



RETURN OF THE BEARDS

Dwarf army review by Brian Mattock

With the release of the stunning new Dwarf characters this issue we thought we'd get Brian, Warmaster Tournament Champion, to say a few words on the little fellas' behalf...

OF DWARFS...

So, an army that doesn't have any cavalry can't win battles? Wrong, the Dwarfs do just that. They may not have any cavalry, but they have some of the best infantry in the game, and trying to shift a Dwarf army once it is in a defended position, is like trying to mine for Gromril with a toothpick.

THE GENERAL AND HEROES

Having a general whose command value is 10 also makes up for the lack of units that may move 30cm. That high command value of 10 means that the more tricky manoeuvres within range of the enemy are easier to pull off, such as successfully completing a flank charge or moving a unit around the the rear of a combat to block retreat.

Unlike all the other armies, the Dwarf general cannot be mounted on a monster or chariot, and although this might seem like a big disadvantage, it actually means that you are less likely to commit him to the fight and endanger him.

The second most important person in the Dwarf army would have to be the Runesmith, taking a Runesmith is a must. For 10 points more than a standard Hero, you get the ability to dispel all spells cast on a 4+ and if you're feeling terribly pessimistic you can even give him a dispel scroll as a one shot automatic dispel. Regardless of how many Runesmiths you take, you may only attempt a dispel once per spell, so one is all you'll need. Bear in mind that Runesmiths are Heroes, not mages, and therefore able to give orders upto 40cm away.

Dwarf Heroes are just the standard hero, statistics wise, that most armies get. In smaller games 1000 points you could probably do with only a general and Runesmith.



Dwarf Characters

THE TROOPS

Most of the basic units for a Dwarf army have 4 hits per stand, which makes them even more difficult to beat in combat and only co-ordinated missile fire from infantry will be able to remove a stand.

Dwarf Warriors are the compulsory unit for the army... and what a unit they are. These guys have 3 attacks, 4 hits and a 4+ armour save, making them

one of the toughest infantry units in the game. They are the backbone of the Dwarf army, tough as gromril nails and have a reasonable chance of standing up to most enemy charges. As with any Dwarf units, if you can get them in a defended position, on a hill, with support then they become almost impossible to beat in a frontal charge.

Dwarf Thunderers may be expensive for a missile unit, but they fire 30cm, have a 6+ armour save and give a -1 penalty to the armour saves of the unit being shot at. Against any heavily armoured units they rock (old Dwarf mining joke!), the armour save penalty making it more difficult to save against shots from them. Two units firing at the same target can be devastating. They are particularly useful against Chaos armies as a lot of their units have high saves. Disrupting a brigade of Chaos Knights or Chaos Warriors is exactly what they should be used for, and if a whole stand can be taken away from combined fire, then so much the better. They are not a combat designed unit and you should therefore try to avoid getting them into combat with anything more than light infantry or other missile units.



Dwarf Rangers

Probably the most versatile unit in the Dwarf army are the Rangers. Rangers are the only units in the Dwarf army which can pursue cavalry or flyers, due to the fact that they lay traps, and send harassers to slow down an enemy's retreat. You can only field two units of Rangers for every full thousand points in the army, but seeing as they are so useful I would always try and take the maximum amount allowed. Although they do not have the longevity of the warriors, due to their inferior armour save, they more than make up for it.

Against heavy cavalry, Rangers are not likely to win in a frontal assault especially if they have to leave supporting stands behind. When attacking heavy cavalry this should always be conducted against the flanks when you can expect 12 attacks to the enemy's 2 or 3 attacks back. Against flyers they can generally be attacked from the front or flank due to their inferior armour save and number of attacks (not counting High Elf Dragon Riders, of course!).

As mentioned earlier, let your general order the Rangers to make multiple moves to get to where they want to be.

Trollslayers... hmmm... these guys are both great and

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horrible at the same time. In smaller battles they can be a liability, as you need to let them live out a glorious death in combat, so that they do not count as victory points for your opponent, but losing them takes you one unit closer to your precious break point, which in these smaller games is not that high for Dwarfs. Trollslayers having no armour save are fairly easy to kill, and a canny opponent can make them charge units of his choosing, due to the fact that they have to charge on Initiative.



Dwarf Trollslayers

One good strategy to adopt with Trollslayers if you are playing a fairly defensive army, is to get most of your army to a defensible position whilst sending the Trollslayers forward toward the enemy. Get them to charge the enemy's battleline, hopefully causing havoc and destroying a unit or two before dying and you will be ahead on victory points, making your opponent have to come after the rest of your now defended army and making him take you on on your terms.

Another use for Trollslayers is to use them as a missile screen since they aren't driven back by shooting, which could otherwise disrupt your battleline. They are particularly effective against Undead Skull Chuckas, as they cannot be driven back and therefore cannot be confused.

The best thing to say about slayers is that they are supposed to be used offensively. So use them offensively.

ARTILLERY AND WARMACHINES

Dwarfs are the only army whose artillery gets an armour save. Even though the save is only 6+, it can be a great benefit if you can get your artillery on a hilltop before the inevitable charge by your opponent's 'budgies of doom'. When they charge they will not get the charge bonus for being in the open or the monster charge bonus and will need 5+ to hit, your artillery gets to stand-and-shoot at the attackers, get their normal attacks back and get armour saves against any wounding attacks. Attacking Dwarf artillery is not always the forgone conclusion that it is in other armies and often the attackers will lose combat and then be shot to pieces in the next shooting phase.

Cannons are an absolute must with their 60cm range. They should be the first unit of artillery you pick for your army. Always try and take the maximum amount of cannons that you are allowed to take. What I said earlier about Thunderers goes double for



Artillery

cannons, they are excellent at taking out or disrupting units that have a high armour save. If you can hit the middle unit in a brigade, even if you don't take out a stand, you will probably drive it back out of contact with the rest of the brigade, forcing your opponent make more Command rolls in their next command phase. If at all possible try and combine your cannon fire with a unit or two of Thunderers or Rangers, which should increase the potential for routing units outright.

The Flame Cannon has a limited range compared to a cannon, but it can still be a devastating artillery piece and can get a massive 18 missile attacks from one stand for only 50 points. The Flame Cannon should really be brigaded with other artillery pieces, as it makes a wonderful deterrent to flyers, as you want to face loads of stand-and-shoot attacks, with the chance of being wiped out before even getting into combat with the artillery.

As with all artillery the rule is get them to a defended position and keep them protected and within range of the enemy. No-one likes the prospect of attacking defended artillery, facing lots of stand-and-shoot attacks, losing your charge bonuses for not attacking a unit in the open and then having to roll 5+ to hit the enemy.

The hardest unit in the Dwarf army to use has to be the Gyrocopter. They are incredible mobile artillery which can move upto 100cm, have 3 shots, 3 hits and an armour save of 5+. In smaller battles of 1000 points, I tend not to take them as they are not that effective on their own, however in larger



Gyrocopter

games where you can have more than one of them, they are excellent. Although you cannot brigade them with any units, if you can move two or more of them to a point where they can fire at the same target, you can bring 6 or more shots to bear on that unit. Seeing that most artillery units do not have an armour save, they make great artillery killers. Order them to fly over artillery protecting units and behind the artillery and blow the hell out of your opponent's artillery line. Anything attacking them in the next turn will have to kill them in one turn (unless they are also flyers), but by then you should have laid waste to a unit or two. Having made a sortie into enemy territory, you are likely to be making a unit or two of theirs suffer a -1 command modifier to move (due to 20cm approximately), but remember that you need to get back to within 20cm of a Hero to be ordered again in the following turn, a Gyrocopter stuck behind enemy lines due to a bad homeback roll is a sitting duck or should I say a mad Dwarf about to have his wings permanently clipped.

A second use for Gyrocopters is to sit them directly behind a combat to block the enemy's retreat. If you are going to do this, try and also place them where they can still fire at non engaged units. Using Gyrocopters like this is a great way of destroying cavalry units with Dwarf Warriors in a frontal assault.

You are Dwarfs you give no ground...

You can find all the ordering details for the Dwarf army models on pages 45-48.