

LEGENDARY BATTLES

Playing Massive Multiplayer Games of Warhammer



WARHAMMER

EXPANSION

By Jervis Johnson



Legendary Battles Rules
Jervis details all the rules you need to play massive games of Warhammer.

Legendary Battles

As part of the celebrations for the 25th anniversary of Warhammer, we decided to organise a 25,000-point Warhammer battle report – one of the biggest ever! Jervis volunteered to write the rules needed for the game, which are presented here. You can read the battle report itself on pages 20-45.

Jervis: Most games of Warhammer are two-player games between armies with equal points values of anywhere from 500 to 3000 points. However, while games like these are great fun, they are not the only way to play Warhammer. The purpose of this article is to provide rules for playing Warhammer in a slightly different way; one where, instead of playing against a single opponent, you gather a group of players together to fight a really large battle. And instead of choosing the armies to a precise points value, you pick a race or two for each side and then use as many models as you can lay your hands on!

Of course, there's a bit more to it than that, and there are a number of special rules and conventions required for large

games like this. This is mainly because the Warhammer rules are written with the assumption that there will only be two armies, with one player a side, and so additional rules are needed to cover what happens when there are more than two players a side. For example, who gets the dice out of the Magic pool? Can units under the command of one player flee through friendly units belonging to another? And so on.

The rules that follow will explain how to deal with these things, and also allow you to do things in a large multi-player battle that you can't do in a normal-sized game. You'll find rules for including allied units in your army, for fielding massed batteries of artillery or large hordes of monsters. There are also alternative rules for deploying and deciding who has won that are especially suited to large games, where adding up Victory Points would take as long as playing the game itself! All you need to do is bring along a large army, handfuls of dice, and be ready to fight one of the most exciting and memorable Warhammer battles of your life!

Legendary Battles Summary

1) ARRANGE THE GAME

- Select teams and decide armies to be used (make sure that the armies on the same team can ally together – see page 16).
- Agree points limit for the battle (minimum of 5000 points per side).
- Decide how armies will deploy, and what victory conditions will be used.
- Agree if any house rules will be used.

2) PICK ARMY

- Choose an army from the relevant Warhammer Army Book.
- Add allied units.
- Add Monstrous Hordes and/or Massed Batteries.

3) PREPARE THE BATTLEFIELD

- Set up the battlefield in any mutually agreeable manner.
- Pick deployment areas.
- Place objectives (if they are being used).

4) DEPLOY

- Agree turn or time limit for game.
- Deploy armies using method decided on in step 1.

5) DESPERATION TOKENS

- Side with lowest points value receives one desperation token for every 100 points they have less than opponents' total points value.
- Desperation tokens are divided amongst the players in the team.

6) FIGHT THE BATTLE

- Determine which side moves first.
- Fight the battle using the Warhammer rules.
- Determine the winner using method decided on in step 1.

The Legendary Battle

A "Legendary Battle" is a special type of Warhammer game that takes place between two teams of two or more players, with each team of players commanding an army of 5000 points or more. Note that it's not each player who has to have an army of this size – it's each side. So two players, one with a 2000-point army and one with a 3000-point army, could fight as a team in a Legendary Battle.

There's no upper limit to how many points each side can have – the more the merrier! Your aim should be to get as much of your collection on the table as you possibly can. In fact, the only real restriction on the upper points limit is that both sides should have roughly the same number of points.

The best way to decide the points limit for the game is to gather the players together and discuss what armies you have available, and how many points' worth of troops you can field. You'll find that it quickly becomes apparent what the sides for the game will be and roughly how many points the game should be. Note that the two sides don't have to have exactly the same number of points, as the rules for desperation tokens, later, will allow you to even things up if one side or the other has slightly more points. This said, try to keep the sides within 1000 points of each other.

So, in order to fight a Legendary Battle you will need a group of players that can muster two armies of 5000 points or more between them. Split the players into two teams (being careful to take into account the rules for allied armies that follow), set a points limit for each side, and then let the players go off and pick their armies ready for the game.

Choosing a legendary army

Each player must pick their army using the normal Warhammer rules. Players belonging to the same team will need to agree amongst themselves how many points each may spend on their army, though usually this will have been decided when the teams are set up.

The only changes to the way you can pick an army are the new rules for Allies and for Monstrous Hordes & Massed Batteries, which are described in the following sections. These modifications aside, you pick your army from the standard Warhammer army list, basing any restrictions on what you can take on the number of points you are allowed to spend on your own army. So, if you were playing in a 10,000-point game but only had 4000 points to spend on your contingent, then the number of characters, Special and Rare choices would be based on 4000 points, not 10,000 (nice try, though!).

Forging alliances

The Allies rules allow players on the same side to command armies drawn from different army lists. This is important in a Legendary Battle, because it's rare for players in a multiplayer game to all collect the same race; usually each side will comprise two or three different armies. If you wish, you can allow any armies to fight together, but to me this approach doesn't feel quite right for Warhammer. After all, there are some armies that have never fought on the same side at any point in the Warhammer world's history. Because of this, I wanted Legendary Battles to have rules that provided guidance about which armies would feasibly fight together.

This is accomplished through the use of the Ally chart you'll see on page 16. Just cross reference two armies to see if they are allowed to ally together. Armies that are enemies may not fight on the same side, but armies that are occasional or common allies can fight alongside each other. If you've got an army that you can't find on the chart for any reason, then either count it as being an occasional ally to all other armies, or (even better!) discuss the matter with the other players and decide among yourselves who they can ally with.

Allied units

By a happy stroke of fortune, the Ally chart also gives you the option of including some allied units in your own army. This is a great way to start off a new army, and means you can include a unit or two of allied models in your collection just because you think they look cool. It also allows for more models to be used in the battle, which is always a good thing – well, if you ask me, anyway!

To see which allied units can join your own army, just read along the line for it on the Ally chart; you may take units from any armies that are noted as being common allies. You may not take units from armies that are your enemies or which you only occasionally ally with. For example, a player fielding an Empire army could include a unit of High Elves, but not Wood Elves or Dark Elves, and so on.

Allied units are paid for from your own points allocation, and you have complete control of them during the battle. Characters and units that are taken do count towards the maximum restrictions that apply to your army for characters and for Special or Rare units. So if you took a Special unit from another list, then it would count against the number of Special units in your army. Similarly a Rare unit from another list would count against the number of Rare units allowed in your army. Allied Core units, however, do not count towards the minimum number of

Famous Battles

THE BATTLE OF BLACK FIRE PASS

At the dawn of the Empire, a vastly outnumbered army of Men led by Sigmar stood side-by-side with their Dwarf allies against the largest Orc horde ever seen. The human and Dwarf armies held a narrow pass, where the overwhelming hordes of Orcs & Goblins could not bring their numbers to bear. The battle lasted many hours, until the Orcs were finally broken by a fearsome charge led by Sigmar himself.



Legendary Battles Ally Chart

| | Empire | Orcs & Goblins | Skaven | Chaos* | Tomb Kings | Vampire Counts | Dark Elves | High Elves | Wood Elves | Brettonnia | Dwarfs | Lizardmen | Ogres |
|----------------|--------|----------------|--------|--------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------|-----------|-------|
| Empire | - | X | X | X | O | X | X | C | O | C | C | O | C |
| Orcs & Goblins | X | - | C | C | X | O | O | X | X | X | X | O | C |
| Skaven | X | C | - | C | O | X | O | X | X | X | X | O | C |
| Chaos* | X | C | C | - | O | O | O | X | X | X | X | O | C |
| Tomb Kings | O | X | O | O | - | X | O | X | X | X | O | O | C |
| Vampire Counts | X | O | X | O | X | - | O | X | X | X | X | O | C |
| Dark Elves | X | O | O | O | X | O | - | X | X | X | X | O | C |
| High Elves | C | X | X | X | X | X | X | - | C | C | O | O | C |
| Wood Elves | O | X | X | X | O | X | X | C | - | C | O | O | C |
| Brettonnia | C | X | X | X | X | X | X | C | C | - | C | O | C |
| Dwarfs | C | X | X | X | O | X | X | O | O | C | - | O | C |
| Lizardmen | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | - | C |
| Ogres | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | - |

* Chaos includes all the different Chaos army books. All Chaos armies count as common allies to each other.

KEY

X = Enemies: Will not fight on the same side.

O = Occasional Allies: Will fight together, but are not friendly units for purposes of the rules. Can't flee through each other. May not be taken as allied units in another army.

C = Common Allies: Will fight together and are friends. Can flee through each other. Can be taken as allied units in another army. However, characters may not join each other's units, the General's leadership and re-rolls for the army standard will only work for their own army, etc.

Famous Battles

BATTLE OF A HUNDRED CANNONS

The armies of Karaz-a-Karak, Karak Kadrin and Zhufbar united under the command of High King Thorgrim Grudgebearer in order to stop a powerful horde of Ogres. Just as the Ogre army was divided by the river Aver, an army of Nuln arrived to aid the Dwarf throng. Caught between Dwarfs and Men, the Ogres were swept away by the largest concentration of artillery ever seen in the Old World, and were utterly destroyed.



Core units you must take – the minimum number of Core units in your force must still be chosen from your main army list, regardless of how many allies you have.

Note that the game restrictions described later for allied units belonging to another player also apply to allied units in your own army. This means they won't be able to use your General's Leadership, for example, and allied characters won't be able to join units from your main army. The only exception is allied Wizards in your army, who must use your pool of power and dispel dice, and don't get a separate pool of their own.

Massed Batteries and Monstrous Hordes

I doubt that there is an Empire player who hasn't dreamt of being able to field a massed battery of Great Cannons, and I'm sure that any Lizardman player worth his salt yearns for the chance to unleash an entire regiment of Stegadons in a thundering stampede! Most other armies include artillery and monsters that can similarly be fielded in huge numbers in a Legendary Battle!

A Monstrous Horde or Massed Battery consists of several monsters, chariots or war machines that are grouped together into a single formation that counts as one Special or Rare choice (as appropriate). Monsters taken as mounts for a Hero can be grouped together in this way, counting as a single Hero choice for the army, and also as an additional Hero, Special or Rare

choice if the monster would normally use up one of these slots as well.

So, a Massed Battery of twelve Empire Great Cannons would count as a single Special choice, a Monstrous Horde of half-a-dozen Lizardmen Stegadons would count as a single Rare choice, while four High Elf Dragon Mages would count as two Hero choices (one for the Mages and one for their Dragons).

All models in the formation must be of exactly the same type, though they can take different upgrades and options if desired. The formation is deployed as a single unit, and each model after the first must be placed within 6" of a model from the formation that has already been deployed. Once the battle starts, however, all models are treated as individual units, and they move and fight separately just as they would in a standard battle.

Each side may take up to one Monstrous Horde or Massed Battery for every 5000 points in their combined army. So, you could take one Monstrous Horde or one Massed Battery in a legendary army worth 5000-9999 points, or two in a legendary army worth 10,000-14,999 points, and so on.

Note that the limit is per side, not per player, and this means that teams will quite often have to discuss who will get to use them before armies are picked. It's not a bad idea for players to pool suitable models under the command of a single player; for example, several Empire players could pool all of their Great Cannon

models into a single Massed Battery under the command of one player. In this case, the player in command of the formation would have to pay all of the points for the models he has been lent.

Setting up

With the armies chosen you are now ready to set up and play. The first thing you will need to do is to set up your gaming table, or rather gaming tables, as with a game this size you will probably need to join several of the tables you normally use together. As a rule of thumb, allow at least one 6' x 4' table for every two or three players taking part. So, two 6' x 4' tables will cater for a 4-6 player game, while three 6' x 4' tables will work for 6-8 players, and so on.

Try to avoid setting up the tables in a long, thin row, as this will not only look strange, but can lead to players simply playing several normal games side-by-side. Instead, I'd recommend trying to create a deeper, squarer battlefield than you would normally by putting together several tables so that the long edges are touching. Offsetting tables to create an irregular shape also works well.

Next, set up your terrain in any mutually agreeable manner, and roll a dice to see who picks which side of the table to deploy on. You should also set up the objectives for the battle at this stage, as described in the Victory Condition rules later on.

Once these things are out of the way you can deploy the two armies. Set them up 24" apart, as you would in a normal game. Rather than setting up one unit at a time, however, which can take forever for a game this size, I recommend using one of the following alternative methods of deployment:

Map: Each side draws a map of the battlefield and marks on it where their units will set up.

Screen: Place a screen between the two deployment areas, and then have each side deploy simultaneously behind their screen. (We find that Games Workshop figure cases can work well for this if you have enough, or you can use cardboard boxes, or whatever else you have to hand).

Race: Both sides set up simultaneously. The side that yells out "finished!" first gets to choose if they have the first or second turn, and their opponents only have five more minutes to deploy the rest of their army. Any units not deployed within this time must be placed in reserve (see the rules for reserves, later).

Fighting a Legendary Battle

You'll be happy to learn that you're now ready to play... well, almost. Here are the modifications to the game rules you'll need to use when fighting multiplayer battles:

- Each player in a team controls his own army. All players on the same side move their units in the Movement phase, all the players shoot in the Shooting phase, and so on. If there is ever a disagreement on what order to do things in, then roll a die to decide who goes first.
- Characters from one player's army may not join units belonging to a team member's army. Generals and army standards only affect units from their own army.
- Only units that are noted as being common allies count as friendly units for the purposes of the rules. See the Ally chart on the previous page.
- In a Legendary Battle, each side receives one power or dispel dice in their dice pool for each player in the larger-sized team, instead of the usual two dice per side. So, if one team had three players and the other team had four, then both sides would get four dice. These dice must be distributed as evenly as possible amongst the players in the team, and

Famous Battles

THE BATTLE OF HEL FENN

In the year 2145, Mannfred von Carstein, last and most cunning of the Vampire Counts, launched a surprise winter attack on the Empire while the realm was in the grip of a fierce civil war. He almost succeeded in capturing Altdorf, but was forced to retreat by a combined Empire, Dwarf and High Elf army. The alliance pursued Mannfred into Sylvania, and he was finally brought to battle at Hel Fenn, where he was defeated by the Elector Count of Stirland, and his Undead army destroyed.



House Rules and Narrative Games

It is well worth discussing if any house rules will be used when you first start organising a Legendary Battle. A house rule is simply a modification to the normal game rules that will be used for the coming battle.

For example, you might decide to nominate one Army General and battle standard bearer on each side as being in overall command of the army, so their Leadership and re-roll can be used by any unit, including allied units commanded by other players. Another house rule I've seen used for large games is to limit access to special characters and unique magic items so that there can't be more than one of each in the battle. Just take care not to get carried away; a small selection of house rules will create a memorable and unique battle, but too many will only serve to slow the game down.

You should also discuss whether to give your game a narrative, for example basing it on a famous battle from the

history of the Warhammer World, or creating a story yourselves. If your group is playing a Mighty Empires campaign then you may want to create a story for the battle that fits in with your campaign. If you give the battle a narrative, you will almost certainly want to come up with some special house rules to help reflect the theme you have chosen, and you may also want to make sure that certain units and special characters are included in the armies.

I haven't included any hard and fast rules for these kinds of things, because whether you allow them or not in your game is very much a matter of personal taste. In any case, I think it's rather important that all of the players involved in a Legendary Battle take some time to sit down and talk to each other about what house rules they would (or would not) like to use in the coming battle. Doing so can only make the game more enjoyable for all concerned.

Editor's Note: The Legendary Battle report on pages 20-45 is an example of a narrative game for which we created a number of special house rules.

Famous Battles

THE BATTLE OF FINUVAL PLAIN

When the Dark Elves and their Chaos allies invaded Ulthuan, they were confronted by a High Elf army at Finuval Plain. The High Elves were terribly outnumbered, but the heroic efforts of Tyrion and Teclis proved just enough to give them victory. The Dark Elf army was all but annihilated and the Witch King only escaped by casting himself into the Realm of Chaos!



then randomly decide who gets any leftover dice. Next, add additional dice to each player's starting pool as you would normally, and then carry on with the Magic phase.

- Players on the same side are not allowed to share the dice from their pool with other players after the dice have been distributed.
- Only one player per side may attempt to dispel any given spell, but they are allowed to try to dispel a spell cast against any unit on their side, including units commanded by other players.

Reserves

When you fight a really large battle, it's entirely possible that you won't be able to fit all of the units onto the tabletop. At other times you may want to hold some units back even if there is room to deploy, in order to keep some troops in reserve to cover any losses you suffer.

Players are therefore allowed to keep some of their units in reserve. These units are not set up with the rest of the army, and instead can enter play in the same manner as a unit that has pursued an enemy off the table (see page 43 of the Warhammer rulebook for details). The only difference to the standard rules is that any or all of the reserves may enter on any turn that the controlling player wishes, and anywhere on their side's table edge.

Desperation tokens

In a large, multiplayer game, it's not uncommon for one side or the other to end

up with fewer points than their opponent. To help even things out, the underdog is given a number of desperation tokens that they can use to help them in the battle. How you represent the tokens is up to you; coins, counters or beads will suffice, although some players will want to scratch-build some tokens that are in keeping with their army.

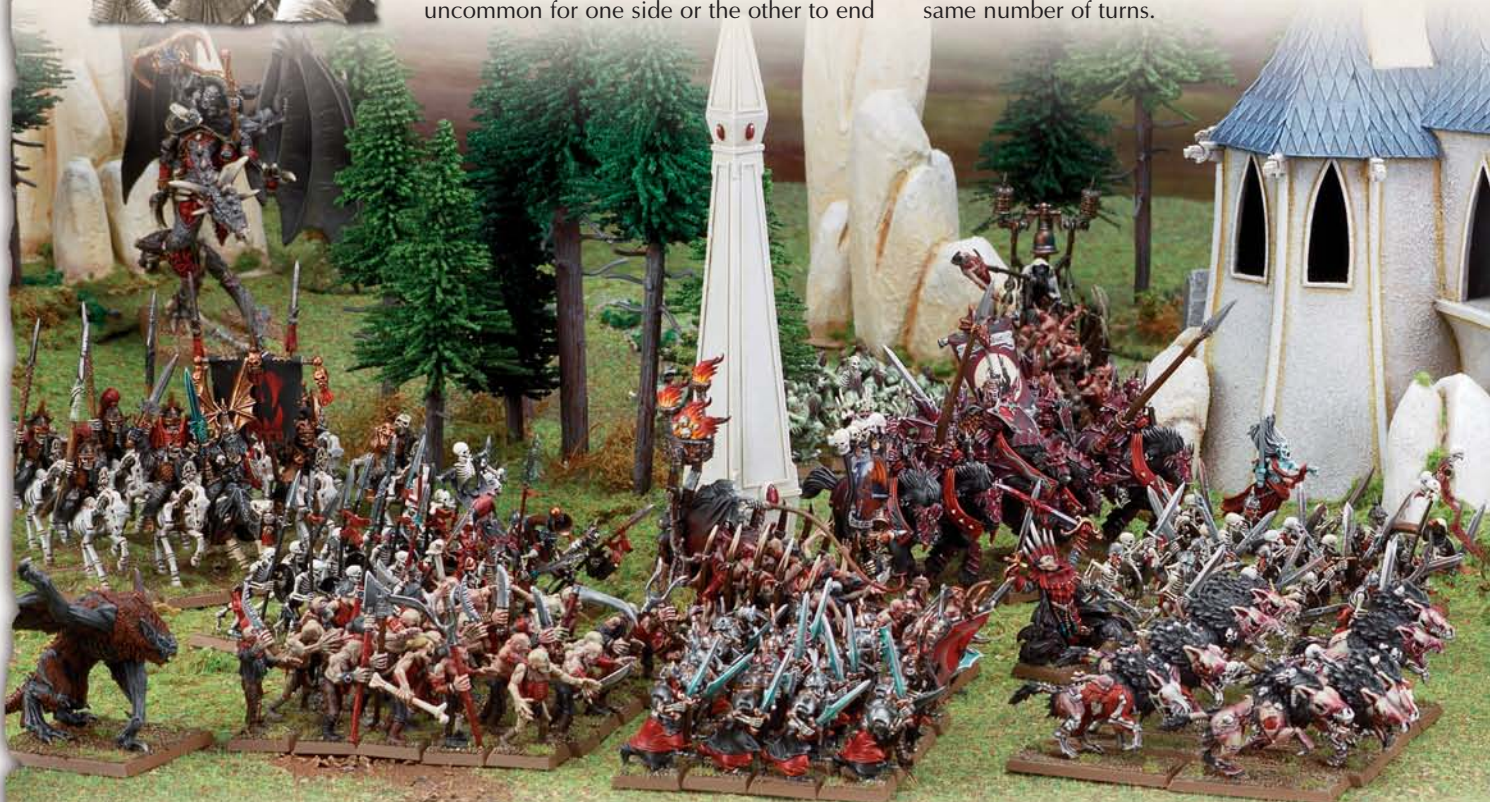
The side with the lowest points total receives one desperation token for every full 100 points they have less than their opponents' total points value. How the tokens are divided up is for the team to decide; you can divvy them out at the start of the battle, keep them in a communal pool to use as needed, or use any other system you may prefer.

A desperation token can be used to do one of the following three things, and is then discarded:

- To change a failed Break, Panic, Fear or Terror test into a passed test.
- To cancel out a spell in the same manner as a Dispel Scroll.
- To re-roll any single dice roll (including scatter dice and misfire dice). No dice may ever be re-rolled more than once, even if other abilities that allow a re-roll apply, and the re-rolled result must be accepted, even if it is worse.

Ending the game

A Legendary Battle can either be played for a specific number of turns, or to a time limit. If you play to a time limit, you must still make sure that both sides complete the same number of turns.



You can determine the winner of the battle as you would in a normal game of Warhammer, but this can be fiddly for a game this size, and can feel anticlimactic. Instead, I recommend you fight over a set of objectives, with the side that captures and holds the majority of them throughout the game winning.

If you decide to use objectives, then you will need to set up five objective markers at the start of the battle. Any suitable marker will do; coins or counters are fine, but specially made markers are better! Take turns setting the markers up (roll a dice to see who goes first). One objective must be placed in each side's deployment area, and the remaining three must be set up in the 24" gap between the two armies. No objective can be placed within 12" of one that is already in play.

You must check to see if you have captured any objectives at the end of each of your turns, so you check at the end of each of your turns, and your opponents check at the end of theirs. An objective is captured if you have a unit with a unit strength of five or more within 6" of it, and there aren't any enemy models closer to the objective than you are.

Each objective you control at the end of your turn scores your side a number of victory points equal to the turn number. So, each objective controlled at the end of the first turn is worth 1 point, each controlled at the end of Turn 2 is worth 2 points, and so on. Keep a running tally of each side's score, and at the end of the battle the side with the highest score is the winner.

Why the esoteric scoring system? Simply because this method makes controlling the objectives on the final turns of the battle more important than controlling them early on, while at the same time avoiding the situation where players ignore the objectives until the last turn and then make a desperate "land grab" to seize the most objectives and win the game.

Conclusion

Hopefully this article has inspired you to organise a Legendary Battle of your own – and if not, then the Legendary Battle report later on in the issue will almost certainly do so! Large games take some time and effort to organise, but the rewards in terms of sheer spectacle and dramatic game-play more than make up for this. So, if you haven't ever taken part in a large game of Warhammer, then I highly recommend you start setting one up right now!

But that's not all – far from it. I hope to be able to follow up Legendary Battles with more articles that explore other ways of expanding your games of Warhammer. So, if you've enjoyed this article, why not write in and let me know what kind of other things you'd like to see rules for. Perhaps you like the idea of storming a mighty fortress, or maybe you want to take your Warhammer army out to sea, or you might fancy fighting underground battles between Dwarfs, Goblins and Skaven. Write to me, care of the White Dwarf team, and let me know what Warhammer expansions you'd like to see.

Famous Battles

THE GREAT WAR AGAINST CHAOS

The Great War against Chaos was fought in 2302. Chaos armies overran Praag, sacked the port of Erengard, and besieged Kislev. They were eventually defeated by a force of Men and Dwarfs led by Magnus the Pious, High King Alriksson and Ar-Ulric Kriestov. Afterwards, Magnus the Pious became Emperor and reunited the Empire.

