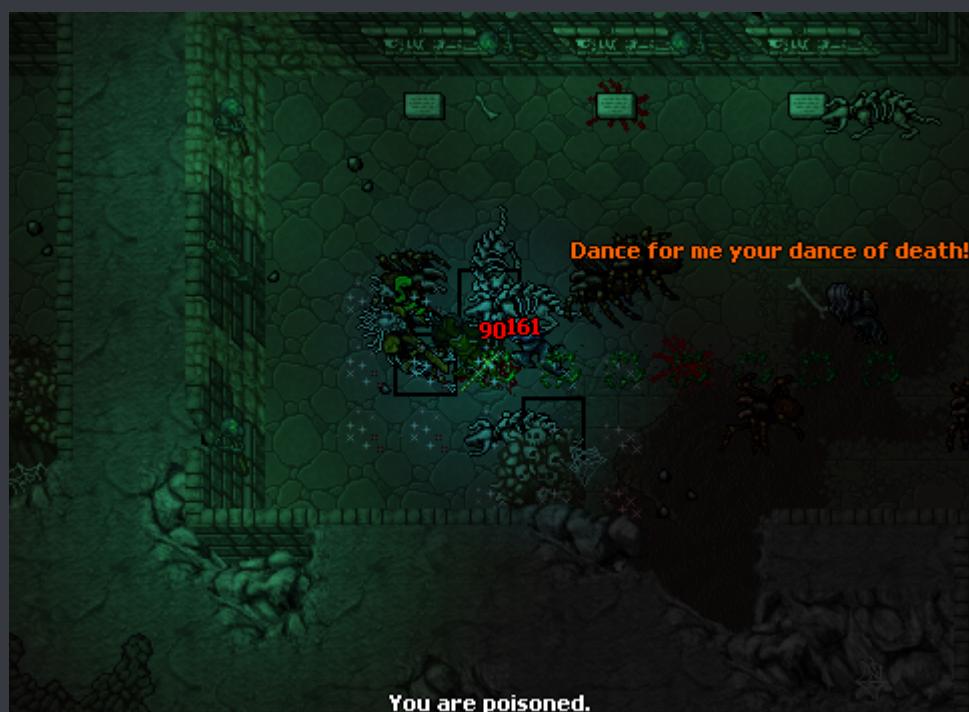
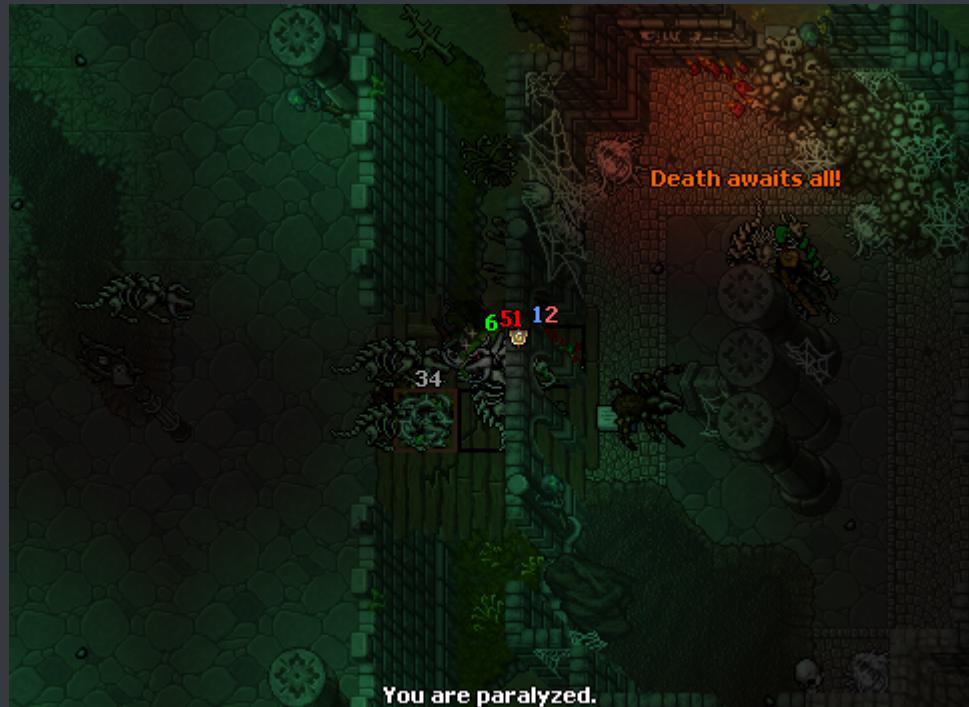


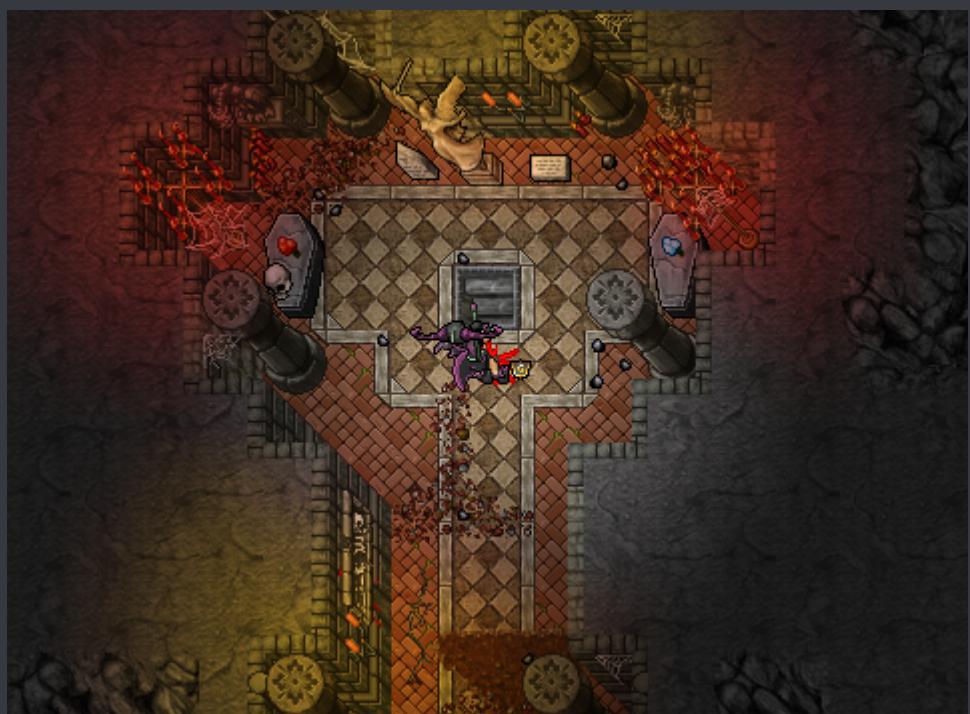
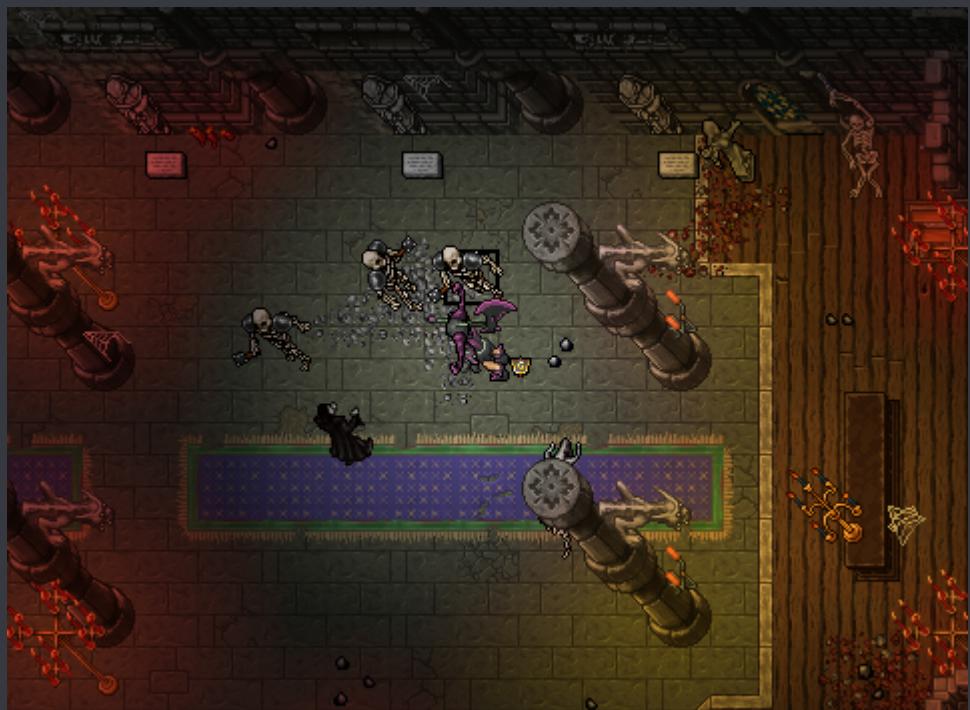














Have you tried to create other projects besides OT projects? For example 2D / 3D games? If so, please tell us a bit about it.

**Unknown Soldier:** No, not really.

We all know that the situation in the world has been very tense for many years, most of us face "many obstacles on our way" to make our dreams come true and to live a normal life. Considering all of this, and assuming you get the opportunity to say something positive to the whole world - what would it be?

**Unknown Soldier:** Well, recent times are pretty tough, most would agree and I am very bad at giving some warming up words, but I'll try: we are all gonna die one day, just do what you like, and don't waste time for listening to all the people saying whatever they're saying about you, be a reasonable hedonist, enjoy what you can, and don't worry too much!

Would you like to add something from yourself that you have not been asked about?  
If so, feel free to do it now.

**Unknown Soldier:** I'd just like to send a big thank you to all the OT community members that contributes to the code for all their work so that people like me can use various Open Tibia software that is being developed. You do a tremendous job.

**Interviewed by Cviras.**

Thank you Unknown Soldier on behalf of the entire community for your time and comprehensive answers. We wish you much success and make your biggest dreams come true and we hope that you will stay with us as long as possible.