

The League of Ostermark

By Nicodemus Kyme

Far beyond the sprawling cities of the Empire lies the province of Ostermark. Situated in the eastern-most fringe of the Empire, Ostermark is as far removed geographically from the urban epicentre of the Empire as it is mentally. One of the largest Imperial provinces, Ostermark is a land of rolling fields and barren plains, the very epitome of the untamed wild where the ethos of the city is an alien and unwelcome intrusion.

A rural land, its peoples are possessed of a solitary, self-reliant mind-set. It is a place of wide spread communities, mainly comprised of isolated farms and small insular villages, and shares nothing of the cosmopolitan culture engendered by many of its provincial neighbours.

A vast and open land, Ostermark is essentially flat, dominated by fields and verdant pastures, occasionally punctuated by low lying hills and rocky crags to the east, mere precursors to the massive mountains that rise beyond. These fields are often bordered by natural hedges and drystone walls to indicate the end of one farmer's land and the beginning of another's. At the very edges of its many rolling fields the Great Forest encroaches, forming an arboreal barrier between Ostermark and its main neighbour state Talabecland, within which lies the city of Talabheim. This low and barren landscape makes for an ideal farming community and many of the buildings and settlements around Ostermark comprise of farmsteads. Its lands are fertile, made so by frequent light rains and generous summers, and its rich soil is ideal for agriculture, Ostermark's principal mercantile, and the many farmers of this land trade their surplus crops at the two major townships of Bechafen and Badenhof. The roads around Ostermark are crude constructions, often little more than dirt tracks to provide passage for farm carts, wagons and travellers on foot. They are paths seldom trodden and it is possible to see for miles around upon a clear day and for not soul to be in sight, such is the isolated nature of Ostermark's populace.

In the Year of our Lord Sigmar, 1999...

With no Emperor to lay claim to the throne the Empire is a land in turmoil, its peoples are thrown into a state of anarchy, and none more so than the people of Ostermark. When the great twin-tailed comet smote its capital city, Mordheim, into smouldering ruins, the province became a lawless land, rife with brigands and bandits. Its Elector, Count Steinhardt, was slain in the terrible cataclysmic events that followed along with the rest of his line, the family name of Steinhardt now a mere footnote in the annals of history. Without any central government to restore any sort of order,

The Eerie Downs

South of Bechafen there is a wide and open plain known as the Eerie Downs. Possessed of a curious and unnerving stillness, the Eerie Downs are a foreboding place. A perpetual pall of low fog rolls upon the wild and unkempt grasslands of the Downs, numerous crags jutting up from the thick and vaporous mists like broken teeth. Woe betide any traveller lost there; men have been driven insane as the silence and the white fog engulfs them, all sense of direction evaporating into a vast expanse of nothing. It is said the souls of those who died upon the Downs haunt them still, that their spirits crave more souls to join them, their howls of anguish and bitterness a dreaded midnight chorus. It is a brave or foolish traveller indeed who ventures upon those pastures and lives to tell of it...

farms burn, crops are destroyed, and famine gnaws at the desperate masses, showing no sign of relenting. Where once blues skies and the call of wild birds provided the everyday vista, now smoke and the cries of the dying shatter this rural idyll.

Mercenaries wander around in bands laying waste and taking what they will, with no one brave enough or powerful enough to challenge them. For Ostermarkers these are dark times indeed, forced to take arms against the enemies without, the stirring tribes of Orcs and Goblins in the Worlds Edge Mountains, Beastmen from the Forest of Shadows and those within, the brigands that threaten to plunder the land 'til it is nought but razed fields and smoking ash.

The old roads are no safe haven for travelling farmers on route to Bechafen or Badenhof in hope of selling their crops to the townfolk, in truth there is little to spare for such an enterprise with the threat of famine an ever-present reality. The towns themselves are full of grim faces, full of fear and hopelessness, the stark shadow of the former capital an unwelcome reminder of the blight infecting the land. Still though, there is hope, and some brave and determined souls still manage to survive and grind out a frugal existence in the untamed wilds. Fields still bear crops, cattle still graze upon the green plains of arable land and farm folk continue to subsist, albeit with fear and a ready sword.

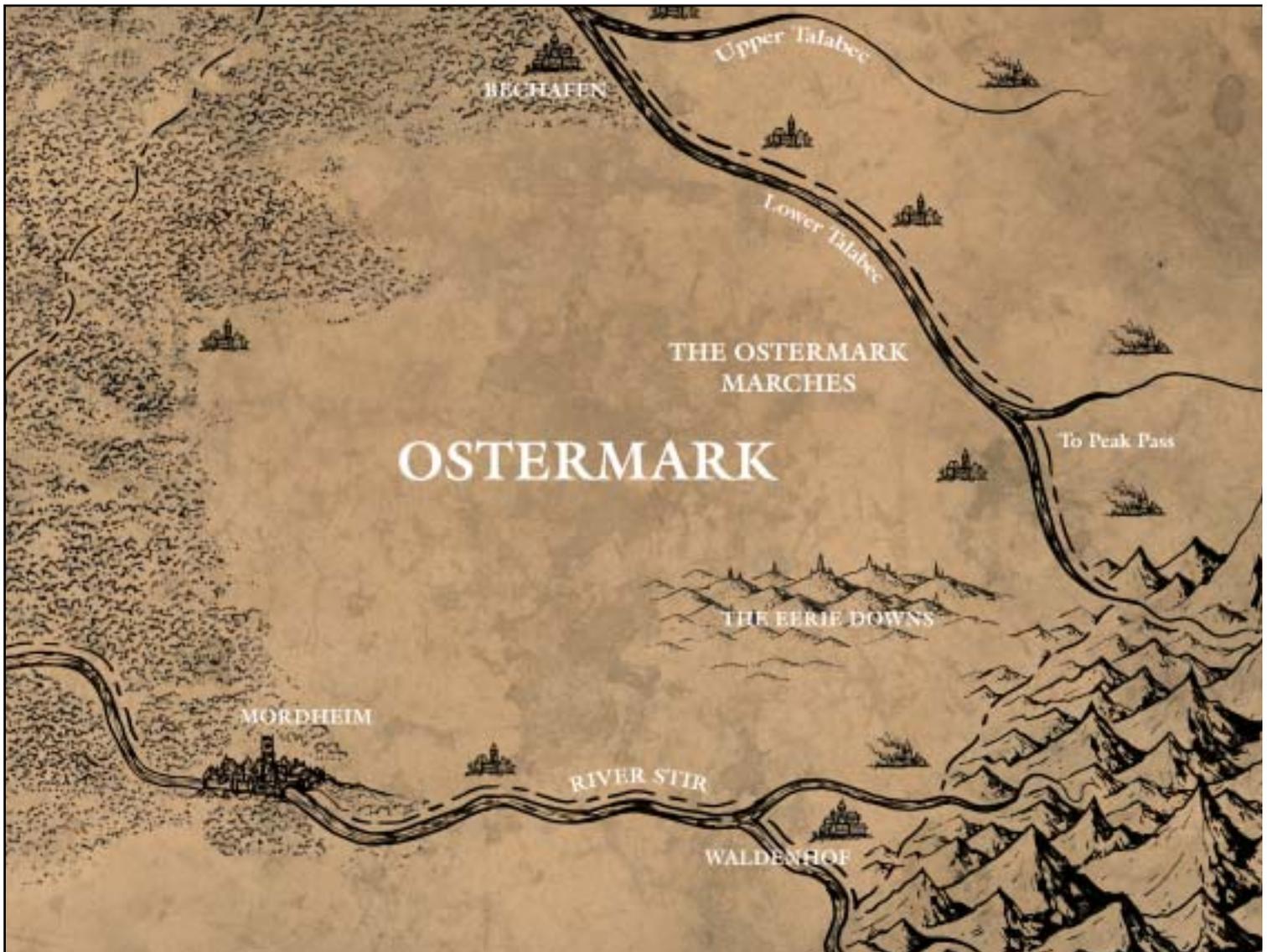
The Ostermark Marches

The Ostermark Marches are the frontier lands that form the border between Ostermark and the lands of Kislev to the north. This man-made border is pockmarked by stout wooden watch towers, each of which carries a large warning beacon. These flames are lit in times of war and are a signal of impending invasion, for the armies of Ostermark to make ready for battle. This borderland is further cemented by a natural barrier, the Lower Talabec, a tributary of the main river Talabec that runs deep into the heartlands of the Empire, and it is a valuable defensive strong point should the enemies of the Empire march beyond Kislev. The town of Bechafen lies deep in the Marches. Primarily a military township, it is renowned for its smithies and armourers, who forge armour and weapons to supply the Ostermark army. With its proximity to the northern lands and the ever-present threat of Chaos the steel of Bechafen is an invaluable resource.

When the last Emperor, Sigismund, was slain upon the very walls of Altdorf and the Empire was split into three warring factions of would-be successors, Ostermark threw in its lot with the claim from the Ottilans of Talabecland, their erstwhile neighbours. 'Twas to be a fruitless alliance as the young Empress Magritta of Marienburg, whom many powerful institutions around Altdorf thought merely a puppet through which the machinations of her elders could be realised, secured power. It began a time of rivalry and civil warring and heightened the terrible plight of the Ostermarkers. And so, it is a time in desperate need of some stability and law in a growingly fractious Empire, where dark forces seek to overthrow it from without and within.

Fighting Battles in the Province of Ostermark

During the time of the three Emperors the rulership of the Empire was disputed and warbands roamed the land as they pleased, looting villages, burning homes and robbing innocents and the only law they recognised was that



exacted through force of arms. The lands surrounding Mordheim, those that belonged to the province of Ostermark, saw numerous small battles between these rival bands, each vying for their slice of the plunder, yoking the downtrodden country folk for all they were worth. Some rose up to defend those weaker than themselves, out of a sense of justice and righteousness, virtues sadly lacking in this dark time and so a desperate struggle had begun...

These rules allow you to fight your 'Mordheim' battles away from the city and out into the wild and untamed countryside of Ostermark. Its lawless lands are rife with banditry and other lawlessness, so much so that even the dark creatures lurking in the Great Forest dare to emerge into the smoke-filled daylight. Battles played outside of Mordheim offer a very different dynamic to the crowded streets and delapidated ruins. It provides a new setting for your games but one that can be incorporated easily by the simple substitution of terrain. Warbands are generated and fight in the same way for battles within the city, except they are fighting in the rural setting of Ostermark. Players can simply use the scenarios in the Mordheim rulebook but, rather than create your battlefield around ruined buildings, towers, streets and so on, use scenery that reflects the surroundings. Ostermark is a rural area and farmsteads, hedgerows, low lying hills, drystone walls, sparse woodlands and sprawling fields are perfect to represent it. Rather than climbing up to the higher floors of a ruined coaching inn or bell tower warriors can climb up trees and

across streams or through crop-filled fields instead. The basic Mordheim rules still apply, it's just the scenery that has changed.

Note: The Empire in Flames rulebook provides some excellent material for fighting battles in an Imperial wilderness setting, ideally suited for battles in and around Ostermark. It is recommended that if players own a copy of Empire in Flames they use the additional rules in this book. You can certainly play battles in Ostermark without it but they will add an extra dimension of detail and allow you to fight campaigns and wilderness specific scenarios.

Scenery

Most of the scenery associated with games of Warhammer can be used to represent the terrain around Ostermark. Hills and woods are two particularly pertinent examples, but walls, hedges, fields and rivers are also ideal, along with small buildings; cottages, sheds, mills etc. can be used to represent farmsteads.

Wyrðstone

When the great twin-tailed comet struck the city of Mordheim, such was its impact that tiny fragments of it were scattered for miles around and to this day Ostermark is riddled with errant pieces of wyrðstone, some of which are bored deep into the earth, others cause unknown mutations in rivers and streams, and some lay amongst the rocky hills of the land in plain sight. Whilst fighting battles in Ostermark warbands collect wyrðstone in the usual way. It is assumed the warriors are scouting the wilds of the province to find it.

Ostermark Warbands

Although they are farmers by trade the men of Ostermark are stout and capable fighters, ready to take up arms against the common foe. Since the destruction of Mordheim some of the Ostermarkers have abandoned their farms, left as smouldering ruins, and formed warbands of their own, seeking to take back what was taken from them, defending their lands to the bitter end, or merely to take a share of the plunder in an Empire thrown into anarchy.

Special Rules

Ostermarkers are used to harsh odds and battling alone to defend their farms against mercenaries and other brigands. Their years of isolation and self-reliance have made them hardy warriors indeed, and, as such, they do not give up easily or balk in the face of outnumbering foes.

Ostermarkers follow the rules for Mercenary warbands as given on page 48 of the Mordheim rulebook. In addition Ostermarkers (Heroes and Henchmen) may re-roll a failed Leadership test for being all alone and routing. A warrior



or warband must accept the second roll, however, regardless of the result. Furthermore, the men often use hounds to guard their farms and raise the alarm against trespassers. Any captain of an Ostermarker warband may have a wardog as part of his starting equipment to represent the beast who once protected his farm and holdings from bandits and other, fouler creatures.

Painting and Modelling

The colours of Ostermark are yellow and purple, although the latter tends to vary in shade and hue as the pigment is difficult to produce in the Empire. Although Ostermark warbands are essentially rural folk, in most cases farmers, it gives a warband a little more identity and cohesion as a group if they have something of their provincial colours on them, perhaps a shirt or arm or head-band. As rustic folk, Ostermarkers tend to carry weapons you might see

on a farm, so axes, pitchforks, bows and so on are all good examples of how you can personalise your Ostermark warband.

To give your models a rural feel, beard heads are a good choice, as well as using fur cloaks to represent animal skins. If your warriors carry shields, those made of wood are the most suitable. Ostermarkers don't have the strict military background of Rieklanders nor the effete opulence associated with Marienburg, rather they are simple folk, without armouries and smithies, the likes of which are found in Nuln and Altdorf, and so their equipment should reflect that. The motifs and heraldry of Ostermark are dominated by their culture so rams and bulls head are appropriate, along with scythes and ears of corn to reflect their agrarian nature.



Scenario 1: Upon the Eerie Downs

A sombre and mysterious place, the Eerie Downs holds a palpable dread for the folk of the Mark; too well do they know the tales of engulfing fog and voices that whisper words of madness into the ears of travellers lost upon them.

Two rival warbands are travelling through Ostermark, seeking to pillage and plunder or to punish those who would. As they draw close to each other, the barren land all about them and not another soul in sight, a curious fog rolls over their feet and soon they are both engulfed, unable to discern friend from foe. Upon the Eerie Downs is a Skirmish scenario and all the rules given on page 127 of the Mordheim rulebook apply with any exceptions noted below.

Terrain

The Eerie Downs are a fairly barren stretch of open land with little by way of landmarks or cover. The battlefield should be fairly open with perhaps a few low lying hills to represent the undulating ground and the odd rock here and there, and perhaps a stone wall or hedge.

Special rules

Thick Fog: The Eerie Downs are swathed in a thick fog which at times makes it difficult to see even beyond your nose! Visibility for shooting, charging, magic etc. is reduced to a distance of 4D6, rolled at the start of each player's turn. Furthermore, each player must roll a D6 before they can move. If they roll a 1 they must pass a Leadership test or become lost in the fog. Any model lost in the fog will move D6 in a random direction each turn, or 2D6 if they are fleeing. They may not shoot, cast spells or charge but if they bump into an enemy they will fight them as if they had charged into hand-to-hand combat but attack in Initiative order. As long as a model is lost in the fog they will believe their comrades have deserted them (all they can see is a white mist all

around them!) and will have to take an All Alone test at the start of each turn (regardless of the proximity of friendly models). Continue to roll the D6 each turn and any model that rolls a 6, if they are not fleeing, gets their bearings and may move and act normally (bearing in mind visibility) from that point on. Note that if a friendly model moves into base-to-base contact with a model lost in the fog either of their own accord, or if they are bumped into by a randomly moving warrior, the presence of a comrade allows them to get themselves together and regain their bearings and they are no longer lost. Any model that wanders off the table edge whilst lost in the fog should be removed from the warband roster. They have been driven mad by the voices of the damned in the mists and are lost never to be seen again.

Ending the game

Once the fog engulfs them the warbands' are both trying to get off the Downs as soon as possible. To do so they must escape via their opponent's table edge. The game ends once a warband has escaped with half its models. Note that neither warband has to take a Rout test during the battle, nor can they voluntarily rout, as they are effectively lost upon the Downs and trying to escape.

Experience:

+2 Survives: If a Hero or Henchman group survives the battle they gain +2 Experience.

+2 Winning Leader: The leader of the winning warband gains +2 extra Experience.

+1 Per Enemy Out of Action: Any Hero earns +1 Experience for each enemy model he puts out of action.

+1 Escapes: Any Hero or Henchman group that escapes earns +1 Experience Point.



Scenario 2: Battle for the Farm



There are many farmsteads around Ostermark. Mercenaries and brigands are drawn to them like moths to the flame as, isolated from society, they are easy meat for looting and pillage. When two warbands dispute the same loot for their own, the farm becomes a battleground, its occupants driven to desperation against two warring foes; such affairs are often bloody and only when all is razed and plundered does the carnage cease.

Two rival warbands have arrived at a farm at the same time with the intent of looting it for all it's worth. Not only must they battle each other for possession of the booty, they must also contend with the desperate farmers, fighting to defend their property to the last.

Terrain

Each player takes it in turn to place a piece of terrain. Ensure that there are around five or six farm buildings placed on the battlefield, joined by wooden fences or low stone walls to represent the farmstead itself, a cottage, barns, stables, tool shed, animal pens etc. The buildings should be placed roughly in the centre of a 4' x 4' area and the outer sections of the battlefield could comprise of the occasional small wood or outlying building.

Warbands

Each player rolls a D6 to determine which warband places his warriors first, with the player rolling the highest given the choice. The warband may be placed within 8" of any table edge and, once the player has finished setting up his warriors, then the second warband is placed within 8" of the opposite table edge.

Starting the game

Each player rolls a D6. The highest roll can choose whether to go first or second.

Special rules

Get off my land: The farmers around Ostermark are used to the predations of bandits and mercenaries and will defend their homes and holdings with their last breath. Hiding inside the farm buildings they await any looters with rakes and shovels! As soon as a model from either warband moves within 2" of a building they must stop. D3 farmers and their farmhands rush out of the building to protect their home and livelihood. They are placed within 2" of any door or entrance to the building. The player may then resume his turn with any members of his warband that haven't yet moved. After that player's turn the farmers take a turn and will continue to do so after that player's until they are dead (consider the farmers an extra player, albeit controlled arbitrarily).

The farmers always move towards the nearest enemy (from either side) but will not move more than 6" away from the building they emerged from. They will not charge if it brings them more than 6" from the building but will fight in hand-to-hand combat if they are able.

Note: If another warrior alerts further farmers from another building, they will take their turn with any farmers already on the board (ie. whichever emerges first takes precedence).

The profile for a farmer/farmhand is given below:

Farmer								
M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
4	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	5

Weapons: Rake, hoe or some other improvised farming implement (counts as a spear). These farmers have been beaten down by years of oppression and starvation. If they are wounded they are instantly taken out of action; do not roll on the Injury table for them. They can put up little fight against armed mercenaries but, as they are defending their homes and there is nowhere for them to run, they will not rout and are immune to *All Alone* tests.

Looting: The warbands have both come to the farm to loot it and, whilst the appearance of a rival warband is unexpected, they won't let it deter them from their objective. At the end of each turn in which a model is inside a farm building and that model hasn't taken any other action that turn, ie. shooting, magic, fought in hand-to-hand combat etc. he may loot it. Roll a D6 on the table below to discover what is found.

- 1 **Nothing** – The building is empty, it has either already been looted or there is nothing of any value.
- 2-5 **Valuables** – There are some valuables scattered around worth 2D6 gold crowns.
- 6 **Wyrdstone!** – A single of shard of wyrdstone is found inside the building, the farmer having happened across it whilst reaping his crops in some outlying field.

Note: A model may not loot a building if there is a farmer within 6" of it. Each building may only be looted once.



An Ostermark Warband sneaks up on an unsuspecting farmer

Fire: The warbands are merciless and ready to raze the farm to the ground once they have taken all that is of any worth. Every member of each player's warband starts the game carrying a torch which may be lit and thrown into a building once it has been looted. The rules for torches are given in the *Empire in Flames* rulebook (p.16) but are summarised below for your convenience. A torch acts as a lantern (if any Hero also possesses a lantern this may be used to burn a building down in the same way), any model equipped with one causes fear in all animals. As a weapon it is treated as a club but with a -1 To Hit modifier and any wounds caused by it cannot be regenerated by any model with the Regeneration special rules. The torch will only last for one battle. A model may torch a building at any time. If they are inside a building (setting fire to furniture and other belongings) then the fire starts automatically. They may also throw the torch up to 6" away to light a building and the fire will start on a roll of 2+ on a D6 (a 1 indicating it has bounced off a roof or merely sputtered out). Once a building is lit, roll a D6 at the start of each player's turn (not including any farmers who might be on the board) to discover if the fire is spreading. Add +1 to the dice roll for each turn the fire has been burning.

- 1 **Gone out** – The fire has sputtered out of its own accord. Don't make any further rolls on the table.
- 2-5 **Rising flames** – Flames and smoke are rising quickly. Any model inside the building must take a Toughness test. If they fail, they suffer D3 Strength 2 hits with no save possible, as they succumb to smoke inhalation and minor burns. Anyone wishing to enter the building must pass a Leadership test to do so.
- 6 **Raging Inferno** – The building is totally ablaze. No model may enter the building and anyone within it takes D3 Strength 3 hits from the flames and burning debris. Any model wishing to get out of the building must pass an Initiative test or it will stay trapped within.

- 7+ **Collapse!** – The building collapses, its timbers finally giving way as the fire engulfs it utterly. Any model inside the building (and not stunned) must pass an Initiative test to escape (knocked down models suffer a -1 to their Initiative for the purpose of this roll). Any model who fails to escape is crushed by the falling debris and taken out of action.

Ending the Game

The game ends as soon as one warband routs or all the buildings have been destroyed. The player who destroys the most buildings wins the game or, if a warband fails its Rout test, the warband remaining wins the game.

Experience

- +1 Survives:** If a Hero or Henchman group survives the battle they gain +1 Experience.
- +1 Winning Leader:** The leader of the winning warband gains +1 extra Experience.
- +1 Per Enemy Out of Action:** Any Hero earns +1 Experience for each enemy he puts out of action (note that farmers do not count as they are so weak and measly they hardly warrant a boost in a warrior's prowess!)
- +1 Per Building Destroyed:** Any Hero or Henchman group that starts a fire which destroys a building earns +1 Experience.

Author

Nick Kyme works on White Dwarf right here at GW HQ. He has written for Town Cryer on numerous occasions, and is on the Mordheim Rules Reviews.



Further Information

Ostlanders can be created using the Empire Militia plastic sprue and/or the plastic sprues you get in your Mordheim boxed set. Contact your nearest Games Workshop or visit the website for details. (See the How to Order section on page 94.)

More Mordheim Website

Turn to page 68 for Pit Fighter. www.Mordheim.com