

ALANDIR THE GREAT

An alternative style of army for Warmaster High Elves,
by Mike Headen

The conventional view of High Elves in Warmaster seems to be that their 'secret weapon' is their archery skill. That 3+ to hit certainly means that lots of High Elf arrows are going to find their mark. Even when enemy troops are *Defended* they are just the same to hit for High Elves as troops in the open are for other armies.



However, I've never been one for conventional armies and my High Elves are no exception. Whilst their red armour, white robes and black & gold weaponry has led to comments about 'Santa's little helpers' from some quarters their high profile colour scheme is not the only departure from what I've seen as the norm for Warmaster High Elf armies.

As an aside, the red armoured samurai of the Li clan of 16th/17th century Japan inspired my High Elf colour scheme. If you are looking for inspiration for alternative colour schemes for your figures a look at illustrated books about historical armies can be a real eye-opener. Check your local library or bookshop.

My armies have the minimum number of Archers, no Reaver Knights and, usually, no Bolt Throwers. On the other hand my armies max out on Silver Helms, always include at least one Hero with a Dragon mount and usually the maximum amount of Mages. Eagles are wonderful for taking out unsupported artillery and striking the flanks of units that thought they were so far from your troops they were safe.

The concept behind this army is again derived from a historical army – this time Alexander the Great's Macedonians. Like Alexander's phalanx, the Archers and Spearmen are there essentially to fix the enemy in place and, if necessary, to protect the Silver Helm's flanks or to mop up after the cavalry. Like Alexander's light cavalry the Eagles are used to harass and distract the enemy in an effort to shift their attention from the main strike. Meanwhile, the Silver Helms use their manoeuvrability to shift

position, taking the enemy in the flank where possible but always applying pressure at a point of my choosing, not theirs.

The combination of a Command 10 General with the toughness and speed of the Silver Helms allows you to re-deploy your strike force to catch the enemy army off balance and to concentrate your forces at a decisive point. The Dragon mount for a Hero or Mage is also used to provide, hopefully, decisive force at the most essential moment. Usually I'll give the mount to a Hero with the Sword of Might which gives you five extra attacks to allocate where they will do most good. The ability to instill *Terror* in many troops and to negate its effects when fighting terror-causing troops is a useful extra. Even against Undead, who are immune to *Terror*, I still think the Dragon mount is worthwhile.

While on the subject of Dragon mounts let me sound a note of caution. When you are new to Warmaster there is a tendency to put your General on a Dragon mount, if you take one. Don't do this for the following reasons. Firstly, the tendency is to throw the Dragon mounted character into the thick of the action where it will do most good – after all it's a waste of points if it doesn't get into combat. Secondly, the loss of the General is instantly fatal to your army and that's quite likely to happen if he's in the thick of the fighting. So my advice is put a Hero or Mage on your Dragon(s) and keep the General out of the fighting unless things are really desperate.

Dragon Riders, on the other hand, seem to me to be far too expensive to risk, especially in small games.

While it is true that they can tip the battle for you, occasionally they are far too vulnerable to counter-attack for my liking. I'd far rather have a Dragon mount, a couple more units of Silver Helms and some magic items for 350 points.

The Light of Battle spell is also a good way of adding to the decisive blow. Successfully casting that in the middle of a combat can make the difference between a draw and a win, or between a 20cm advance and a 10cm one.

When ordering the army I rely almost entirely on my General. In my opinion it is the General's command rating of 10 which is the High Elf 'secret weapon' and not their 3+ shooting. In a recent 3,000 point game only one command wasn't given by the General – and it failed! Three units did get left behind but, because I was able to maintain the momentum of the cavalry attack, they weren't needed anyway.

A common tactic in Warmaster is to form a screen of cheap, fragile troops backed by a strong force, which will charge any enemy that crushes the screening troops. Their high Command value means that High Elves can sometimes move to crush the support line, leaving the feeble screen as the only troops close enough to mount a counter attack – even then they probably have to turn round first. If you can pull this off it is a battle winner – of course, if you don't, you wind up between the hammer and the anvil.



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Since decisive strikes are rarely possible unless your army is concentrated, most of my force is usually within 20cms of the General. If the army gets scattered in the course of fighting either move your General to the most important area of the battle and let heroes and mages deal with the 'stragglers' or even consider spending some Commands to concentrate the army again. Always be prepared to give ground if it will save troops in the long run but don't get so obsessed with maintaining tidy battle lines that you lose sight of the need to win the battle!

If faced with an enemy who sits in dense terrain and hides from the Silver Helms Mages provide a good way of inflicting damage. A powerful force of Silver Helms with Dragon-mounted characters can be used as a base of operations, giving the Mages somewhere to run to if walked over

by the enemy. The Mages can use *Storm of Stone* to inflict widespread damage and then *Hail of Destruction* to target weakened units – obviously you need at least two Mages (and a little luck) to pull this off. The enemy then has the option of 'death by a thousand cuts' or coming out into the open, where you want them, to take on your army. This army is not suitable for every occasion, it's an offensive not defensive army, but it has certainly proved effective in the course of the games I've played since Warmaster came out.

If you can use your high Command value to move troops so as to catch the enemy off-guard, concentrating for a decisive strike, this can be a devastating approach to fielding High Elves – of course if you don't manage that you may just die horribly – but that's Warmaster.

SAMPLE 1,000 POINT ARMY

General
Wizard on Dragon Mount
with *Sword of Fate*
1 unit of Archers
3 units of Spearmen
3 units of Silver Helms
1 unit of Giant Eagles

SAMPLE 2,000 POINT ARMY

General with *Orb of Majesty*
Wizard on Dragon Mount
with *Sword of Might*
Wizard on Dragon Mount
with *Scroll of Dispelling*
2 units of Archers
4 units of Spearmen
8 units of Silver Helms
(one with *Sword of Fate*)
2 units of Giant Eagles



We played the final game in this year's club Warmaster campaign last Wednesday night. My final battle was with 2,270 points of High Elves against 2,070 points of Undead and 1,975 points of Chaos.

The armies were:

HIGH ELVES

General <i>Orb of Majesty</i>	4 units of Spearmen
2 x Mages on Dragon Mounts (1 w. Scroll of Dispelling)	1 unit of Bolt Throwers
2 units of Archers	10 units of Silver Helms
	2 units of Giant Eagles

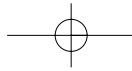
UNDEAD

Tomb King	3 units of Skeleton Chariots
3 x Liche Priests (1 on Zombie Dragon)	1 unit of Bone Giant
6 units of Skeleton Bowmen	1 unit of Skull Chucker
16 units of Skeleton Warrior	1 unit of Carrion
2 units of Skeleton Cavalry	plus assorted magic items including <i>Orb of Majesty</i>

CHAOS

General	2 units of Chaos Knights
Hero on Chaos Dragon	2 units of Marauder Cavalry
Chaos Wizard	2 units of Chaos Chariots
2 units of Chaos Warrior	1 unit of Dragon Ogres
2 units of Chaos Marauder	plus assorted magic items including <i>Orb of Majesty</i>





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SET-UP

The battlefield was 6' x 4' and fairly open. Looking from my side of the table there was a large (12" x 9") hill slightly left of centre in my deployment area and a small (6" x 6") wood on my right. There was a small ridge (3" x 9") on my left and on my side of the centre-line. In front of the hill, on the enemy side of the table was a small (4" x 4") wood, too dense for any troops to enter and a bigger wood (9" x 9") behind it which infantry could occupy. Slightly right of centre and just the other side of the centre-line was an area (8" x 8") of rough, rocky ground which only infantry could get into. Finally, on my right in my opponent's deployment area was an area of hedged fields (9" x 9"). All sizes are approximate.

I deployed my two Archer units in line on the hill with the Bolt Throwers between

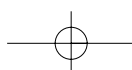
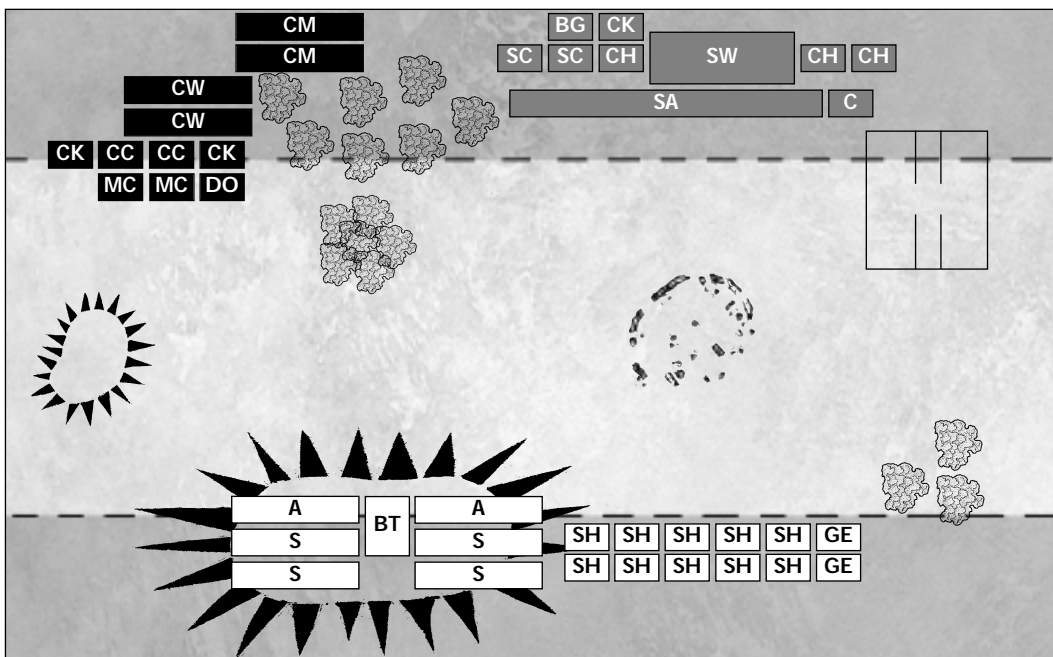
them and the Spearmen in two lines behind the Archers. The cavalry were in line, in two ranks of five units, to the right of the infantry with the Eagles in line, one behind the other, on the right flank of the cavalry

The Chaos army deployed in three lines, Cavalry and Dragon Ogres in front, Knights and Chariots behind and infantry bringing up the rear. They deployed to my front-left with the mounted units beside the big wood and the infantry behind it.

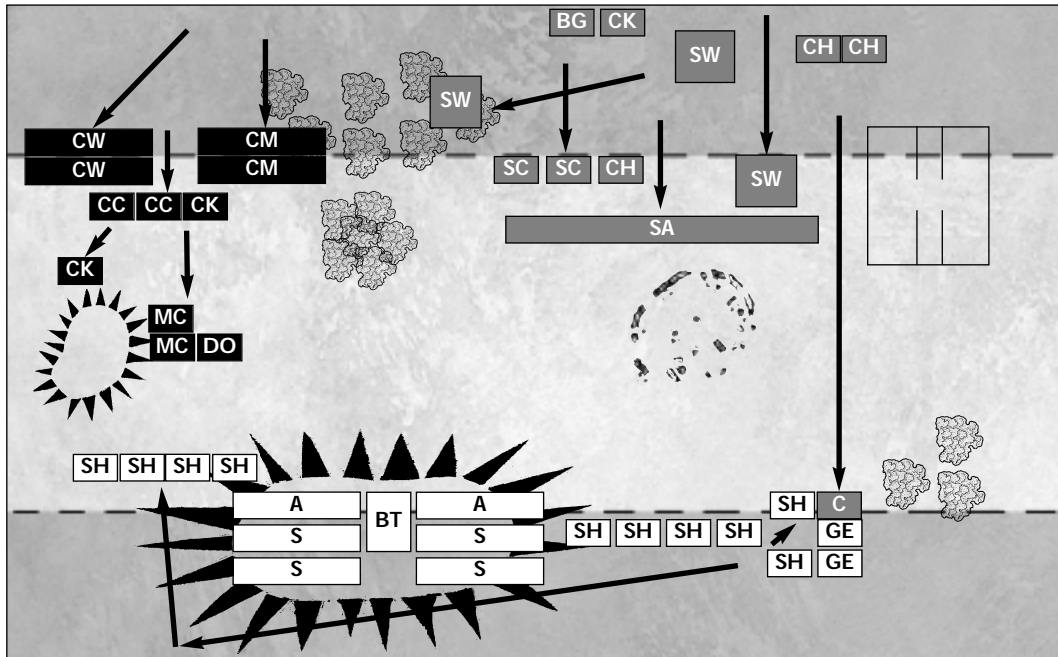
The Undead set up opposite me and had a front rank of Archers backed by a solid block of Warriors with cavalry and chariots at the left end and Chariots and Carrion on the right (as I looked at their army). The Bone Giant and Skull Chukka formed a reserve.

KEY		
High Elves		
A Archers	BT Bolt Throwers	
S Spearmen	SH Silver Helms	
	GE Giant Eagles	
Undead		
SA Skeleton Archers	SC Skeleton Cavalry	
SW Skeleton Warriors	CH Skeleton Chariots	
C Carrion	BG Bone Giant	
	CK Skull Chukka	
Chaos		
CW Chaos Warriors	CK Chaos Knights	
CM Chaos Marauders	MC Marauder Cavalry	
	CC Chaos Chariots	
	DO Dragon Ogres	

DEPLOYMENT



TURN 1



1ST TURN

As attackers in the Campaign phase the Undead went first. The Chaos army manoeuvred for position trying to work round my left flank. The Undead moved their Skeleton Bowmen screen forward, moved a brigade of Skeleton infantry into the big wood and charged my front Eagle unit with the Carrion and the Liche Priest on the Zombie Dragon.

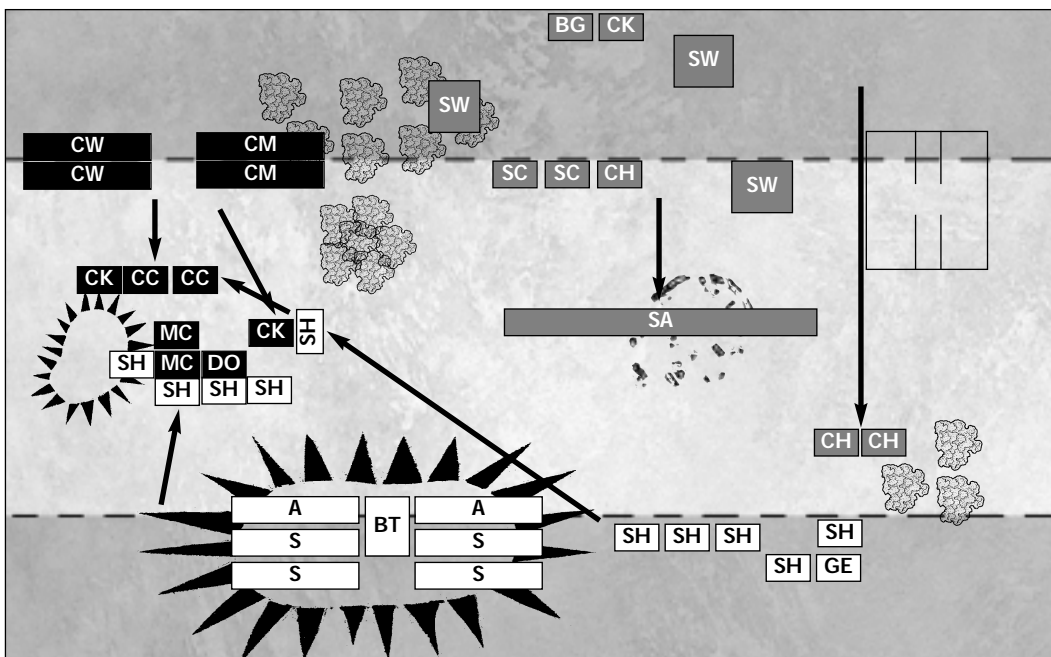
The Carrion wiped out the Eagles and took two stands off a unit of Silver Helms before the single remaining Carrion stand was 'bounced off' by a draw.

In my turn I moved the remaining Eagles and a unit of Silver Helms into the Carrion, killing the beasts and the Liche for the loss of another stand of Eagles. I pulled four Silver Helm units from my rear rank and moved them to the other flank to counter the Chaos flanking move. Not a good start.



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TURN 2



2ND TURN

The Undead managed to move some of their Bowmen forward before grinding to a halt.

The Chaos cavalry continued to work their way towards my left flank while the infantry refused to move.



My cavalry brigade, that had been changing flanks, now charged the Marauder cavalry and Dragon Ogres, hitting one cavalry unit in the flank, as well as contacting the whole frontage. Meanwhile, a unit of Silver Helms who had the *Bushwacker* Battle Honour (no Command modifier for distance from character) raced across the front of the High Elf battle line and crashed into the flank of a unit of Chaos Knights. The Wizards moved to join the fight against the Knights and Dragon Ogres. The Marauders and Dragon Ogres were wiped out but reduced one Silver Helm unit to a single stand and a second to two. The Bushwacker Silver Helms wiped out a unit of Chaos Knights, a unit of chariots and a stand from the second unit of Chaos Knights negating their Banner of Shielding before losing a round of combat

– despite rolling 11 dice to the enemy's 2! Finally, they were wiped out in the Chaos counter-attack and lost the Wizard on Dragon too.

3RD TURN

The surviving Chaos Knights and Chariots destroyed two units of Silver Helms before falling back and re-organising but the Chaos infantry remained in place leaving their mounted companions to their fate.

The Undead 'juggernaut' continued to grind forward and the two remaining Liche Priests sped forward and cast *Death Bolt* to pick off stands already weakened by bowfire. They succeeded in killing another stand of Giant Eagles and driving back a single stand unit of Silver Helms.

The High Elves managed to re-arrange their line a little but were unable to launch any charges. Massed fire from the Bolt Throwers on the hill scored eight hits on a unit of Skeleton Bowmen and drove them back 19cms... Oh, soooo close!

The Chaos cavalry now chose to stand still while the infantry moved forward, deploying from column into line. The Undead pushed a brigade of infantry forward to threaten the High Elf right flank and finally got a brigade of Chariots moving forward for a couple of turns. The Liches and Bowmen finally put paid to the last of the Eagles.

In response another unit of Silver Helms raced from right to left flank and charged the Chaos cavalry in the flank. Despite the presence of a Chaos Hero and his Dragon, the Silver Helms killed the sole surviving stand of Chaos Chariots and advanced into the two surviving stands of Chaos Knights, crushing them in turn for the loss of a single stand of Silver Helms. The Chaos army having reached its break point fled the battlefield.

Two more units of Silver Helms destroyed two units of Skeleton Warriors and a unit of Bowmen before being driven off by the survivors of the last Skeleton Warrior unit. For the third time in the battle I'd had twelve attacks and scored only TWO hits! The survivors of that attack were in turn destroyed by the two Skeleton Chariot units that had moved up last turn but most of the rest of the Undead army halted again.

Once again a unit of Silver Helms raced across the front of the High Elf battle line, this time from left to right, and crashed into the flank of a unit of Skeleton Chariots while the High Elf missile troops re-deployed to pour fire into the other. Another unit of Silver Helms charged on initiative into the flank of a unit of Skeleton Bowmen.

A combination of missile fire and a

swirling melee saw both Skeleton Chariot units and the surviving Skeleton Warriors cleared from the High Elf right flank beneath a hail of arrows and trampling hooves.

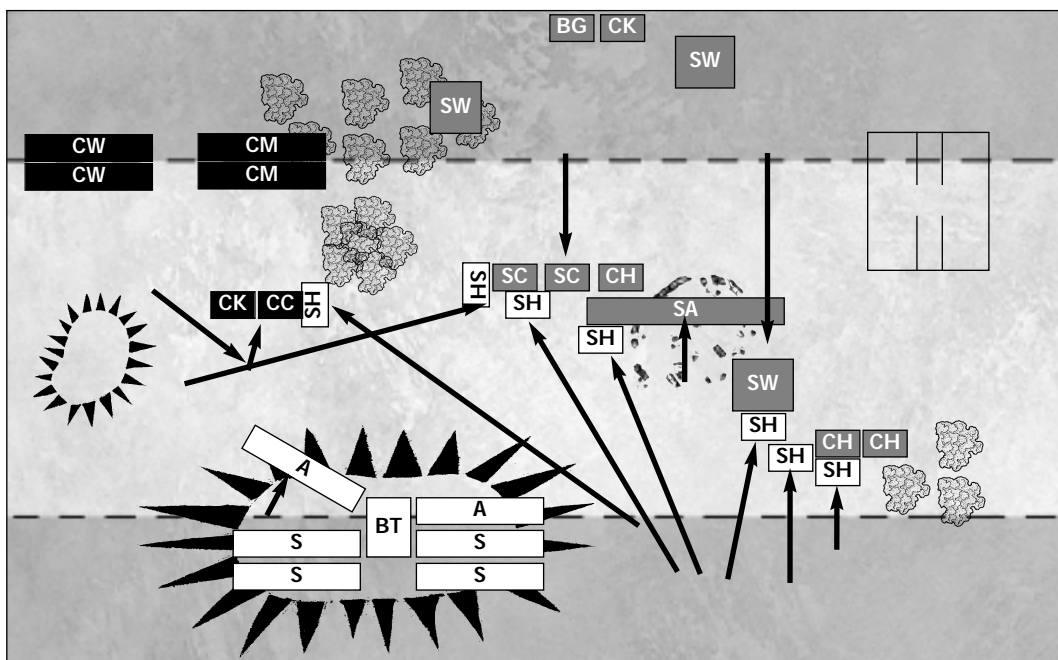
The Skeleton Bowmen on the other hill had beat the Silver Helms due to yet another 'twelve attacks, two hits' result - Doh!

Having got his second cavalry brigade moving briefly, at last, the Tomb King was unable to shift the rest of the army and so there was only some desultory shooting from the two surviving intact Skeleton Archer units in front of my line.

Re-organising the High Elf missile troops to face the Skeleton Bowmen I launched the cavalry whom had 'bounced' last time with orders to do better ... or else!

The High Elf missile troops destroyed one unit and the Silver Helms destroyed the other. Then I realised that the Tomb King was in range of my Fall Back move and more than 30cms from any friendly unit - Game Over!

So, despite having 2,270 points to 4,045, a combination of the speed and resistance of the Silver Helms and the difficulty of co-ordinating attacks within an army, let alone between armies, had allowed me to deal with each threat as it occurred and defeat the two armies.



TURN 3