

Continuing on from last month's War of the Beard article, Anthony Reynolds brings us the second installment. The awesomely powerful War of Vengeance Dwarf army list allows you to recreate the heroic battles of this time.

# THE WAR OF THE BEARD

## Part II: The Dwarfs' War of Vengeance

In the mists of time, before the rise of Man, a tragic war was fought between the Dwarfs and the Elves, two powerful races at the pinnacle of their strength. This was a time of legendary acts and powerful magic, and countless heroes rose and fell over the course of the War of the Beard, known amongst the Dwarfs as the War of Vengeance. Set against the backdrop of this epic conflict, the Dwarf legend Brok Stonefist and the masterful Elven Lord Salendor fought each other numerous times during this bitter war, each one refusing to back down from the other. Thousands of years later, in these days of decline for both the Dwarfs and the High Elves, they would be regarded as two of the mightiest warriors in the known world, but in their own time there were many legendary individuals just as powerful as they were. Thousands of lives were lost in the brutal and uncompromising clashes between Brok and Salendor, and they are remembered by their descendants with fierce pride.

Brok Stonefist of Karak Azgul was a mighty warrior, ancient even at the time of the War of the Beard. He had led his clansmen to countless victories early in the tragic conflict and became much hated and feared by the Elves who fought his armies. Brok rose to his position from humble beginnings, spending several decades as a messenger, running communications along the ancient tunnels connecting the various Dwarf holds that in times of old were still in use. He knew the tunnel layouts like no other living Dwarf and seemed to have a mental map of everywhere he had traveled. As his beard grew longer and decade upon decade rolled past, he was sought out by many Thanes and Lords to lead mining expeditions into unknown territory and soon became renowned for his subterranean navigational skills.

When the war broke out against the Elves of Ulthuan, Brok was called upon to guide forces from Karak Azgul beneath the plains and attack the Elves from behind their lines. On one such mission, Elven arrows struck down the Thane leading the army, and Elven cavalry encircled the Dwarfs, who then formed a defensive shield

wall. Seizing the initiative, Brok screamed a warcry and stormed out of the shield wall. Without thinking, the Dwarf warriors leapt after him, a counter-attack that shocked the Elves who were hacked down before they could react. With Brok at the forefront, the Dwarfs managed to punch their way through the Elf line and make a fighting retreat back to their tunnels. Once there, the Dwarfs looked to Brok for leadership, and reluctantly he accepted. That night Brok led the sorely depleted Dwarf force through tunnels that had not been in use for hundreds of years and directed the miners to excavate to the surface. The tunnels came up in an undefended area, and Brok led the Dwarfs on a savage surprise attack against the same Elf army they had fought earlier that day, crushing them completely.

From that day forth, Brok was greatly respected by those who followed him. He was given the honorary title of Ungdrin Ankor Rik, Lord of the Tunnels, and over the next hundred years became one of the most accomplished of all the Dwarf generals in the War of Vengeance. He led the Dwarfs of Karak Azgul to countless victories and earned a fearsome reputation amongst the Elves. They named him Arhain-tosaith, which translates roughly as 'the shadowy one of the earth'.



It was only when Brok Stonefist faced the armies of Lord Salendor of Tor Achare, who would become his ultimate nemesis, that he was ever matched on the field of battle. Salendor was a young and brilliant Elf Lord who led his troops with a mastery far beyond his youth, having been alive barely two centuries. The young Salendor was a calculating tactician and a skillful master of the blade, who was also versed in the

magic arts. His cool demeanor and quick strategic mind served him well against Brok, and the two quickly became fierce rivals. Whenever the armies of Karak Azgul appeared behind the forces of Salendor he managed to counter the attack, and every ploy Brok attempted was efficiently responded to by the young Elf. At the Battle of Blind River, Brok attempted to undermine the ground

beneath the feet of Salendor's army that was marching through the night. Rumored to have been gifted with mystical prescience, Salendor realized the ruse at the last moment. He sent a troop of Ellyrian Reavers galloping over the traps and the ground collapsed behind them as they raced through the night. When the



dust-covered Dwarfs launched their attack from the subterranean tunnels, they found the Elves waiting for them with spear and bow.

Over the next hundred years, Brok and Salendor clashed numerous times in the midst of bitter combat, and the meeting of these two mighty heroes was always an epic confrontation that could last hours on end. Neither foe could overcome the other, and neither backed down an inch in these contests. Brok was as strong as the mountains themselves, and it is said that no Elf ever moved as swiftly as Salendor, as if he knew every move that his foe was about to make even before his enemy did. The pair sought each other out in battle whenever possible, hacking their way through countless enemies to face each other in single combat.

It was in the great battle of Athel Maraya that the pair had their final confrontation. Several Dwarf armies, including a strike force led by Brok, besieged the doomed Elf city. Miners guided by Brok tunneled beneath the fair city walls, undermining them and causing several wall sections to collapse, creating breaches that the Dwarfs marched through. Dragons circled the elegant towers, descending in devastating attack runs through the

city streets, incinerating hundreds of Dwarfs who were cooked inside their red-hot armor. Brok and his battle-seasoned troops came to the surface in the middle of the city, striking with brilliant timing to coincide with the fall of the walls, and confusion filled the streets. The Dwarfs fought fiercely for every inch of ground they gained, suffering horrendous casualties from archers within the towering buildings, dragon-fire and desperate Elf militia who were fighting to protect their own homes and families.

Dwarfs bearing torches and flaming brands lit fires, which combined with the dragon-fire, resulted in a rapidly spreading inferno, turning the city into a deadly furnace. Both sides of the battle were forced to abandon the city or face being engulfed within it. Just as these fires took hold of the center of the city, Brok came face to face with Salendor for the final time. As the city burned down around them, the two warriors weaved a deadly dance of sword and axe,

If you have read this story and now want to recreate the battles of Brok Stonefist and Lord Salendor of Tor Achare, then you are in for a treat. We all thought the story of these two adversaries was so inspiring that we have decided to include the rules for them in White Dwarf 266. Games Development have been put to work and are now frantically writing!

ignoring the entreaties of their comrades to flee the city. Elegant bridges toppled and delicate towers collapsed, raining a fiery shower of debris around the heads of the combatants, but still they fought on, ignoring all but the movements of their foe. Eventually, the Dwarfs and Elves were forced to flee the intense heat, leaving the two heroes battling until the city was completely engulfed.

Thus the two rivals are remembered, neither willing to back down from the fight, and the flaming city falling around them until they were consumed. Amongst the Elves, it is said that even after death, the two rivals continue to wage their war, battling each other through the millennia as ghostly shades. Amongst the Dwarfs of Karak Azgul, Brok is revered as the pinnacle of Dwarfishness, personifying the stubborn fighting spirit of his people. Both will live on in memory as two of the most brave and uncompromising warriors of their people.

## WAR OF THE BEARD DWARF ARMY LIST

This army has been created so that you can recreate the War of the Beard, a tragic time of epic battle between two proud races at the height of their power. It was a time of mighty heroes, powerful magic and epic confrontations. This army may only be chosen when fighting an army chosen from the High Elf War of the Beard army list, featured in last month's White Dwarf - these armies would be far too lethal to play against a regular army!

### CHOOSING CHARACTERS

Army Value	Maximum Characters	Maximum Lords
< 2,000	0-4	1
2,000-2,999	0-5	Up to 2
3,000-3,999	0-7	Up to 3
4,000-4,999	0-9	Up to 4
each +1000	+2	+1

### CHOOSING TROOPS

Army Value	Core	Special	Rare*
< 2,000	1+	0-5	-
2,000-2,999	2+	0-6	-
3,000-3,999	2+	0-7	-
4,000-4,999	4+	0-8	-
each +1000	+1	+0-1	-

\* Note: No rare choices may be chosen in a Dwarf War of the Beard Army

## DWARF WAR OF THE BEARD SPECIAL RULES

- War of Vengeance Dwarfs hate all Elves.
- No model may take Dwarf handguns or pistols. No cannons may be used.
- Dwarf Rangers and Hammerers may not be chosen.
- Each Runesmith and Runelord in the army gives the Dwarf player an extra two Dispel dice in the enemy Magic phase rather than one.
- A single unit of Longbeards and a single unit of Ironbreakers may be chosen as Core choices. In addition, any number may be chosen as Special as normal.
- Any unit of Longbeards that has the Army General within it will act as his bodyguard and become stubborn (see page 85 of the Warhammer rulebook).
- Dwarf Lords may take up to 150 points of runic items chosen from the Weapons, Armor and Talisman lists.
- Runelords may take up to 175 points of runic items chosen from the Weapons, Armor and Talisman lists.
- Daemon Slayers may take up to 125 points of runic items chosen from the Weapons list.
- Thanes and Engineers may take up to 75 points worth of runic items chosen from the Weapons, Armor and Talisman lists.
- Runesmiths may take up to 100 points worth of runic items chosen from the Weapons, Armor and Talisman lists.
- Dragon Slayers may take up to 75 points worth of runic items chosen from the Weapons list.
- Champions in units of Longbeards and Ironbreakers may take up to 25 points worth of runic items chosen from the Weapons and Armor lists.
- Dwarf Warriors and Miners may take a runic standard worth up to 50 points.
- Longbeards and Ironbreakers may take a runic standard worth up to 75 points.
- In addition to their normal runes, all Anvils of Doom come with either the Rune of Doom (see page 51 of the Dwarf Armies book) OR the Rune of Reflection and cost 235 points. If a double 1 is rolled when attempting to cast the Rune of Doom, the Dwarf Magic phase ends immediately and all remaining dice are discarded, no other adverse effects occur.







A High Elf mage confronts a Dwarf Anvil of Doom.

## DWARF RUNES SPECIAL RULES

The Dwarfs of old knew many secrets that have since been lost, and the Runesmiths had a mastery of their art that is almost unfathomable. The following rules can only be used for War of the Beard games.

### MASTER RUNES

Several of the Master Runes were able to be crafted by many more Runesmiths in the times of the War of Beard than in later times, and so are more common. The following Master Runes **do not count as Master Runes** in a War of the Beard army, and so more than one of each may be taken in a single army. Remember that the other usual rules for Rune Items (see the Rule of the Runes, p.19 of the Dwarf Armies book) apply as normal.

#### Weapon Runes:

- Master Rune of Skalf Blackhammer
- Master Rune of Alaric the Mad
- Master Rune of Breaking

#### Armor Runes:

- Master Rune of Steel
- Master Rune of Gromril

#### Runic Talismans:

- Master Rune of Balance (one dice may be removed from the enemy's magic pool per Rune of Balance)
- Master Rune of Spite

### RUNIC TALISMANS

**RUNE OF SPELL-HATING** 50 Points  
Runelords – One use only

The art of creating this difficult rune has been lost in time, although at the time of the War of Vengeance, the most powerful Runesmiths were familiar with its intricacies. It is capable of shutting down even the most powerful of sorceries.

This rune may only be played once per battle, and will stop enemy magic instantly. The rune may be played to automatically dispel one enemy spell – there is no need to roll. This rune is even able to dispel a spell cast with Irresistible Force

### RUNIC STANDARDS

**MASTER RUNE OF VENGEANCE**  
80 Points

This ancient rune focuses the Dwarf's innate hatred of magic into a devastating punishment against any who dare to use it against them. Even before the Mage manages to draw the magical energy needed to cast his spell, lightning bolts leap from the sky, dancing towards him with a devastating crack of light.

When a spell is targeted against a unit with the Master Rune of Vengeance, but before the effects of the spell are worked out, the Dwarf player may choose to use the rune against the casting Wizard. For each Power dice that the Wizard has used to cast the spell, he

takes a Strength 4 automatic hit. If the Wizard is still alive, the spell is cast as normal.

### ANVIL OF DOOM RUNIC POWER

**RUNE OF REFLECTION**  
Casting value: 8+

With a mighty blow, the Runelord strikes the anvil with a resounding crack. Power arcs across the battlefield, striking towards an enemy wizard, who suddenly loses control of his powers.

This spell can be cast on any enemy Wizard within line of sight. One randomly determined spell of the Wizard's is automatically cast on the Wizard himself and the unit he is with (if appropriate). If the Wizard casts Drain Magic on himself, it will be cast at Level 2. If Vaul's Unmaking is cast on the unit, the Dwarf player may choose which item is nullified.

### NEW OPTION FOR DWARF LORDS

**THRONE OF POWER** 65 Points

Instead of fighting on foot a Dwarf Lord may choose to be carried to battle atop one of the great Thrones of Power.

The Throne of Power is carried by four sturdy Veterans, which gives the Dwarf Lord an additional four normal WS5, S4 attacks. Any attacks against the Throne must be resolved against the Dwarf Lord himself. The model cannot join a unit. The Throne has Magic Resistance (2).

Morgrim Elgidum, the Elfdoom, stepped up onto the large, icy rock. His nail-studded boots sounded sharply in the silence of the cold, crisp air. Unconsciously stroking his full beard, he gazed over the edge of the precipice. Through the slowly drifting clouds he could just make out tiny figures on the plains far below. His cold, grey eyes narrowed, and he felt the slow-burning rage inside him flare. The news had arrived that morning that the High King's son, the proud warrior Snorri Halfhand, had been slain; cut down dishonorably by the black-hearted Elven King Caledor. Snorri was Morgrim's young cousin, and the pair had fought and feasted at each other's side on many occasions. Tomorrow, Morgrim and his stalwart kin would face the treacherous Elves on the plains and crush them utterly. They would march relentlessly through the night, descending along the twisting mountain paths through the darkness, their desire for vengeance pushing them ever onwards.

Turning, the proud Dwarf Lord surveyed his kinsmen as they marched down through the deepening chasm, some fifty feet from his position. The steady beat of hard boots on stone and deep resounding chanting echoed up towards him as darkness slowly descended. Smiling grimly to himself, Morgrim stepped off the rock, sinking up to his knees in the snow that had begun to fall again, and began to work his way back to join his comrades.

A deafening roar suddenly echoed up from behind him, and Morgrim swung around, pulling the heavy, rune-encrusted axe from his back. Standing looking over the cliff-face, the hellish noise got louder until, with a tremendous burst of air an immense blue dragon screamed up over the precipice from below. Squinting his eyes against the biting cold wind, Morgrim snarled up at the immense creature as it shot into the sky overhead. An armored figure rode upon the back of the proud creature and, seeing Morgrim below, gestured towards him with an ornate lance. The dragon twisted effortlessly through the air, coiling lithely overhead to face the lone Dwarf. It plummeted from the sky, dropping through the falling snow towards Morgrim, immense talons poised to strike and the Dragon Prince's lance aimed squarely at his chest.

A flurry of crossbow bolts streaked through the air towards the diving creature, ricocheting harmlessly off its gleaming blue scales. Huge, slitted eyes filled with intelligence and cunning were locked on the Dwarf Lord. As it neared, it reared up so as to pass over the Dwarf, and several black-shafted bolts punched into its soft underbelly. It screeched, more in shock than actual pain, and veered to the left. The skillful Dragon Prince compensated for this sudden movement, changing the angle of his lance, and struck out at Morgrim as the dragon swept overhead.

Holding his double-headed axe tightly in steady hands, Morgrim slashed it across his body with astounding swiftness, shattering the lance that descended towards him. Runes on the axe-haft left a glowing trail of light through the air. With a lightning follow-up move, Morgrim whipped the axe over his head, cutting a deep gouge along the dragon's hind leg as it rolled through the air above him.

Although he could hear the shouts of his comrades, who were running heavily through the snow to reach him, the grim Dwarf knew they would not arrive in time to aid him. The dragon rose into the air, turning gracefully before descending towards him once more. Pulling up sharply just before the Dwarf Lord, the creature opened its mouth wide, its jaw overextending and its chest expanding with a sharp intake of air. A burst of roaring flame billowed out of the serpentine maw, rolling over Morgrim. Steam rose in a great hissing cloud as snow and ice melted under the furnace, but the grim figure remained untouched. Flames gushed around him harmlessly as ancient runes on his armor and helmet glowed brightly.

Frustrated, the dragon lurched towards the Dwarf with a savage roar, eyes filled with malevolence. Snow and ice remained untouched by the heat in a perfect circle around

Morgrim, who let out a roar of his own, raising his axe high above his head. The dragon lunged forwards, its head darting out to snap at the lone figure. Morgrim swung his axe in a powerful arc, impacting with the side of the blue dragon's head just as it came into range, cutting deeply into the tough, scaled skin and battering the dragon to the side. Leaning forwards in his saddle, the Elven rider slashed his sword towards the Dwarf, but the attack was smashed aside with a disdainful swat of the axe. Leaping forwards, Morgrim struck a thunderous blow with the ancient rune weapon into the dragon's neck. The decorative blade bit deep into the sinuous creature, nearly severing its head.

The dragon jerked backwards with a gurgling screech, dark blood pattering into the perfectly white snow. It crashed down into the ground, thrashing wildly in its death throes. The Dragon Prince tried frantically to free himself of the harness holding him to the saddle, but before he could manage the buckles, the dragon rolled over the edge of the precipice. Just as it fell, the Elf looked up and locked eyes with Morgrim. Behind the ornate helmet, Morgrim could see pale grey eyes filled with fear, and the next moment the flailing pair disappeared from view, plummeting down into the clouds.

The Dwarf stood looking over the drop, his eyes cold. As his kinsmen arrived breathless at his side, they gazed at their Lord in reverent silence. Eventually he turned to face them. "Tomorrow," he said in a gravelly voice. "Tomorrow, the field of battle will be awash with Elf blood. We will take a heavy toll to make them pay for their treacheries."

Without another word Morgrim turned, shouldering his bloody axe and began walking.



**Note:** For those cunning players out there, NO you may NOT take any of the Albion magical items in a War of the Beard army – they haven't been

found yet! Also, we have found that games with War of the Beard lists work best when they are at least 3,000 points in size. This allows you

and your opponent to select lots of characters, elite regiments and special magic items, giving much more of an epic feel to the battle.