KADABRA GAMES

THE GOLDEN KEEP

FORCES OF DARKNESS



A FIELD BOOK OF WAR & SETTLEMENT

ILLUSTRATED PLAYER'S MANUAL

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0.7.4 · Released game rules · October 2026

Player manual for the released 0.7.4 rules. Four races, forty roles, seven constructible buildings per race and twelve campaign chapters. Preview campaign additions and unfinished presentation work are distinguished from released mechanics. Tactical plans are reasoned recommendations, not measured matchup guarantees.

FOREWORD

Enter the world

Before a soldier reaches the road, someone has carried the timber, left a home, reached a hall and fitted the equipment. Command that whole journey. This handbook teaches the working settlement and the tactical relationships that turn its output into a useful army.

Begin with Your first command, then use the race chapters and goal-specific build orders for the problem in front of you. The reference tables give actual released prices and base rules. A manual can explain why a pike should meet a rider; the battlefield still decides whether you put the pike in place in time.



From the world’s cinematic artwork. Gameplay illustrations inside this book are labelled separately.

CHAPTER 01

I · Your first command

A settlement must keep working while its army fights.



The peoples of Golden Keep, from the approved character lineup. An art plate, not a gameplay screenshot.

Choose the battle you want

Select Humans, Orcs, Gargoyles or Black Dwarves on the title screen. They are four separate playable peoples, each with its own workers, buildings and ten unit roles. Choose a rival, difficulty and battlefield, then select Command for an ordinary skirmish. The Forces of Darkness title does not combine the three non-Human peoples into one faction.

Choose Relaxed while learning physical recruitment and interiors. It grants more preparation time, rather than making your troops invulnerable. Standard and Veteran send pressure sooner. The title screen shows the first raid time. Campaign chapters have their own initial timing, so read their briefing instead of assuming the skirmish clock.

TRY NEW UNITS & INTERIORS is a supplied practice field marked as debug play. It is useful for inspecting a role, but its free troops and halls are not a normal build order. The costs and plans in this manual describe Command matches and ordinary campaign play.

A first five-minute routine

Begin by finding the keep, the nearest gold and timber, and the approach an enemy would use. Start gathering immediately. A resource in a worker's hands is not yet available to spend; watch for the return trip and deposit. Keep the initial soldiers between the exposed workers and the unexplored approach.

Your first new building should answer a need. A barracks enables replacement soldiers. Housing prevents a population stall. A refinery improves nearby gathering and starts the oil economy. A tower protects a fixed route but cannot escort workers to a new resource site. Building one of everything before producing defenders spends away your response to the first raid.

01. Send available workers to both gold and timber. Adjust the split when the resource bar and your next purchase show which material is limiting you.

02. Use a soldier to reveal the nearby approach without marching the whole army into the enemy base. Return it if the route is defended.

03. Place a barracks on open, reachable ground, leaving room south of the building for its doorway and for traffic.

04. Keep gathering while the builders work. Add a recruit only when you can also protect the worker route and its household.

05. Before the next queue fills your homes, construct housing. Set the training hall's rally point behind your defenders, not inside hostile fire.

06. After the first attack, repair damaged structures, withdraw hurt troops toward support, inspect stock and decide whether the next investment is defense, mobility or siege.

What wins and what loses

In a normal skirmish, destroy every opposing command keep while retaining at least one of your own. You do not have to demolish every house. Conversely, an army in the enemy town does not save you if your final keep falls. Check the minimap during a siege and leave enough defense to protect your own command center.

Campaign victory requires every listed objective. Destroying the enemy keep cannot bypass an unfinished delivery, muster, occupation or escort objective. The protected starting champion must remain alive in escort chapters, even after reaching the destination. J opens the journal so you can check the actual task.

Read the position before issuing the next order

Left-click a unit for its identity and current state. I opens readable details, including health, attack, armor, active effects and ability readiness. The details are more useful than the silhouette when two units share a battlefield role. Check whether the selected person is still traveling for training or fitting before counting them as available for combat.

Fog matters. Explore the route before placing a forward settlement or committing an escort. Water, rock, lava and chasms block normal travel. Winged appearance does not make every Gargoyle a permanently flying unit: ordinary movement still follows walkable terrain, with particular leap abilities providing limited exceptions.

CHAPTER 02

II · The working settlement

Deliveries, doors and stockpiles are part of the battlefield.

Gold, timber and the return journey

Workers harvest gold, timber and crude oil. A worker carries up to twelve units before returning. At base rate, a harvest action collects two units; gold uses a 0.7-second work interval and other resources a 0.55-second interval. Those are work-site intervals, not income per second for an entire route: walking, returning, unloading, blocked paths and full stores all reduce actual income.

Use the resource bar as a report of deposited stock. To improve a slow economy, first inspect idle workers, the distance to an accepting store and storage capacity. Adding more workers to a jammed doorway can deepen the bottleneck. A nearby refinery improves gathering at resource nodes within eight tiles by 25%; several refineries do not multiply that local bonus. Race economic studies can combine with it.

Gold belongs in a command core's vault. Timber can be accepted by the keep, refinery and advanced workshop. Crude belongs at a refinery. Keep workers near a safe return route, and protect the actual store as well as the deposit. A distant forest is not efficient merely because many trees remain. If a selected tree is unreachable inside dense woods, workers can seek a reachable tree nearby in that forest.

Finite storage and enlarging the vault

A new keep has capacity for 800 gold, 500 timber and 120 refined oil. A refinery holds 800 timber, 500 crude and 500 refined oil. The advanced workshop accepts timber with an 800-unit capacity. These are physical building inventories; resources are not stored in an unlimited global bank. The totals at the top of the screen sum usable stock in completed friendly buildings.

Open STORES to find the full container. ENLARGE VAULT adds gold capacity in two stages: the first costs 120 gold and 80 timber, the second 180 gold and 120 timber. Each stage takes fifteen seconds. A keep’s gold limits become 1,200 and 1,600 respectively. These upgrades do not enlarge its timber pit or oil tank.

If a refund cannot fit into surviving stores, excess resources can become salvage. Destroyed stores can also leave salvage. Recovering it still requires work; do not count stock in a destroyed building as immediately spendable. A forward keep can shorten gold routes and add strategic redundancy, but its 450 gold and 300 timber cost is a major commitment.

Crude is not fuel

Send workers to an oil deposit and give them a completed refinery to unload into. With refining enabled and space remaining, the refinery consumes two crude to produce one refined oil every two seconds. Empty crude bins, a full oil tank or a disabled refinery stops that conversion. Extra harvesting does not solve a full output tank.

Refined oil pays for fuel-using recruits and refills their personal reserves. The initial skirmish keep receives forty oil; that is a starting reserve, not recurring free production. A paired Tar Hurler and Cinder Ram alone cost sixty-five oil to recruit, so a normal opening cannot purchase both from that reserve without refining more.

An oil user’s ordinary attacks also consume fuel. The large named ability has an additional stated cost. Before marching, select the unit and inspect the actual carried fuel. To refill it, use REFUEL SELECTED at a friendly stocked tank or refinery; the unit must visit, finish its service and leave. The chosen building must contain enough oil for the missing capacity. A large total elsewhere in town does not fill an empty local tank.

Housing is both capacity and a home

The keep provides ten supply, housing six, and an advanced workshop four. Total army capacity is capped at ninety-six. Most people use one supply, champions and many heavy or mounted specialists use two, and large machines use three. Queued recruits reserve their supply, so a queue can fill the available places before soldiers emerge.

Recruitment also requires a household with enough free places for that particular role. Three scattered single vacancies are not equivalent to one home with three places for a machine’s recruitment. Completed housing must be connected to the producer by a walkable route. Build new homes before the queue stalls and leave a clear route from their doors.

Housing does not gather a food resource. Retired Farmstead-style structures may exist in older saves, but farms are not one of the seven construction choices in this edition. Do not spend time searching the current build catalog for an obsolete food prerequisite.

Construction, repair and the cost of expansion

Place foundations through V or the building shortcuts. Ground must be explored, sufficiently open and reachable by a worker; buildings cannot overlap resources or blocking terrain. Construction pays its gold and timber up front. The game normally assigns up to two available builders, who must travel to the site. Select additional workers and right-click a foundation if you want them to assist.

Construction times in the reference table are one worker’s work time before bonuses and travel. Two workers contributing continuously can finish sooner, but that also removes two gatherers for the duration. A new tower that saves a worker line can repay that diversion; a speculative building far from the route may simply delay the army.

Workers repair completed friendly buildings when ordered onto them. Each repair pulse spends one timber to restore eight health, at a 0.6-second interval per working repairer. Keep timber available during defense. A Forge Tender offers a different repair ability for Black Dwarves, but workers remain the ordinary way to maintain structures. Do not assume a nearly finished foundation can absorb the same pressure as a completed building.

CHAPTER 03

III · The seven halls

Corresponding buildings share their basic purpose and price across the four races.

Construction reference

Read the names in your own column when following a build order. G/T means gold and timber. The health and work times are base values; studies can change construction speed or building health. A finished foundation is required before its supply, service and defense become available.

Role	Human	Orc	Gargoyle	Black Dwarf
Keep	Keep / Castle	Fortress	Undercitadel	Irondeep Keep
Barracks	Barracks	War Camp	Stone Lair	Hammer Barracks
Cottage	Townhouse	Huts	Cliff Nests	Hearth Dwellings
Tower	Watchtower	Watchtower	Lava Spire	Iron Watchtower
Temple	Temple	Shaman Hut	Altar Hall	Ancestral Forge
Mine	Oil Refinery	Tar Refinery	Gas Refinery	Deep Mine Refinery
Shelter	Steam Workshop	Ram Workshop	Gasworks Roost	Siege Foundry

Prices, durability and space for people

The building menu lists current prices before you place a foundation. There is no required upgrade from an existing barracks into a workshop: a workshop can be constructed directly when you can pay and reach an eligible site. The dependency is often economic and tactical rather than a locked building tree.

Role	Gold	Timber	Work seconds	Base health	Supply
Keep	450	300	65	1900	10
Barracks	170	100	28	1050	0
Cottage	75	45	17	650	6
Tower	125	95	24	850	0
Temple	160	110	32	1000	0
Mine	140	85	30	1100	0
Shelter	190	130	35	1100	4

Give each hall a job

The keep recruits workers, stores core resources and defends the settlement. A barracks recruits the core army and each race’s designated infantry specialists. The support temple produces its support specialist, heals friendly outdoor units within eight tiles for two health per second, and fits the champion’s final ability. Put its protection where injured troops can reach it.

A watchtower fires within nine tiles, delivering a base nineteen-damage shot every 1.1 seconds. It holds a location; it cannot pursue a raider who has left its reach. A keep has shorter defensive reach. Towers are most useful where their coverage overlaps the worker route or a defended choke rather than on an isolated patch of ground.

The advanced workshop recruits each race’s heavy or specialist roster, provides four supply and works on advanced equipment. Training work there runs at 1.25 times the base rate. Its shared queue can still be delayed by travel and fittings. The refinery is an economic and fuel building: its local harvest bonus depends on the resource node’s distance, not simply the worker standing beside the refinery.

Older settlements

Five additional building identities survive in supported saves: Farm, Village, Stronghold, Ritual and Hero Hall. They are not new construction options. Their old homes, inventories, healing, defenses and queues remain meaningful when you load such a settlement. Do not rebuild a current strategy around an unavailable hall merely because an older video shows it.

Legacy farms provide ten supply and timber drop-off; villages provide sixteen supply and core storage; strongholds provide twelve supply, military production and defense. Ritual halls refine oil, heal nearby troops and grant the old non-stacking two-damage military benefit while standing. Hero halls provide

four supply and faster champion training. The current seven-building paths cover every trainable role and study without requiring these structures.

CHAPTER 04

IV · People, training and equipment

A purchase begins a journey; it does not materialize an army at the doorway.



A recorded Human Barracks interior: the training bench, fitting station, recruit choices and arriving work are visible together.

Follow one recruit from home to the field

Open a completed producer and choose TRAIN. The order reserves deposited resources and a household place. A recruit leaves its home, walks to the hall, enters, reaches a work station, receives its role and eventually exits toward the rally point. Machines and mounted roles also have an assembly stage. Machine crew travel and board as part of that process.

The queue holds up to five recruitment orders at a producer. Training seconds are the station work portion only. Household departure, outdoor travel, indoor walking, waiting, assembly and later fittings all add time. A recruit that appears late is not necessarily stuck: inspect WORK & ARRIVALS to see which stage is active.

The same unit persists through training and fitting. This is why protecting the settlement's routes matters. A long unsafe route from home to workshop is a vulnerability even when the workshop itself is defended. Place rally points behind your line so new troops do not trickle alone into a battle. Cancel early if you change your plan: uncommitted recruitment can return its reserved cost; work already committed is not a guaranteed full refund.

Inside the buildings

Left-click a completed friendly building to open its interior. To send outdoor troops in, select them and right-click the building. Selected workers prioritize repairing a damaged building. Inside, select people with left-click and right-click the floor to move them. LEAVE BUILDING or EXIT HALL sends the selected occupants through the door; OUTSIDE or Escape only closes your view.

The battle continues while an interior is open. A person inside does not attack or scout the outdoor battlefield. Watching a busy room is useful for diagnosing production, but do not leave the camera there while an exposed army needs orders. Use the minimap and return outside regularly.

The four tabs organize the work. TRAIN lists recruits and queues. STUDY orders research and equipment. STORES reveals the local inventory, refinery and vault controls. PEOPLE helps locate occupants. WORK & ARRIVALS shows travelers, waiting customers and interrupted jobs. A manual movement order can suspend a service; resume it deliberately when ready rather than assuming the person will complete the original fitting.

Learning is not equipping

Race studies fall into two categories. Settlement studies change the economy or defenses directly. Personal military studies teach equipment that eligible people must visit a workshop to install. Completing Formation Harness, for example, does not add armor to a guard still standing across the map. Check installed equipment in the unit's details.

A fitting takes six seconds at its station, plus travel and waiting. Applicable learned equipment is queued for new recruits before they rally. Several recipes can therefore make a well-equipped recruit slower to reach the front than its base training time suggests. Organize the town to keep those visits short, and begin an attack after the important fittings have actually finished.

Only one race study can be underway for your side at a time. The three shared equipment recipes use their own research records; do not assume their timing is governed by the same race-study lock. The study tables show gold, timber, work time and prerequisite research. Cancelling an active race study returns its reserved resources to available storage. A lost study building interrupts that study.

Shared equipment

These three recipes apply across all races, and each eligible unit installs each kit once. They stack with applicable race equipment. Workers are excluded. The melee/ranged division is the unit's attack range, not a judgment based on its appearance: below three tiles uses the forged weapon kit, while three or more uses missile and siege tools.

Recipe	Hall	G / T	Study seconds	Installed benefit
Forged weapon kit	Barracks	180 / 100	36	+3 damage to military units with range below 3
Armor and harness kit	Advanced workshop	160 / 120	34	+2 armor to military units
Missile and siege tools	Advanced workshop	190 / 140	40	+3 damage to military units with range at least 3

Research order is a strategic choice

Each race's second economic study requires its first. Study five in the six-study sequence requires study three; the final champion study requires study five. In the tables these are named explicitly. The ranged/tool study has no earlier research prerequisite. You may invest in the immediate answer to the enemy instead of buying every cheaper study first.

A champion's named ability requires both its final study and the champion's completed personal fitting at the support temple. All four champion abilities have a forty-five-second cooldown. Specialists have their own abilities without that final champion-research requirement. Distinguish the two systems before spending resources to unlock a button that was already available on a specialist.

CHAPTER 05

V · Why one force defeats another

A counter is a working relationship between damage, armor, position and time.

Damage and armor

A resolved hit deals the greater of one damage or its modified strike damage minus effective armor. The one-damage floor means armor does not make a unit absolutely immune. Damage modifiers, armor piercing, temporary wards and armor break change that calculation. Health determines how many successful hits can be endured; it does not reduce the damage of each hit.

For a simple unmodified illustration, a fourteen-damage strike into seven armor removes seven health, whereas a twenty-seven-damage strike into the same armor removes twenty. This explains why heavy bolts can remain useful against armor while a stream of small hits is greatly reduced. It does not predict a duel on its own: attack interval, range, movement, upgrades and several attackers all matter.

Base unit statistics appear in the roster reference. They are not promised damage-per-second outcomes. Projectiles travel, melee attacks prepare and resolve, units can be interrupted, and blocked formations do not all attack at once. Test an army by whether its roles get to perform their jobs, not by adding the printed damage numbers.

Mounted attacks meet braced pikes

A deployed Pike Warden gains two armor, deals 2.1 times its normal strike damage against mounted targets and reduces incoming mounted damage to 45% before armor. A pike hit also interrupts mounted momentum and briefly restrains the target. This is a specific implemented mounted counter. The Human Knight is a core champion, not the Courser Lancer’s mounted class.

A pike automatically braces after holding still briefly when not under a plain move order; its ability also toggles deployment. Moving breaks the brace. Place pikes before the charge arrives and keep them still at the threatened approach. Ordering them to chase a retreating horse gives away the reason you recruited them.

Courser Lancers and Tusk Riders build charge distance while moving along a sufficiently straight heading. A clean approach of at least three tiles enables a heavy hit, followed by recovery. Turn

sharply, stop too long or run into prepared pikes and the plan changes. Use riders against an exposed flank, not as a universal front-line upgrade.

Ranged fire, armor piercing and pursuit

A Pavise Arbalester adds back up to five of the defender’s effective armor to its strike before mitigation. Its heavy bolt and this armor bypass make it an answer to armored targets, provided it can survive the reload. Planting its shield grants six extra armor but reduces movement to 15% of normal. Put defenders between it and an attacker coming around the side.

Slow heavy units such as Ironhide Breakers, Basalt Maulers and Tunnel Bulwarks can be pressured by ranged troops that maintain space. This is a positional recommendation based on their speed and reach, not an automatic win. Narrow terrain, a hook, tether, dive or a second enemy group can prevent retreat. Scout the escape route before attempting repeated shots and withdrawals.

Rune Pickbreakers remove armor on ordinary strikes: two per hit, or four on the prepared next strike, stacking to six for eight seconds. Use their melee contact to help allied ranged fire. Orc Hunter and Cinder Tools provides three armor piercing to eligible fitted missile troops; Black Dwarf Crossbow and Siege Winches provides four to its eligible fitted units. Confirm the fitting before relying on that benefit.

Break a building without losing the siege weapon

Siege-trait attackers multiply damage against buildings by 1.65 before final mitigation. Fitted Orc Siege Craft adds its own structure-damage multiplier. This makes siege a purposeful investment against defended structures, but the price, fuel and slow movement mean the rest of the force must create firing time.

Steam Mangonels have a three-tile minimum range; Cinder Mortars have a three-and-a-half-tile minimum. Their ground-targeted abilities check the aimed point against minimum and current maximum range, then land after a delay. Ordinary target attacks also account for the target’s radius at the minimum-range boundary. If an enemy reaches the weapon, a larger attack number does not solve the lack of room to fire.

Screen with infantry, keep support nearby and give the machine a retreat lane. Spread your own approach so a stuck front unit does not drag everyone into a choke. A Chain Warden’s three-second tether can hold one victim for a delayed mortar shot, but the mortar still needs a legal firing position and fuel. Fire at where the enemy will remain, not simply where it was when the selection changed.

Fields, flame and short combination windows

Tar and gas are ground fields with limited lives. Tar lasts nine seconds and slows enemies in it. Gas lasts eight seconds, slows enemies, reduces their sight and prevents affected ranged units from targeting beyond three tiles. The speed effect leaves affected units at 45% normal speed while the field status persists. These fields are not permanent terrain changes.

The Cinder Ram or Ember Bellows must bring its flame close to the field and face it. Ignition checks the field center within 4.6 tiles and in front of the flame unit. Align the pair before placing the field; the ram turns slowly. Waiting for a long spoken explanation between gas and flame can waste the entire eight-second window.

Ignited tar becomes a burning field with at most six seconds remaining. Gas detonates for a thirty-damage base burst, or 37.5 with the Alchemist’s fitted focus, then has at most two seconds of burning field left. Burning fields apply repeated small hits, which still meet damage mitigation. Do not promise that a cloud erases every armored formation. Separate the roles: slowing holds a route, disruption shortens enemy fire, and ignition adds damage.

Support is a position, not just a purchase

The War Drummer’s nearby rhythm shortens allies’ attack intervals to 78% of normal while the status applies. Its passive aura reaches five tiles; its active crescendo gives an eight-second rhythm status to allies within six. Keep it near the force it supports. Killing or separating it ends the continuing passive supply, although an already-applied timed active status can persist.

The Eyrie Cantor gives nearby allies five temporary armor and 25% regroup movement speed for six seconds. A Tunnel Bulwark’s deployed protection supplies four armor within three tiles. These specialist shield effects use the strongest applicable protection, rather than adding every shield together. Formation size and spacing therefore matter more than crowding identical support effects onto one unit.

A Hospitaller channels fourteen health per second on one wounded living ally, up to six seconds. A Forge Tender repairs machines or buildings at eighteen per second, or 22.5 after Fortified Workshops; on a living soldier it instead gives a temporary seven-armor brace. Damage to the channeler, movement orders or the target leaving reach can interrupt treatment. Pull wounded units back into a protected pocket and avoid exposing the healer to the same attack.

CHAPTER 06

6 · Humans

Hold a deliberate line, preserve its support and create space for a flank or bombardment.

The ten roles

These are unfitted base values for this race. G/T/O lists recruitment gold, timber and oil. Range is in map tiles; attack interval and station work are in seconds. A workshop’s training bonus and all travel or fitting time are separate. Core race modifiers are already included; do not apply them again to the specialist entries.

Human Worker

Hall: Keep / Castle
G / T / O: 55 / 0 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 65 / 0
Damage / interval: 5 / 1.3
Range / speed: 1 / 3.1
Base work: 12

Shield Guard

Hall: Barracks
G / T / O: 80 / 20 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 135 / 2
Damage / interval: 14 / 1
Range / speed: 1.1 / 3.25
Base work: 16

Human Archer

Hall: Barracks
G / T / O: 95 / 35 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 85 / 0
Damage / interval: 13 / 1.3
Range / speed: 6.3 / 3.6
Base work: 18

Human Knight

Hall: Barracks
G / T / O: 175 / 60 / 0
Supply: 2
HP / armor: 265 / 4
Damage / interval: 29 / 1.3
Range / speed: 1.3 / 2.9
Base work: 28

Pike Warden

Hall: Barracks
G / T / O: 105 / 35 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 150 / 3
Damage / interval: 16 / 1.15
Range / speed: 2.1 / 2.8
Base work: 20

Courser Lancer

Hall: Steam Workshop
G / T / O: 165 / 55 / 0
Supply: 2
HP / armor: 190 / 2
Damage / interval: 20 / 1.65
Range / speed: 1.45 / 4.8
Base work: 29

Pavise Arbalester

Hall: Barracks
G / T / O: 125 / 65 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 118 / 1
Damage / interval: 27 / 2.35
Range / speed: 7.2 / 2.45
Base work: 25

Field Hospitaller

Hall: Temple
G / T / O: 135 / 25 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 92 / 0
Damage / interval: 5 / 1.8
Range / speed: 1.1 / 3.15
Base work: 24

Pitch Sapper

Hall: Steam Workshop
G / T / O: 100 / 60 / 24
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 108 / 1
Damage / interval: 9 / 1.5
Range / speed: 3.8 / 3.65
Base work: 23

Steam Mangonel

Hall: Steam Workshop
G / T / O: 230 / 160 / 30
Supply: 3
HP / armor: 250 / 3
Damage / interval: 39 / 3.7
Range / speed: 10.5 / 1.8
Base work: 42

The core of the force

The Worker supplies the entire formation; preserve its gathering time and keep it out of the front rank.

The Shield Guard is an affordable close defender. Use it to occupy enemies while archers fire and specialist pikes cover mounted approaches.

The Human Archer supplies economical ranged fire. It does not share the Pavise's innate armor bypass, so improve its equipment or change the mix against heavily protected enemies.

The Human Knight is a durable, hard-hitting core champion trained at the Barracks. Its title does not confer the mounted charge rules used by Courser Lancers.

Pike Warden · Brace pike

Set the Warden where a mounted attack must pass, then let it stop. Use other troops to pursue while the pike protects the vulnerable line. Its relatively long melee reach helps it work behind the first contact, but it cannot answer distant missiles by standing still.

Courser Lancer · Lance charge

Seek a clear straight approach to an exposed target. The active charge lasts three seconds and has a fourteen-second cooldown. After the impact, reassess instead of repeatedly ordering a tight circle that loses momentum. A braced pike line is a reason to change the route.

Pavise Arbalester · Plant pavise

Deploy only after choosing a firing position that friendly troops can hold. The long reload and very slow planted movement give flankers time to reach it. Toggle the pavise off before a major reposition, and use the bolt against targets whose armor is reducing ordinary arrows.

Field Hospitaller · Tend wounds

Choose a wounded non-machine ally within five tiles. The healer must remain safe and the patient must stay close through the channel. Its nine-second ability cooldown does not guarantee nine seconds of uninterrupted treatment; a hit can end the current channel immediately.

Pitch Sapper · Burning pitch

Place burning pitch on walkable ground within five tiles. It costs six fuel, lasts seven seconds and uses a ten-second cooldown. A second patch cannot replace this Sapper’s live one. Choose an approach the enemy will actually occupy, rather than spending the field under a target already leaving.

Steam Mangonel · Boiler bombardment

Keep its three-tile dead zone behind a screen. Boiler Bombardment costs six fuel, takes 1.1 seconds to land and has a twelve-second cooldown. Its radius catches groups; a lone mobile target can leave the aimed ground. Bowstrings and Winches can extend the fitted weapon’s maximum reach.

Champion · Royal Standard

Restore up to forty health and grant three armor for eight seconds to outdoor allies within six tiles. Use it after allies have lost health and before the next concentrated attack. The heal is immediate, not a continuing healing aura.

Complete the final race study and the champion’s personal fitting before using this ability. Select the champion and press G, or use its command button. Its cooldown is forty-five seconds. Nearby effects

require allies to be in range at activation; do not mistake a successful button press for protection of troops across the map.

The six race studies

Costs are gold and timber; times are study work seconds. The prerequisite column names the earlier research, not a building upgrade. Personal benefits still require individual fitting. Economic, building-health and sight improvements apply directly when the study completes.

Study	Hall	G / T	Seconds	Prerequisite	Effect
Carpenters' Guild	Keep / Castle	110 / 85	28	None	Workers build 30% faster, supporting new homes and production halls.
Supply Wagons	Oil Refinery	150 / 110	36	Carpenters' Guild	All harvesting is 20% faster; nearby depot bonuses still apply.
Formation Harness	Barracks	150 / 100	35	None	Fit Shield Guards, Pike Wardens, Pavise Arbalesters and Courser Lancers with 3 extra armor.
Bowstrings and Winches	Steam Workshop	170 / 130	40	None	Fit Archers, Pavise Arbalesters and Steam Mangonels for 1.2 extra range and 2 extra damage.
Tempered Steel	Steam Workshop	230 / 160	48	Formation Harness	Fit all military units, including cavalry and steam siege, for 3 extra damage.
The Royal Standard	Temple	260 / 180	52	Tempered Steel	Fit Knights to rally nearby allies: restore 40 health and grant 3 armor for eight seconds.

CHAPTER 07

7 · Orcs

Pull the opponent into a close fight, sustain contact and bring the flame pair together.

The ten roles

These are unfitted base values for this race. G/T/O lists recruitment gold, timber and oil. Range is in map tiles; attack interval and station work are in seconds. A workshop’s training bonus and all travel or fitting time are separate. Core race modifiers are already included; do not apply them again to the specialist entries.

Orc Laborer

Hall: Fortress
G / T / O: 55 / 0 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 72.8 / 0
Damage / interval: 5.4 / 1.3
Range / speed: 1 / 2.976
Base work: 12

Orc Warrior

Hall: War Camp
G / T / O: 80 / 20 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 151.2 / 2
Damage / interval: 15.12 / 1
Range / speed: 1.1 / 3.12
Base work: 16

Orc Hunter

Hall: War Camp
G / T / O: 95 / 35 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 95.2 / 0
Damage / interval: 14.04 / 1.3
Range / speed: 6.3 / 3.456
Base work: 18

Orc Warchief

Hall: War Camp
G / T / O: 175 / 60 / 0
Supply: 2
HP / armor: 296.8 / 4
Damage / interval: 31.32 / 1.3
Range / speed: 1.3 / 2.784
Base work: 28

Hook Reaver

Hall: War Camp
G / T / O: 110 / 30 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 142 / 1
Damage / interval: 18 / 1.1
Range / speed: 1.3 / 3.5
Base work: 21

Ironhide Breaker

Hall: Ram Workshop
G / T / O: 185 / 70 / 0
Supply: 2
HP / armor: 285 / 6
Damage / interval: 28 / 1.75
Range / speed: 1.55 / 2.15
Base work: 32

Tusk Rider

Hall: Ram Workshop
G / T / O: 150 / 50 / 0
Supply: 2
HP / armor: 175 / 1
Damage / interval: 19 / 1.35
Range / speed: 1.3 / 4.6
Base work: 27

War Drummer

Hall: Shaman Hut
G / T / O: 120 / 80 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 155 / 1
Damage / interval: 8 / 1.6
Range / speed: 1.2 / 2.85
Base work: 24

Tar Hurler

Hall: War Camp
G / T / O: 105 / 55 / 25
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 104 / 0
Damage / interval: 12 / 2.1
Range / speed: 6.4 / 3.05
Base work: 24

Cinder Ram

Hall: Ram Workshop
G / T / O: 220 / 170 / 40
Supply: 3
HP / armor: 360 / 5
Damage / interval: 34 / 2.35
Range / speed: 1.6 / 1.65
Base work: 44

The core of the force

The Laborer is a worker with the Orc core-stat adjustments, not a free replacement for a Warrior. Keep it gathering, building and repairing.

The Warrior is a straightforward melee body for sustained contact. Pair its pressure with the drummer and use hooks to make a victim fight on your terms.

The Hunter provides core missile fire. Fitted Hunter and Cinder Tools gives it extra range and piercing; without the fitting it remains the base ranged role.

The Warchief is the Orc core champion. Keep it near allies when its learned and fitted War Cry is ready, rather than letting it chase alone beyond the group.

Hook Reaver · Reaving hook

Look for a vulnerable enemy within five tiles with an exposed path to the Reaver. Other enemy bodies can shield that path. Machines, deployed troops and enemies already lunging resist the pull. The victim travels along the ground rather than teleporting through obstacles; allies should already be ready to attack it.

Ironhide Breaker · Breaking wave

Use Breaking Wave when several opponents are inside the short frontal arc. The strike also interrupts and briefly restrains them, but its fourteen-second cooldown and slow body make chasing skirmishers inefficient. Give it a location to contest and let faster troops prevent the enemy from simply backing away.

Tusk Rider · Tusk rush

The rush is a short committed move, followed by two seconds of recovery. Use it on an exposed ranged target rather than the center of a prepared defensive line. The sixteen-second cooldown prevents repeated instant escapes. Save a route back to friendly infantry when the first attack does not finish the target.

War Drummer · War rhythm

Treat its position as part of your formation. A drummer at the back of town cannot help the troops at the bridge. Trigger the twenty-second-cooldown crescendo when allies are gathered and about to attack; then keep the passive aura near the continuing fight without placing the drummer in front.

Tar Hurler · Tar field

Tar Field reaches seven tiles, costs five fuel and uses an eleven-second cooldown. The unignited patch slows enemies and lasts nine seconds. Position the ram first so its flame can reach the same patch before it expires. A Hurler left in the settlement cannot support a distant assault.

Cinder Ram · Cinder breath

Its armored front reduces incoming attacks from the facing direction, while its slow turn and movement expose flanking opportunities. Cinder Breath costs ten fuel and holds it in a close flame attack for 2.5 seconds, with a fifteen-second cooldown. Align the prow before firing, screen its sides and plan the refueling trip.

Champion · War Cry

Give outdoor allies within six tiles thirty percent more damage for eight seconds, while reducing their armor by two. Use the window when your force can actually attack. Triggering it during a long approach spends the duration and leaves the armor penalty without useful contact.

Complete the final race study and the champion’s personal fitting before using this ability. Select the champion and press G, or use its command button. Its cooldown is forty-five seconds. Nearby effects require allies to be in range at activation; do not mistake a successful button press for protection of troops across the map.

The six race studies

Costs are gold and timber; times are study work seconds. The prerequisite column names the earlier research, not a building upgrade. Personal benefits still require individual fitting. Economic, building-health and sight improvements apply directly when the study completes.

Study	Hall	G / T	Seconds	Prerequisite	Effect
Timber Crews	Tar Refinery	100 / 80	28	None	Timber harvesting is 35% faster, feeding sustained army production.
War Rations	Fortress	140 / 100	34	Timber Crews	Military units recover 0.7 health per second after eight seconds without taking damage.
Blooded Axes	War Camp	155 / 95	35	None	Fit Warriors, Warchiefs, Hook Reavers, Ironhide Breakers, Tusk Riders and Cinder Rams for 5 extra damage.
Hunter and Cinder Tools	Ram Workshop	165 / 125	40	None	Fit Hunters and Tar Hurlers for 0.6 extra range and 3 armor piercing. Fitted Cinder Rams deal 25% stronger flame pulses.
Siege Craft	Ram Workshop	220 / 170	48	Blooded Axes	Fit military units for 40% more damage to buildings; drums and burning tar support the advance.
The War Cry	Shaman Hut	260 / 180	52	Siege Craft	Fit Warchiefs to drive nearby soldiers into eight seconds of fury: +30% damage, but 2 less armor.

CHAPTER 08

8 · Gargoyles

Choose the engagement through speed, disruption and short committed dives.

The ten roles

These are unfitted base values for this race. G/T/O lists recruitment gold, timber and oil. Range is in map tiles; attack interval and station work are in seconds. A workshop’s training bonus and all travel or fitting time are separate. Core race modifiers are already included; do not apply them again to the specialist entries.

Gargoyle Shaper

Hall: Undercitadel
G / T / O: 55 / 0 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 58.5 / 0
Damage / interval: 5.4 / 1.3
Range / speed: 1 / 3.41
Base work: 12

Gargoyle Sentinel

Hall: Stone Lair
G / T / O: 80 / 20 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 121.5 / 2
Damage / interval: 15.12 / 1
Range / speed: 1.1 / 3.575
Base work: 16

Gargoyle Embercaster

Hall: Stone Lair
G / T / O: 95 / 35 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 76.5 / 0
Damage / interval: 14.04 / 1.3
Range / speed: 6.3 / 3.96
Base work: 18

Gargoyle Elder

Hall: Stone Lair
G / T / O: 175 / 60 / 0
Supply: 2
HP / armor: 238.5 / 4
Damage / interval: 31.32 / 1.3
Range / speed: 1.3 / 3.19
Base work: 28

Redwing Skirmisher

Hall: Stone Lair
G / T / O: 100 / 40 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 98 / 0
Damage / interval: 11 / 1.05
Range / speed: 5.5 / 4.45
Base work: 20

Basalt Mauler

Hall: Gasworks Roost
G / T / O: 195 / 60 / 0
Supply: 2
HP / armor: 330 / 5
Damage / interval: 30 / 1.85
Range / speed: 1.5 / 2.05
Base work: 34

Gloam Hunter

Hall: Gasworks Roost
G / T / O: 155 / 45 / 0
Supply: 2
HP / armor: 145 / 1
Damage / interval: 22 / 1.4
Range / speed: 1.25 / 4.05
Base work: 28

Gaswing Alchemist

Hall: Gasworks Roost
G / T / O: 130 / 65 / 28
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 112 / 0
Damage / interval: 8 / 1.75
Range / speed: 5.8 / 3.35
Base work: 27

Ember Bellows

Hall: Gasworks Roost
G / T / O: 155 / 90 / 36
Supply: 2
HP / armor: 165 / 2
Damage / interval: 15 / 1.5
Range / speed: 3.1 / 2.7
Base work: 30

Eyrie Cantor

Hall: Altar Hall
G / T / O: 140 / 75 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 110 / 0
Damage / interval: 7 / 1.6
Range / speed: 4.8 / 3.7
Base work: 26

The core of the force

The Shaper carries out the same gathering, construction and repair jobs as other workers. Its movement advantage does not remove the need for safe deposits and stores.

The Sentinel is a fast core melee role with less base health than its Human counterpart. Use its mobility to support a chosen fight, rather than assuming it can absorb prolonged concentrated fire.

The Embercaster is the core ranged unit. Its fitted Ember and Gas Focus adds splash to strikes; do not confuse that missile splash with the Bellows' separate gas-ignition ability.

The Elder is the core champion. Skyfall requires the final study and fitting. Protect it as the named original escort when a campaign objective assigns that role.

Redwing Skirmisher · Wing volley

Wing Volley fires three quick javelin shots, then orders a short retreat away from the target. It has a ten-second cooldown. Give that retreat somewhere walkable to go. The Skirmisher’s speed and reach reward spacing; low armor and health make roots or close pursuit dangerous.

Basalt Mauler · Ground slam

Ground Slam affects a short area around the Mauler, dealing a base twenty-five damage and briefly rooting nearby enemies while interrupting prepared strikes. Its sixteen-second cooldown makes timing important. Use it to protect a place or catch a group already committed to melee, not to run after every distant archer.

Gloam Hunter · Hunting dive

Hunting Dive crosses a short obstacle to clear landing ground, then leaves three seconds of grounded recovery. Its eighteen-second cooldown makes a solitary dive into several defenders risky. Use the mobility to reach a flank that the main force can support; this is not indefinite flight over the map.

Gaswing Alchemist · Bottled gloam

Bottled Gloam costs seven fuel and places an eight-second cloud within 6.5 tiles, with a twelve-second cooldown. Use it to disrupt a firing position or prepare ignition. The unignited cloud affects enemy range and sight, but the Alchemist itself is lightly protected; keep it away from direct pursuit.

Ember Bellows · Flame sweep

Flame Sweep costs nine fuel and holds the user still for two seconds. Keep the Alchemist close enough to share the target and begin the sweep before the gas disappears. Its fifteen-second cooldown and short reach mean a retreating enemy may deny the combination if you start too far away.

Eyrie Cantor · Sheltering call

Sheltering Call reaches allies within 5.5 tiles and uses a nineteen-second cooldown. Its six-second armor and movement benefits support a planned regroup. Move the Cantor into range before calling, then withdraw with the force. A visible pulse around an isolated Cantor does not protect a distant army.

Champion · Skyfall

Leap to explored clear ground within nine tiles and strike enemies within three tiles of the landing for a base thirty damage before mitigation. Check the landing and supporting route first; a strong entry does not guarantee a safe escape.

Complete the final race study and the champion’s personal fitting before using this ability. Select the champion and press G, or use its command button. Its cooldown is forty-five seconds. Nearby effects require allies to be in range at activation; do not mistake a successful button press for protection of troops across the map.

The six race studies

Costs are gold and timber; times are study work seconds. The prerequisite column names the earlier research, not a building upgrade. Personal benefits still require individual fitting. Economic, building-health and sight improvements apply directly when the study completes.

Study	Hall	G / T	Seconds	Prerequisite	Effect
Refinery Crews	Gas Refinery	105 / 90	28	None	Harvesting is 18% faster, feeding vessels, valves and gas weapons.
Warm Stone	Undercitadel	145 / 105	35	Refinery Crews	Military units recover 1 health per second after eight seconds without taking damage.
Wing Drills	Stone Lair	145 / 110	35	None	Fit Sentinels, Redwing Skirmishers, Gloam Hunters, Gaswing Alchemists and Eyrie Cantors to move 18% faster.
Ember and Gas Focus	Gasworks Roost	180 / 135	42	None	Fit Embercasters and Ember Bellows to splash 35% strike damage within 1.6 tiles. Fitted Alchemist gas detonations deal 25% more damage.
High Roosts	Gasworks Roost	220 / 180	48	Wing Drills	All units see 3 tiles farther and defensive buildings gain 2 firing range.
Skyfall	Altar Hall	260 / 180	52	High Roosts	Fit Elders to leap up to 9 tiles across a gap and strike enemies near their landing for 30 damage.

CHAPTER 09

9 · Black Dwarves

Move the armored line with purpose, then expose targets for bolts, tethers and siege.



Black Dwarf reference: compact proportions, dark skin and beard, planted stance and weighty armor.

The ten roles

These are unfitted base values for this race. G/T/O lists recruitment gold, timber and oil. Range is in map tiles; attack interval and station work are in seconds. A workshop's training bonus and all travel or fitting time are separate. Core race modifiers are already included; do not apply them again to the specialist entries.

Dwarf Miner

Hall: Irondeep Keep
G / T / O: 55 / 0 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 78 / 2
Damage / interval: 5 / 1.3
Range / speed: 1 / 2.666
Base work: 12

Tunnel Guard

Hall: Hammer Barracks
G / T / O: 80 / 20 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 162 / 4
Damage / interval: 14 / 1
Range / speed: 1.1 / 2.795
Base work: 16

Dwarf Arbalest

Hall: Hammer Barracks
G / T / O: 95 / 35 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 102 / 2
Damage / interval: 13 / 1.3
Range / speed: 6.3 / 3.096
Base work: 18

Iron Champion

Hall: Hammer Barracks
G / T / O: 175 / 60 / 0
Supply: 2
HP / armor: 318 / 6
Damage / interval: 29 / 1.3
Range / speed: 1.3 / 2.494
Base work: 28

Tunnel Bulwark

Hall: Hammer Barracks
G / T / O: 145 / 85 / 0
Supply: 2
HP / armor: 240 / 7
Damage / interval: 12 / 1.5
Range / speed: 1.15 / 2.05
Base work: 29

Rune Pickbreaker

Hall: Hammer Barracks
G / T / O: 120 / 45 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 158 / 3
Damage / interval: 21 / 1.45
Range / speed: 1.35 / 2.8
Base work: 23

Cinder Mortar

Hall: Siege Foundry
G / T / O: 215 / 145 / 32
Supply: 3
HP / armor: 215 / 4
Damage / interval: 43 / 4.2
Range / speed: 11.3 / 1.65
Base work: 40

Iron Mole

Hall: Siege Foundry
G / T / O: 245 / 150 / 30
Supply: 3
HP / armor: 310 / 7
Damage / interval: 27 / 1.95
Range / speed: 1.4 / 1.9
Base work: 43

Forge Tender

Hall: Ancestral Forge
G / T / O: 115 / 70 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 135 / 2
Damage / interval: 8 / 1.7
Range / speed: 1.2 / 2.7
Base work: 25

Chain Warden

Hall: Hammer Barracks
G / T / O: 135 / 95 / 0
Supply: 1
HP / armor: 172 / 4
Damage / interval: 14 / 1.8
Range / speed: 4.2 / 2.55
Base work: 27

The core of the force

The Miner is the working foundation of the hold. Higher base durability is not a reason to let raiders occupy its route.

The Tunnel Guard combines the core guard role with Black Dwarf health and armor. It is slower than the Human Guard, so defend useful ground and avoid an endless chase.

The Dwarf Arbalest is the core ranged role. The fitted winch study supplies its armor piercing; the name alone does not give it the Pavise Arbalester's innate five-armor bypass.

The Iron Champion is a durable core champion. Its final Oath Ward protects a nearby force; it is most useful when several allies face the same period of incoming fire.

Tunnel Bulwark · Tunnel guard

Deployment grants personal armor and a short protective aura, but leaves the Bulwark moving at 15% speed. Advance in stages: move into the next useful position, deploy, then bring the firing line behind it. A shield that cannot keep up with the army is guarding empty ground.

Rune Pickbreaker · Crack plate

Crack Plate prepares the next stronger armor break for six seconds, with a thirteen-second cooldown. The armor reduction is a temporary opening for the army, not a permanent removal of the enemy's equipment. Focus supporting fire while the break is active, and keep the Pickbreaker alive long enough to establish it.

Cinder Mortar · Cinder shell

Cinder Shell needs an aimed point between 3.5 tiles and the current maximum range. It costs eight fuel, lands after 1.1 seconds and uses a fourteen-second cooldown. The splash suits a group held in place, but a tether on one enemy does not immobilize the entire formation. Retain room behind the weapon for withdrawal.

Iron Mole · Drilling rush

Drilling Rush costs six fuel and aims at a breach within six tiles. A successful structural arrival delivers a heavy hit, then five seconds of recovery reduce speed and strip five armor. Do not send the drill far beyond its support. A Forge Tender and screening troops help cover the exposed recovery.

Forge Tender · Field repair / brace

Field repair channels on a nearby damaged machine or building. Choosing a living soldier gives a five-second seven-armor brace instead. The twelve-second cooldown serves both uses, so decide whether the next threat calls for repair or immediate protection. Keep the Tender safe from hits that interrupt its channel.

Chain Warden · Iron tether

Iron Tether roots one enemy within five tiles for three seconds and interrupts its prepared strike, with an eighteen-second cooldown. Hold the target when your damage dealers are already in place. Using the tether while the mortar is still moving or too close wastes much of its brief opportunity.

Champion · Oath Ward

Grant seven armor for eight seconds to outdoor allies within six tiles. Use it to cross a threatened approach or survive concentrated pressure. It does not heal existing wounds, so plan repair and recovery separately.

Complete the final race study and the champion's personal fitting before using this ability. Select the champion and press G, or use its command button. Its cooldown is forty-five seconds. Nearby effects require allies to be in range at activation; do not mistake a successful button press for protection of troops across the map.

The six race studies

Costs are gold and timber; times are study work seconds. The prerequisite column names the earlier research, not a building upgrade. Personal benefits still require individual fitting. Economic, building-health and sight improvements apply directly when the study completes.

Study	Hall	G / T	Seconds	Prerequisite	Effect
Deep Veins	Deep Mine Refinery	110 / 75	28	None	Gold harvesting is 35% faster, supporting armored formations and siege machines.
Stonecraft	Irondeep Keep	140 / 115	34	Deep Veins	Buildings absorb 3 damage from every hit.
Tempered Shields	Hammer Barracks	165 / 100	36	None	Fit Tunnel Guards, Iron Champions, Tunnel Bulwarks and Rune Pickbreakers with 4 extra armor; Iron Moles gain 2.

Study	Hall	G / T	Seconds	Prerequisite	Effect
Crossbow and Siege Winches	Siege Foundry	180 / 120	42	None	Fit Arbalests, Chain Wardens and Cinder Mortars for 3 extra damage and 4 armor piercing.
Fortified Workshops	Siege Foundry	235 / 170	48	Tempered Shields	Buildings gain 20% maximum health, preserving their current health ratio. Forge Tenders repair machines and buildings 25% faster.
Oath Ward	Ancestral Forge	260 / 180	52	Fortified Workshops	Fit Iron Champions to shield nearby allies with 7 extra armor for eight seconds.

CHAPTER 10

X · Build toward a purpose

Choose a goal, buy the tools for it and protect the process that produces them.

Read these as goal-specific plans

Each plan names the problem it is intended to solve. Costs below include the named new halls and units only; they exclude extra workers, housing, defenders, repairs, refills and research. Subtract buildings already present. These are source-grounded purchase plans, not benchmarked openings or guaranteed victory recipes.

There is no universal timestamp at which every player should add the same building. Travel, map layout, difficulty, losses and occupied workshops change arrival time. Use milestones: income is returning, the threatened route is protected, the household has space, the unit has left fitting, and the pair has reached the same battlefield.

The initial ordinary skirmish provides 360 gold, 240 timber, a keep and housing, five workers and four soldiers. The opponent begins with a larger established base. Spend the initial funds on the next useful

step, then fund the rest through gathering. None of the complete packages below is meant to be bought instantly from starting resources.

Hold a Human approach against mounted pressure

Purchase target: Barracks + two Pike Wardens + two Pavise Arbalesters.

Budget: 630 gold / 300 timber / 0 oil; four supply for the units.

This spends on an immediate barracks answer rather than opening with an expensive workshop. It is a recommended response, not a tested fastest build. Enemy missiles may require your own pressure or a flank; the pike line is not an answer to every target.

01. Keep workers on both materials and finish the Barracks. Use starting troops to cover construction rather than advancing them all toward the enemy.

02. Recruit the first Pike Warden when the mounted threat is approaching. Add the second to cover a wider approach; produce the Pavise pair as resources allow.

03. Choose a position with a protected firing line. Stop the pikes before contact and plant the pavises behind them. A moving pike is not providing the same mounted counter.

04. If pressure continues, add housing as needed and consider Formation Harness. Wait for individual fittings before treating the extra armor as part of the defense.

Break a defended structure with Human siege

Purchase target: Steam Workshop + Oil Refinery + Steam Mangonel.

Budget: 560 gold / 375 timber / 30 oil; three supply for the machine.

Bowstrings and Winches is useful for fitted siege range, but an undefended machine remains vulnerable at any research level. Do not buy every study while you lack troops to keep enemies away from it.

01. First retain an adequate infantry screen from your existing army or barracks. The listed package does not include that protection.

02. Build the Oil Refinery and send a worker to crude if you expect sustained use. Complete the Steam Workshop with an accessible door and safe rally point.

03. Recruit the Mangonel, allow any learned fittings to finish and verify fuel before leaving. A Temple and Hospitaller can support the living screen, but the Hospitaller cannot heal the machine.

04. Approach behind the screen and fire from outside the three-tile minimum. Aim bombardment at a structure or a group unlikely to move before impact. Withdraw the weapon if enemies close its dead zone.

Create an Orc close-combat group

Purchase target: War Camp + Shaman Hut + Hook Reaver + two Warriors + War Drummer.

Budget: 720 gold / 360 timber / 0 oil; four supply for the units.

The hook and drummer multiply the usefulness of a line that already exists. Against a deployed shield or a machine the hook is unavailable, so change target or use ranged pressure instead of repeatedly pressing the ability.

01. Build the War Camp and replenish the melee line before spending on support. The initial soldiers should guard the route while recruits travel.

02. Add the Shaman Hut and War Drummer after the line can protect it. Group the drummer with the fighters before moving out.

03. Look for an exposed enemy within hook range. Pull toward troops already waiting to attack rather than toward an isolated Reaver.

04. Trigger the drum crescendo near contact. Choose Blooded Axes when repeated melee engagements justify fitting the eligible fighters; bring them home or delay departure until fitting finishes.

Prepare tar and ram together

Purchase target: War Camp + Ram Workshop + Tar Refinery + Tar Hurler + Cinder Ram.

Budget: 825 gold / 540 timber / 65 oil; four supply for the units.

The cost is the package from an otherwise unbuilt settlement; subtract halls you already own. The nine-second tar life makes this a positioning drill. It is not solved by activating the two abilities anywhere on the map.

01. Build the refinery early enough to exceed the starting forty-oil reserve. Keep ordinary defenders available while paying for the heavy pair.

02. Finish the War Camp and Ram Workshop, recruit both roles, and wait until both have exited their service routes.

03. Move them together with a screen. Align the ram toward the intended field before ordering Tar Field.

04. Place tar on the approach and use flame while the field is still alive and its center lies within ignition reach. Save enough fuel for the named abilities and plan the return to a stocked tank.

Use a light Gargoyle force to choose contact

Purchase target: Stone Lair + two Redwing Skirmishers + one Sentinel.

Budget: 450 gold / 200 timber / 0 oil; three supply for the units.

This uses speed and a relatively inexpensive producer. It does not demonstrate that two Skirmishers beat a particular enemy count. Assess terrain, enemy range and supporting units before deciding the fight is favorable.

01. Complete the Stone Lair and use the initial army to protect workers until the new group arrives.

02. Recruit the Skirmishers and a Sentinel rather than diverting immediately to the full gas workshop. Keep the Sentinel close enough to deter a pursuer.

03. Scout a route with space to withdraw. Fire from reach, then allow Wing Volley's retreat to move toward your own safe ground.

04. When the enemy uses roots or closes both retreat routes, regroup instead of insisting on the same maneuver. Wing Drills can improve eligible fitted mobility after the basic force is secure.

Build a gas-and-flame pair

Purchase target: Gasworks Roost + Gas Refinery + Gaswing Alchemist + Ember Bellows.

Budget: 615 gold / 370 timber / 64 oil; three supply for the units.

Gas has value before ignition because it disrupts enemy ranged targeting and sight. Immediate detonation trades that remaining disruption window for burst damage; decide which benefit the current fight needs.

01. Build the refinery and assign crude gathering; the pair exceeds the initial oil reserve. Preserve enough basic troops to protect the investment.

02. Finish the Gasworks Roost and train the pair. Check their fuel and complete any intended fittings before departure.

03. Bring both into position before creating gas. Put the cloud on a relevant firing position or approach, then sweep flame through it within the eight-second field life.

04. Use an Eyrie Cantor separately when a regroup needs armor and movement. Do not delay ignition to cycle through unrelated abilities.

Build a Black Dwarf line against direct pressure

Purchase target: Hammer Barracks + Tunnel Bulwark + Rune Pickbreaker + Dwarf Arbalest.

Budget: 530 gold / 265 timber / 0 oil; four supply for the units.

A compact defense benefits from protection, but a slow shield should not drag the whole force into a fruitless chase. Against retreating enemies, protect your economy and advance to the next useful location.

01. Place the Hammer Barracks where recruits can reach the front safely. Keep the initial army between construction and the hostile approach.

02. Recruit a Bulwark to occupy the line, a Pickbreaker to reduce armor and an Arbalest to exploit the opening.

03. Advance the Bulwark to useful ground before deploying. Keep the Arbalest in firing space and send the Pickbreaker onto the priority armored target.

04. Fit Tempered Shields for eligible front units or Crossbow and Siege Winches for the Arbalest when the situation and workshop investment justify them.

Make a tether useful to a mortar

Purchase target: Hammer Barracks + Siege Foundry + Deep Mine Refinery + Chain Warden + Cinder Mortar.

Budget: 850 gold / 555 timber / 32 oil; four supply for the units.

The Warden holds one enemy, not a whole group. Splash is most useful when other enemies are already nearby. A shell fired at a building proves the mortar can fire, but does not by itself prove a successful tether combination.

01. Keep a melee screen from your existing army; this package is the control-and-siege addition, not the entire force.

02. Finish the Foundry and refinery, recruit both specialists and check oil at the tank. Leave room at the rally point for the machine.

03. Set the mortar beyond its 3.5-tile minimum and within firing range. Only then move the Warden into a safe tether position.

04. Root the chosen enemy and fire at its ground before the three-second hold ends. If the opponent reaches the mortar, retreat behind the screen rather than forcing an illegal shot.

Change the plan when the battlefield changes

If a raid reaches the workers, pause the expensive next purchase and secure that route. If a missile army refuses melee, add pursuit or control instead of more slow bodies. If a tower blocks the only crossing, prepare siege and its screen. If a campaign asks only for deliveries and construction, attacking the enemy base may waste the safest route to completion.

Research should serve the army you actually field. Buying a piercing study without eligible troops, a champion ability without a fitted champion, or oil equipment without a stocked return point ties up resources without solving the present problem. Before spending, state the next job in plain terms: hold this crossing, catch that ranged unit, repair this machine or break that tower.

CHAPTER 11

XI · The Chronicles of Atheria

Twelve released chapters turn settlement skills into different objectives.

Campaign scope and progression

The 0.7.4 release contains four campaigns of three chapters each. All four opening chapters are available immediately. Completing a chapter unlocks the next for that people, and completed chapters can be replayed. A later preview expands the campaign material; those additional chapters are outside this release manual.

The campaigns are game adaptations inspired by the creator's world and source material. Their exact battles, tactical unit names and dialogue are not presented as recovered canonical history. The Black Dwarf guardianship theme draws from the creator's account of voluntary guardians of the depths; assigning that general dwarf tradition to the playable Black Dwarves is an adaptation. Gargoyles are living crimson people, not stone statues.

The released chapter ledger

These objectives use the current release's seven-building vocabulary. An older recorded briefing may refer to a Farmstead, Clan Stronghold or Cliff Town. Follow the displayed current objective: the release remaps those former goals to available buildings, and supported older structures can still receive their compatibility credit.

Campaign / chapter	Title	Current objectives
human-01	The Unlit Hearths	Deliver 180 gold; Deliver 120 timber; Finish the Oil Refinery; Finish the Barracks

Campaign / chapter	Title	Current objectives
human-02	The Narrow Road	Scout the southern crossing; Hold the crossing for 45 seconds; Muster ten soldiers
human-03	A Gate Unbarred	Muster sixteen soldiers; Break the first watchtower; Destroy the enemy command keep
orc-01	A Fire for Everyone	Deliver 180 gold; Deliver 120 timber; Complete two Huts; Finish the Tar Refinery
orc-02	The Warpath Is a Road	Finish the Ram Workshop; Muster eight soldiers; Escort the champion to the meeting ground
orc-03	The Right to Remain	Raise a Ram Workshop; Destroy the enemy Barracks; Break the enemy command keep
gargoyle-01	Stone That Lives	Complete two Cliff Nests; Finish the Stone Lair; Deliver 120 timber; Reach the outer outlook
gargoyle-02	The Long Descent	Raise the Altar Hall; Muster eight sentinels and companions; Bring the elder to the northern landing
gargoyle-03	A Place Above the War	Raise a Gasworks Roost; Hold the eastern bridgehead for 60 seconds; Break the enemy command keep
black-dwarf-01	The Voluntary Watch	Establish a Deep Mine Refinery; Deliver 220 gold; Deliver 120 timber; Muster eight defenders
black-dwarf-02	What the Gates Conceal	Raise two Iron Watchtowers; Guard the threshold for 60 seconds; Keep the hold standing for three minutes
black-dwarf-03	The Old Wards	Raise an Ancestral Forge; Hold the upper approach for 75 seconds; Silence the enemy Barracks

Deliver, muster, scout, hold and escort

Delivery objectives count resources brought home during the chapter. Starting stock does not count; spending a delivery afterward does not erase progress. Construction requires a living finished building, not a placed foundation. Muster checks living non-workers. Their numbering in the journal is not a mandatory order: several objectives can progress together.

Scouting needs a living friendly unit to reach the marked radius. Holding needs a living military unit inside it with no living enemy unit contesting it. Leaving or allowing a contest resets an unfinished hold timer. Once a hold objective is complete, you do not have to remain there indefinitely unless another objective or survival concern requires it.

Escort means the original protected champion. A replacement champion cannot substitute for that identity. Reach the marker and keep the escort alive until the entire chapter succeeds. Destroy objectives likewise refer to the assigned original target building; a newly built replacement of the same type is not the named target. Survive objectives count simulation time, so paused reading does not advance them.

A method for each kind of chapter

For an economic opening chapter, begin the delivery loop and required buildings in parallel while the starting troops defend. Do not convert every worker into a builder and then wonder why delivery counters stop. For a muster-and-hold chapter, put housing and recruitment before the final push, then occupy with a durable group and a protected ranged line.

For an escort, clear the route with the army first and move the protected champion with support. Do not use it as the lone scout or sacrifice it after the destination marker completes. For a destruction chapter, identify the actual target and build siege only if the defenses warrant the cost. Keep a reserve watching your command keep throughout.

Briefings can advance automatically or manually. Auto controls progression, Next moves to the next line, Replay Story starts the sequence again, and Take Command begins play. Read Chapter & Objectives opens the larger text view. Missing voice recordings do not prevent reading the instructions or completing the mission.

CHAPTER 12

XII · Commanding the field

Movement choices determine whether the army can use its statistics.

Move, attack and stop

Right-click ground to move selected units; right-click an enemy to attack it. A followed by a destination orders attack-move, allowing the force to fight along the way. H stops the selected units. Plain movement and attack-move serve different purposes: use movement for a deliberate withdrawal or position change, and attack-move when clearing a route with a combat-ready group.

Drag a selection rectangle for several troops and use Shift to add to the selection. Tab selects the army. Save useful groups with Ctrl plus 1-5, then recall with the number. Keeping the front line, mobile flank and siege/support in different groups makes it easier to reposition one job without disrupting every unit.

Do not send a mixed-speed force as though all members arrive together. Slow machines, deployed shields and wounded support can fall behind. At a crossing, gather before advancing and leave room for the screen to form before siege stops to fire. A command marker at the destination does not prove every selected troop has reached it.

Battlefields and scouting

Original Borderlands is the original single-player valley. Crossing Banners has a river with broad causeways; The Crowned Ridge offers long routes around its center; The Divided Halls connects cavern chambers through galleries. The three designed skirmish maps are also available as mirrored two-player battlefields.

A narrow route can let a smaller front hold for ranged troops, but it can also trap a withdrawing machine. A long flank may avoid a tower yet cost the time needed to save workers. Look at route length, nearby resources, enemy firing positions and a safe return path before committing. The minimap is a navigation tool as well as a warning display.

Use the camera to make decisions

Pan with the default camera keys, progressive edge scrolling or middle-button drag. Zoom with the mouse wheel and use Home to center the command keep. Clicking the minimap moves your view. Keep enough context to see the approach and support positions, then inspect a selected unit when you need a fuel, fitting or cooldown detail.

Settings adjust camera speed and edge scrolling. If an interior or crowded fight is difficult to read, use the readable details and accessibility controls rather than assuming a small effect proves the benefit landed. Important tactical checks are concrete: the right ally is close, the machine has fuel, the target is in range and the retreat path is open.

CHAPTER 13

XIII · Chronicles, controls and comfort

Save the position, and make the interface work for you.

Save a campaign or skirmish

F5 writes Quick save; F9 loads it. The pause menu offers three manual chronicles, Quick save and the automatic Resume slot. Continue chooses the latest available saved battle; Load Game lets you select a particular slot. A restored ongoing battle opens paused, giving you time to inspect the situation before continuing.

Autosave runs roughly every two minutes of active play and at ordinary exit transitions. Paused time does not advance that timer. A crash can recover only a completed checkpoint. Replacing a save retains the previous copy for recovery, and the loader can try the backup when the main file is invalid. A failed load should leave the current match intact.

Saved battles retain the map, fog, armies, stock, orders, queues, fittings, interiors, assemblies, fuel, abilities and mission state. A fitting deliberately suspended before saving remains suspended. Loaded story text resumes its line; a voiced line restarts its recording. Campaign unlocks and preferences are separate local data, not files you should delete when replacing the game executable.

Install and resume carefully

Extract the complete download. On Windows run Goldenkeep.exe. On Linux use Play Goldenkeep.sh or the Goldenkeep executable provided by the package. Keep the data folder and runtime files beside the executable. Moving just the executable is not a complete installation.

Normal Windows save data resides under AppData/LocalLow/Atheria/Goldenkeep/Saves in your user profile. The saved-battle browser is the easiest way to choose a chronicle without handling its files. This edition does not offer account-based cloud synchronization. Single-player quick save and quick load do not control a live multiplayer match or replay.

Readable text and deliberate sound

Settings separate Master, Effects, Interface, Speech, Music and Ambience levels. M mutes sound while preserving the levels. Accessibility settings scale reading text and captions from 100% to 150%, offer stronger reading contrast, speech/event captions, persistent health bars and reduced decorative motion. Friendly square-and-dot markers and enemy crosses supplement team colors.

Reading scale affects larger text panels, help, story and captions; the compact fixed battle HUD retains its layout. Story Text Advance Rate changes the pace of unvoiced lines from 75% to 150%, while recordings keep their natural pace. Use manual story advancement if you prefer to finish each passage yourself.

In single-player, settings, help, research overview and readable panels pause the action. A live interior does not. In a network match ordinary menus leave the shared battle running. Learn that difference before treating a long research inspection as a safe pause in a duel.

Rebind the command keys

Settings > Controls exposes twenty-six rebindable actions. Assigning an occupied key swaps the actions when valid; Escape cancels a pending change, and Reset Controls restores defaults. Labels in the game follow the saved bindings. The table below records defaults for reference.

Arrow keys remain available for camera movement. Escape, Enter, F12, control-group digits, modifiers and mouse buttons are reserved. Typing in multiplayer fields does not issue battlefield shortcuts. If a key appears not to work, check whether a dialog, targeting mode or text field currently owns input before repeatedly pressing it.

CHAPTER 14

XIV · Two commanders and the replay

Direct matches require a reachable host and matching builds.

Create or join a room

Both players should use the same game build. Choose Multiplayer. The host selects Host a Match and copies the room invitation; the guest pastes it and joins. TLS encryption is enabled by default. The invitation includes the address, port, room code and pinned host certificate fingerprint so the guest can verify the host before sending the code.

LAN discovery finds waiting local hosts, but discovery itself does not establish certificate trust. An encrypted room still needs its invitation. The default TCP game port is 28917; LAN discovery uses UDP 28918. A loopback address such as 127.0.0.1 only connects instances on the same computer. Direct play targets trusted LAN or private-VPN connections, not a public matchmaking service.

The host chooses the map, both commanders choose a race and mark ready, then the host starts. Changing map or race clears readiness. Two-player maps mirror terrain and resource positions and use equal starting assets. Destroy the opposing command keeps or win through surrender. An intentional host departure awards the guest victory.

Menus, interruption and reconnect

Menus and settings do not pause a network battle. A lost connection is different: the host pauses the shared world and allows up to forty-five seconds for one reconnect, with ninety seconds total across interruptions. The guest can retry automatically or choose Retry Now.

After restarting on the same computer, Rejoin Previous Room can recover the seat while the host is still waiting, using the saved private room ticket and trusted identity. Orders held only in a terminated process cannot be recovered. There is no host migration. Keep invitations and room tickets private to the intended players. Disabling TLS is an explicit choice to use an unencrypted connection.

Watch a host replay

The host can save a replay during the match or from the result screen. Watch Latest Host Replay opens the latest local recording. Pause, cycle speed from one-half to eight times, restart and move the camera to inspect what happened. Replay playback accepts no battlefield orders. Escape leaves it.

Use replay to ask practical questions: when did a worker route become unsafe, when did the screen leave the siege weapon, or why was support out of range? The current viewer is for the latest local recording, not a browsable replay library or a live spectator service. Cooperative campaigns, ranked play, matchmaking and relay servers are not included in this release.

CHAPTER 15

XV · When the plan stalls

Check the missing condition before replacing the whole strategy.

The recruit will not start

• Check that the producer is completed, belongs to your race and trains that role.

• Check deposited gold, timber and refined oil rather than carried resources.

• Check the five-order recruitment queue, total supply and one household with enough free places.

• Check that the household doorway can reach the producer, then inspect WORK & ARRIVALS for traveling or suspended work.

The upgrade is learned but the unit looks unchanged

Inspect the unit's installed equipment. Eligible units need an actual fitting visit; workers and ineligible roles do not receive a military kit. Check the assigned workshop and its queue. If a manual order interrupted the service, resume it. A recipe icon in a research panel is not proof that the soldier at the front already has the benefit.

The ability refuses the target

Check cooldown, carried fuel, target type, distance and whether the unit is restrained or already channeling. A mortar cannot bombard inside minimum range. A hook cannot pull a machine or deployed defender. A healing channel needs an eligible nearby target. A gas or tar user cannot replace its own still-active field. A champion needs the final fitted ability kit.

The army won the fight but the chapter continues

Open J. Deliveries, construction, scouting, occupation and the original escort can remain unfinished after the enemy keep is gone. Occupation requires a military presence without an enemy contest until the timer finishes. Keep the protected champion and your command keep alive while resolving the remaining objectives.

A last commander's rule

Spend with a purpose and watch whether that purpose is being achieved. A strong army is one whose workers can keep supplying it, whose recruits can reach it, whose equipment has actually been installed and whose different roles arrive at the same fight. When the screen contradicts the plan, change the order - not the explanation.

KEEP BESIDE YOUR KEYBOARD

Quick reference

Action	Control	Remember
Select / group select	Left-click / drag	Shift adds to selection.
Move, gather, attack, build or repair	Right-click ground or target	The selected units and target determine the order.
Attack-move	A, then destination	Default A is attack-move, not leftward camera movement.
Stop	H	Cancels the current field order.
Select army	Tab	Use separate control groups for more precise role control.
Build catalog	V	Seven current construction choices per race.
Place barracks / housing / tower	B / C / T	Requires eligible ground and resources.
Worker / infantry / ranged / champion hall	Q / E / R / F	Opens the matching hall; choose TRAIN to recruit.

Action	Control	Remember
Cancel last recruit	Backspace	Cancellation and refund depend on service commitment.
Research / selected ability	U / G	Some abilities enter targeting mode.
Assign / recall group	Ctrl + 1-5 / 1-5	Five groups.
Pan	Arrow keys; W/S/D; screen edges; middle drag	Arrow keys remain available after rebinding.
Zoom / center keep	Mouse wheel / Home	Minimap also moves the camera.
Journal / readable details	J / I	Single-player reading panels pause; multiplayer continues.
Pause / close or cancel	Space / Escape	Escape first closes a panel or cancels pending targeting.
Help / mute	F1 / M	Mute preserves category levels.
Quick save / quick load	F5 / F9	Single player; restored ongoing battles open paused.
Screenshot	F12	Reserved key.
Interior movement	Select people, then right-click floor	Movement can suspend their service.
Leave an interior	LEAVE BUILDING / EXIT HALL	OUTSIDE or Escape closes the view only.