



DUX BELLORUM

Arthurian Wargaming Rules AD367–793

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WELCOME TO *DUX BELLORUM*

Dux Bellorum is an Arthurian-era Dark Ages miniatures game, set in the period from the mid-4th century AD to the end of the 8th century AD: a time when new kingdoms were forged in the British Isles and a time when battle was commonplace.

Warfare in Britain in this period is characterised by quality of leadership and individual bravery rather than a technological difference in weaponry or a wealth of tactical choices chosen from well-thumbed military manuals. In keeping with this, the rules emphasise the influence an army's commander has on his units, with simple manoeuvre rules and chaotic, deadly close combat. It would also seem at odds with the period's flavour to produce a very technical, data-crunching game, so I've stuck to a straightforward game that I believe represents the British Dark Ages most appropriately. *Dux Bellorum* has been designed very much as a 'game' rather than an attempted in-depth 'simulation' of military conflict, although I hope that the challenges presented to the players replicate the challenges faced in this historical era: inspiring the right troops at the right time, balancing quality versus quantity in your army, and a sprinkling of luck at the right time.

Dux Bellorum uses bases mounted with multiple miniatures as the basic playing pieces; this means that individual casualties are not removed from units and the number of miniatures you own has no bearing on hosting a good game, making the game flexible for players on a variety of budgets. All distances are given in Base Widths, which allows the game to be used within any scale of miniature based in many different ways.

Dux Bellorum armies are selected from Late Roman, Romano-British, Welsh, Saxon, Pictish, Irish, Land Raider, and Sea Raider lists. Choosing the army you wish to model can involve as much or as little research as you like, and selecting which troops you wish to recruit can be a mini-game in itself. Armies usually consist of between 5 and 10 units, depending on the type of troops chosen and extra strategies purchased.

The basics of each part of the battle rules are laid out 'In Brief'; these sections outline the rules in their simplest form, with the accompanying text providing more details. Scattered through the book you'll find some optional rules and playing tips; the optional rules provide a little more depth but have been left out of the basic game to streamline it, and the playing tips offer hints to improve your game play. Optional rules may initially be ignored, but it's worth becoming familiar with the playing tips after you've played the game a couple of times.

These rules have developed from, but give a very different game to, my original *Glutter of Ravens* game, which was published in 1998 by Outpost Wargame Services; many of the mechanisms in *Dux Bellorum* have their origin in *Glutter of Ravens*, but this game benefits from more than an extra

Romano-British Companions. 28mm Gripping Beast and Westwind painted by Andy Hawes.



decade of gaming experience and eliminates the (paper) record keeping aspect of the original game. The army lists are significantly different, based on extra years of research by myself and other enthusiasts and historians.

I set myself the following ground rules as I developed the game, which I hope shows the design philosophy of *Dux Bellorum*:

- Design a simple non-tournament game where players can concentrate on playing not learning, and gaming for fun.
- Keep the emphasis on 'game' not 'simulation'.
- Present optional rules without cluttering the streamlined basic game.
- Engage players in every phase of the game: give them choices to make.
- Present flexible army lists that reflect my own and other interpretations, whilst retaining the character of each army.
- Represent close combat as a swirling, dangerous mass rather than well-co-ordinated battle lines.
- Differentiate between 'offensive' and 'defensive' foot and allow armies to be foot or mounted, allowing professional soldiers to fight as either.
- Convey the spirit of Dark Ages battle without being too technical.

Enjoy the game and use your army well!

THE GOLDEN RULE OF GAMING

If you find yourself in a situation not covered by the rules or where your interpretation differs from your opponent's – it happens to most of us at some point – both players should present their best interpretation of the rules, and then roll a die to decide which to use .

WHY 'DUX BELLORUM'?

Dux Bellorum, meaning 'Leader of Battles' or more imposingly 'War Duke', was the title used to describe the British hero Arthur in a manuscript that may have been written around AD 830 (the earliest surviving copy, however, was drafted around AD 1100). This isn't the place to restart the on-going debate as to whether Arthur was historical or legendary, but the title bestowed upon him in this manuscript seems an apt description for any aspiring Dark Ages warlord in history, legend, or game.

