

# Warlords of the Dark Ages

A Shieldwall Miniatures Campaign

By

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## 1. The Map

The map represents the fictitious island of Lyonesse in what corresponds to our 10<sup>th</sup> Century AD.

The map is representational, much like the “schematic” maps available during the Middle Ages. It shows the important towns and castles on the island, known as areas. Each area has:

- 1) A name
- 2) A point value
- 3) A loyalty indicator (pennon)
- 4) A control indicator (guidon).

An area with no pennon or guidon is neutral. For simplicity's sake we are ignoring naval warfare.

There are three sizes of force in the game, small, large, and huge. A small standard (rectangular flag) represents a small force, a larger one represent a large force, and the largest a huge force.

There are five players, whose icons have these colors:

Dalriana:	Yellow
Murchia:	Light blue
Cymria:	Green
Sumnia:	Red
Marchester:	Dark blue

The referee has created a specific battleboard representing the ground surrounding the towns and castles. You will be able to see what terrain is in each area when you have your war leader at that location.

Fuzzy brown lines connect areas to one another. These represent efficient routes of travel.

The other mountains, hills, and woods on the map indicate what sort of country surrounds each area, and will affect its terrain. It also gives you an idea of why there is no road for example between Ayrflow and Fennian.

Each castle area is worth 600 tax points. Each town area is worth 200 tax points. Tax points represent both hard cash and also the vassals available in each area.

## 2. History of Lyonesse

The game begins in the year AD 950. The setting is a large island south of Ireland, known as Lyonesse.

Of old, Lyonesse was divided into three kingdoms: The Cymrians in the west, the Dalrianans in the north, and the Saxons in the south and center. The ancient border of Cymria was the Goreflood River. Of old, Dalriana's lands extended east to the end of the Ayrflow Mountains. Cymria and Dalriana both laid claim to the Belshaw Hills and disputed ownership vigorously. The Saxons held the east and the south, but laid claim to the entire island.

Between 650-750, several waves of Carolingian Franks migrated to Lyonesse, overran the Saxon lands and pushed the Cymrians and Dalrianans out of much of their ancestral territory.

Over the next two centuries the Franks assimilated with the Saxons they had conquered, ruling from the ancient capital at Malten Castle. They also regarded themselves as the rightful rulers of Cymria and Dalriana, which led to constant warfare along the ill-defined borders of the three kingdoms.

In 940 the Frankish King Adelbard II died of wounds suffered during a friendly chess game with his seneschal. The claimants to the throne of Lyonesse promptly went to war (with a brief pause to behead the seneschal): The Duke of Sumnia in the east, the Duke of Murchia in the north, and the Duke of Marchester in the south. Dalriana used the anarchy as a pretext to claim “protective rights” over the lands of Cymria as well as the north of Lyonesse.

After several stalemated wars between 941-945, the borders simmer with trouble and the center of Lyonesse lies ungoverned. The major powers have spent five years recovering, to continue the argument.

### 3. Victory

Each player will receive a set of victory conditions. The winner is the first player to end a game year with all his victory conditions met. If several players meet their conditions the same year, the winner is the player controlling the most points worth of towns and castles.

### 4. Malten Castle

Malten castle is the ancient capital of Frankish Lyonesse, and the possessor of this castle has a very strong propaganda advantage as far as the vassals of the other Frankish players are concerned. If a Frankish player has captured Malten Castle and gained its loyalty, then his warlord gains an advantage. Any regular list troops of the other players suffer a -1 on leadership if fighting against him if he is present and on the field. Dogs of war are exempt, as are any Cymrian or Dalriannan troops.

### 5. The Solemn Oath

A player may take a Solemn Oath, recorded with the referee. The oath may be for anything in the scope of the game. A player usually takes a solemn oath at the request of another player or players, who are said to hold the oath in keeping. The oath is binding until the keepers release the oath-taker from the oath. If the referee judges that a player has broken the oath, the player's warlord drops 2 leadership points, and his tax revenues drop 10%. This penalty persists until the keepers release him from it.

### 6. Game Sequence of Events

- 1) The game is played in turns.
- 2) Each turn represents a nominal 10-day period.
- 3) Four turns represent the 40-day period during which a lord's vassals were obliged to meet under his command and conduct his wars.
- 4) At the end of the fourth turn the game-year ends. All forces leave the map, although conquered area remain under the new owner's control. The lord and his vassals spend the rest of the year feasting and feuding with their relatives.

#### Starting a Game Year

- 1) At the start of the year, each player buys a new army from his army list, using the tax point values of the areas he controls, plus any extra money in his warchest. Extra items are also available for purchase, as listed below on the Cost Chart. He then tells the referee where on the map each part of his army will begin the year. Unspent points go into his warchest.
- 2) Models must start the year in an area the player controlled at the end of the prior game year. It does not need to be loyal but must have been under his control.
- 3) Each player receives one army general, who represents the head of his family, known as the **warlord**. The referee assigns this model its initial abilities, weapons, etc. but you may add extras as allowed by your army list by paying the required cost. If the warlord is killed during a game-year, a new one appears in a location chosen by the referee. Each time a warlord "resurrects", his leadership drops one point.
- 4) For example, a Welsh player would start the game with a Teyrn and 1000 points with which to buy additional troops from the Welsh army list of his choice (Powys, etc.).
- 5) Once players have placed their models, the referee tells each player his initial spy and scouting reports and the date when turn 1 of the year is due.

#### Playing a Turn

- 1) Each turn the players email the referee their move.

- 2) The referee then correlates the moves and the results of the move.
- 3) If a battle takes place, the referee, the players concerned, and any other players they wish to invite meet and fight the battle. The referee then decides losses and retreat results.
- 4) Once the move is done, the referee emails each player his move results.

## 7. Costs for Additional Items

You must buy supply wagons and stone throwers at the start of a game year, but you may buy other items at any time in any location if there is money in your warchest.

Item	To buy	To Field
Supply Wagon	50	25
Heavy stone thrower	50	25
Crew models for stone thrower (minimum crew 3 models)	8	-
Ladder	2	-
Battering ram	10	-
Torch (torches disappear after use in a battle)	1	-

### Optional Rules in Use

- 1) Each character may have one family heirloom
- 2) Each player may buy one holy relic
- 3) Land-waster and the Papal Banner are not in use.

Heirlooms and relics must be paid for each year.

## 8. The Point Value of a Force

We will calculate the point value (PV) of a force as the cost of all its models. We will not count items from the Additional Items chart above except for crew models.

## 9. Movement

A force must have a character model with it in order to move. This can be any character model available from your army list. For convenience, we will call him the general commanding the force.

Characters of the same type will get a seniority number at the start of the year to identify them. The warlord himself is of course always *primus inter pares*.

### On-Road Movement

- 1) A force (a group of models acting under a given order for the turn) may make a normal move of one area per turn along a road. For example, a force in Malten could move to Harwich or Chelby, but not Drimby.

### Off-Road Movement

- 1) You may order a force to move off road, simply by naming the destination area, which may be any area on the map.
- 2) Off-road movement is risky and slow. A force may get lost and suffer attrition.
- 3) Terrain, distance, the types of models in the force, and the leadership of the general will all affect the result. You will have to discover the odds by experience, but common sense is a good guide.

### Conflicting and Converging Moves

- 1) If two forces move to the same spot, one will arrive first, decided by the leadership of the generals involved.
- 2) If there is a battle, converging forces arrive 1D6+2 turns apart.

- 3) If two forces “cross” each other, the referee will ask the players if they want to ignore each other. If they do not, then one will “steal a march” on the other and arrive first. The second force stays in its original location.
- 4) A player who steals a march must fight a battle under “attack” orders (see battles below).
- 5) To see who steals the march, the referee will roll 1D6 per force, adding the leadership of the force’s general.

## 10. Capturing and Controlling Areas

### Capturing

- 1) Unoccupied neutral areas start the year with defending forces equal to half their point value. Thus a town area will have a 100-point defensive force and a castle area will have a 300-point defensive force. The referee buys these forces at the start of each year. Once a player captures a neutral area, any surviving defenders retire to their local manors to sulk and wait on events.
- 2) Neutral areas will surrender automatically if your force outnumbers their 3:1 in point value. Otherwise you must besiege the area to capture it.
- 3) You may enter an area without trying to capture it.
- 4) If you still have the loyalty of an area that another player has captured, you may reclaim it (if undefended) by entering the area with any size force, even a lone character. You do not need the minimums from rules (2) and (3) above.

### Loyalty

- 1) After capture, you must garrison an area for a full game year before it becomes loyal. You need a 50-point garrison during the year for a town and a 150-point garrison for a castle. If the garrison drops below this value we assume the local defenders eject your men, even in the midst of a siege.
- 2) Until loyal, it is worth half its normal points.
- 3) You may place starting forces in any area you controlled at the end of the prior year, even if it is not yet loyal.
- 4) The area’s loyalty remains with its prior owner until you meet rule (1) above.
- 5) Once loyal, you no longer need a garrison to control the area, and you collect full taxes for it.

## 11. Supply and the Warchest

### Supply

- 1) A controlled town area will supply up to 50 figures per turn. A controlled castle area will supply up to 150 figures per turn.
- 2) Excess figures are unsupplied and suffer attrition at the start of the turn based on their leadership rating (see below). A castle or town gives no supply to the garrison if the attackers outnumber the defenders 3:1 or more.
- 3) An captured but not yet loyal area will supply up to 25 figures per turn.
- 4) You may buy supply wagons for your forces. A supply wagon supplies up to 100 figures per turn and may be used inside an area to supply the garrison during a siege.

### The Warchest

- 1) All your unspent points sit in your warchest, which must be located somewhere on the map.
- 2) You may move your warchest if accompanied by a character model.
- 3) You may spend money from your warchest at any location and freely transfer money to another player.
- 4) If your warchest is captured you lose all the money.
- 5) In a field battle where it is present, a wagon model indicates the warchest’s location.

## 12. Intelligence

- 1) Rumors of general activity allow the players to know where enemy forces are located.

- 2) A force of 1-50 models is a small force.
- 3) A force of 51-200 models is a large force.
- 4) A force of 201+ models is a mighty force.
- 5) Each turn the referee will send out a summary of what forces are in each area as of the end of the turn, but not how they moved that turn.

## 13. Battles

When hostile forces start a turn in the same area, or enter the same area, a battle may take place.

### **Retreat before Battle**

After receiving your scouting report of the enemy's strength and condition, you may decide you cannot possibly win a battle and chose to retreat. A retreating force suffers some attrition. The force retreats one area away from the line of the enemy advance, usually along a road, but off-road retreats are legal.

### **Attack and Defend Orders**

Each force must declare attack or defend. A force on attack has 16 turns to break the enemy force's army morale. A force on defend needs to fight for 16 turns with its army morale intact. Both forces may declare attack.

If both forces declare defend then there is no battle; however, hostile forces cannot move "through" one another.

A force on attack gets the first move vs. a defending force, and may add one to the leadership of one of its units or characters once during the game.

If a force on attack fails to break the enemy it must retreat to its starting position at the start of the battle. This will usually be back along its path of advance. It counts as losing the battle, and regains losses as if it had lost even if its own army morale did not break. The other side counts as winning the battle and regains losses as the winner.

### **Terrain**

Each area has an expanded battleboard hex about 12 feet across. The referee will have laid out the terrain in this expanded hex at the start of the campaign. A player who is in the hex will get a copy of the expanded hex. An actual battle will usually be played on a subsection of this hex the size of the available game table, for example 5 hexes by 8. Each small hex represents a Geo-Hex tile.

### **Setup and Game Length**

Setup will vary depending on the forces involved. Usually the defender will be allowed to pick where he wants to place his units, and the attacker will start three feet away.

### **Fieldworks**

For simplicity we will not have forces dig fieldworks. However, walls and hedges may be present on the battlefield.

### **Army Morale**

Army morale breaks if a force ends a turn with half or more of its point value in flight, killed, or destroyed. At that point the rest of the army also flees. The other side may continue to try and destroy enemy units until all are off the table. When 16 turns are over or one side has all its units off the table, the game ends.

If a force's army morale breaks, all its units enter flight and it retreats from the area. This will be along a road if possible, but the referee will enforce an off-road retreat if necessary.

### **Regaining Losses**

A winning force regains half of its killed figures and 2/3 of its destroyed or fled-off-table models.

A losing force regains  $\frac{1}{4}$  of its killed figures and half its destroyed or fled-off-table models. If forced to retreat off-road, there may be additional attrition. The penalty for losing a battle is severe, but in this era of irregulars there were no "orderly retreats". If a force was broken it was dispersed with little chance of recovery.

Each time a given general loses two battles, his leadership drops one point. Each time he wins two battles, his leadership rises one point. The player may buy this same general again next year if desired, to keep the bonus.

### **Stripping the Dead**

The winner also collects half the point value of the armor weapons, and warhorses from all permanently killed figures, friendly or enemy. The referee adds the point value of these items to the player's warchest. Items collectable are those in the army list that cost extra above the base cost of the model, with the exception of warhorses. Warhorses are worth 14 points.

Game length will be 16 turns. This is usually more than enough time for one force's army morale to break. The game ends either at the end of turn 16 or when one side has all its units fled off the table.

### **Veteran Characters**

We will use the veteran character rule from WAB. If you get a veteran character you may keep using him in later game-years, as long as you pay for him. However, you cannot get a veteran character if your force outnumbered the enemy by 2:1 or more in PV. We will not use the veteran unit rule; this would be hard for me to keep track of and units really did not persist in this period they way they did for the Romans.

### **Warlord Reputation**

If a warlord (and no other character) wins two battles in a row, the referee will add 1 permanently to his leadership. If he loses two battles in a row he will lose 1 from his leadership. The maximum leadership is 11, but there is no minimum. If the winning force outnumbered the enemy by 2:1 or more in PV, then a victory will not count, but a loss will still count against him.

The battle will not count if either side is a small force; these are just skirmishes.

### **Representing Castles and Towns in Battles**

If necessary, we will use the Buildings and Fortifications section of the basic WAB rules to handle assaults on towns and castles that might take place during a field battle. You may not launch an assault on a town or castle unless you also have the points to capture it.

**Towns:** Towns are about 18" across, with 4-6 light buildings inside. Towns have a dry ditch and timber palisade protecting them, with one reinforced gate.

**Castles:** Castles are of the motte and bailey type. They are on high ground, usually two contours above the base level. They are also 18" across with 4-6 light buildings. They have a dry ditch, a timber palisade, one reinforced gate, and a stone tower keep at one end. I don't have a good way to represent a motte but if I come up with something the motte will require an extra turn to climb to reach the base of the tower.

**Destroyed Sections:** If a stone thrower destroys a section of palisade or keep, a three-inch gap is knocked down and then counts as a linear obstacle. Until then, models must use ladders to climb to the top of a palisade, and the stone keep may not be attacked. If a stone thrower destroys a house, it collapses and from then on its walls count as a linear obstacle.

**Torches:** Any number of models may carry torches on long poles, but may not shoot or use other weapons while carrying them. If a torchbearer stays in contact with a palisade or house for a full movement phase, it catches fire on a 1D6 5-6. A defender within one inch of the fire may then spend a movement phase to put it out on a 1D6 4-6 score. Once alit, the fire destroys D3 points per turn. The attacker must designate which models are carrying torches at the start of the assault and no others may pick them up during the assault. Once burned, a three-inch gap is created as above, and a house collapses into a smoldering linear obstacle. Up to four models may try to burn a given section.

**Ladders:** The attacker may use ladders to climb to the top of a palisade. Two infantry models may carry a ladder at full speed, or one model moving 1" slower than normal. It takes half a move to erect a ladder, and models take 2" to climb it. Defenders within 1" of the ladder may fight the man at the top of the ladder, gaining linear obstacle defensive advantage. Two models may be on the ladder. If the attacker wins the combat he and his companion may climb onto the parapet; otherwise the defenders throw down the ladder on a D6 4-6. The top man suffers 1 wound for falling but his companion is not injured. A ladder long enough to reach the top of the keep counts as two ladders and takes twice as many men to carry, but may hold four models. If thrown down, the top man suffers two wounds and the next man suffers one wound.

**The Ditch:** To cross the ditch, a model must stop at the edge, then spend a full turn crossing to the other side. A model may spend a movement phase filling ditch. A model fills 1/12<sup>th</sup> of a three-inch ditch section per turn. Up to four models may work on a given section.

**Battering Rams:** It takes 6 models to carry a ram, moving 1" slower than normal. The ram does D3 points of damage to a gate or palisade, or 1 point of damage to a keep wall. It must be in contact for a full movement phase with a crew of 6 models. The ram cannot cross the ditch.

## 14. Combat Results Table

I will use the quick results table below for deciding minor encounters where it is not worthwhile to get everyone together. I will decide attack/defend orders depending on my interpretation of the situation. The modifiers apply to both forces, so they may cancel one another out.

**Combat Results Table (2D6)**

Modified Score	Odds (Higher:Lower)			
	1.25:1 or less	1.5:1 or less	2:1 or less	More than 2:1
2-3	Decisive defeat	Tactical defeat	Bloody draw	Tactical victory
4-5	Tactical defeat	Bloody draw	Tactical victory	Tactical victory
6-8	Bloody draw	Tactical victory	Tactical victory	Decisive victory
9-10	Tactical victory	Tactical victory	Decisive victory	Decisive victory
11-12	Decisive victory	Decisive victory	Decisive victory	Decisive victory
Leadership of highest-ranking character in the force above enemy, per point, up to +2				+1
Force has no characters with it:				-2
Mostly infantry, in rough terrain area:				+1
Mostly cavalry, in open terrain area:				+1
Decisive Victory/Defeat	Losing force loses 2/6 killed and the rest routed, losing all engines and wagons in the force. The winning force loses PV equal to half the enemy killed and gains the field.			
Tactical Victory/Defeat	Losing force loses 1/6 killed, 2/6 routed, and the rest retreat off the table, losing half of all engines and wagons. The winning force loses points equal to enemy's killed points and gains the field.			
Bloody Draw	Smaller force loses 1/6 killed and 2/6 routed. The larger force loses the same points in killed and routed troops. Both forces hold their ground, but a force on attack orders counts as losing the battle. If both were on the attack, both count as losing. Neither side loses any wagons or engines.			

## 15. Attrition and Exhaustion

The chart below summarizes the attrition rates in the game.

<b>Cause</b>	<b>LD 10+</b>	<b>LD 8-9</b>	<b>LD 6-7</b>	<b>LD 5-</b>
Unsupplied. Use leadership of each troop type. Models are exhausted.	None	5%	10%	20%
Retreat before combat. Use general's leadership. If no general, use leadership of each troop type.	None	1%	5%	10%
Off-Road Movement, per Turn. Use general's leadership. If no general, use leadership of each troop type.	None	5%	10%	20%
Terrain crossed also affects the attrition rate. Use the worst terrain crossed:				
Across mountains/swamp:				+20%
Across forest/hills/river:				+10%
<b>Loss of wagons or siege engines:</b> Roll 1D6 per wagon or engine present for retreat before combat, and per turn of off-road movement. It is lost on a 1. Subtract 2 if across mountains or swamp, or 1 if across other nasty terrain. If there is a general with a leadership of 10+, they are never lost. Crew are unaffected, use the leadership-based rates above.				
<b>Exhaustion:</b> An exhausted model suffers a -1 on leadership, weapon skill, and ballistic skill.				

### Exhaustion

A model is exhausted if:

- 1) It starts a turn unsupplied.
- 2) It has routed off the table, been destroyed in combat, or is a regained loss after a battle.
- 3) The warlord is never exhausted.

An exhausted model suffers a -1 on leadership, weapon skill, and ballistic skill.

A model must rest for a full turn in supply to recover from exhaustion.

If you brigade exhausted models with fresh models the whole unit is treated as exhausted, and any losses come from the fresh models.

## 16. Sieges and Assaults

### Sieges

To capture a town or castle that refuses to surrender, you must either assault it or sit outside until the defenders starve. If you have not captured the area by the end of the year your troops disperse and your siege has failed.

If you outnumber the defenders 3:1 in number of models (not point value) you have cut off its supply. Otherwise the defenders can still sneak parties out to bring in food. They may still claim the supply value of the area.

While sitting outside, your force does no damage to the fortifications; you must stage an assault in order to break down the walls and fight your way in.

A town or castle has a maximum garrison size of 100 infantry, cavalry, crew and character models. Supply wagons, etc. do not count.

**Assaults**

A force may launch one assault per turn on a town or castle. The referee figures the point value ratio between the two forces and rolls on the results chart below. Note that since defenses are mostly wooden, it is not that difficult to assault a town or castle, assuming you have the basic points necessary to capture it in the first place. The referee will decide which models a player loses in an assault, rounded up to the nearest model

**Assault Table**

Die Score	Odds Attacker:Defender				
	Under 2:1	2:1 or more	3:1 or more	4:1 or more	5:1 or more
1	R1	R1	R2	R2	V1
2	R1	R2	R2	V1	V1
3	R1	R2	V1	V1	V2
4	R1	R2	V1	V2	V2
5	R2	V1	V2	V2	V2
6	R2	V1	V2	V2	V2

**R1: Easily Repulsed:** Attackers suffer casualties = 20% of defender PV. Defenders suffer casualties = 5% of their own PV.

**R2: Bloody Repulse:** Attackers suffer casualties = 30% of defender PV. Defenders suffer casualties = 15% of their own PV.

**V1: Bloody Victory:** Defenders wiped out. Attackers suffer casualties = 50% of defender PV

**V2: Easy Victory:** Defenders wiped out. Attackers suffer casualties = 25% of defender PV.

Vs. a castle: -2 on die roll.  
Each heavy stone thrower present: +1

**17. Common Sense and Special Actions**

I will enforce common sense according to his best judgement. For example I won't allow a force of 5 models to steal a march on a huge army of 200 models in order to block it from moving into the smaller force's starting area.

On the other hand, I will gladly consider "special actions" that cover reasonable (and possibly dastardly) operations not specifically spelled out in the rules. Assassins? Bonus pay?

I may also have to change the rules if some problem pops up, so you will have to put that down to the action of fate or the Gods affecting the fortune of war.