


Men of Hawkshold

In the Holds of Men, Hawkshold is first among equals. No other kingdom is as wealthy, populous, or powerful as Hawkshold. The ancient defensive alliance that binds together the Holds of Men was built around Hawkshold.

When an Orc invasion must be repelled, Hawkshold sends its army. If there is an outbreak of necromancy, it is a Hawkshold lord who investigates. And when the call went out to free the ancestral homeland of Men, it was the Grand Duke of Hawkshold who led the crusade to drive out the Orcs and Goblins from Tangrath.












These are Playtest Rules. They are draft rules under consideration by our Rules Team, and are unofficial. If you wish to use them in a game you must have your opponent's consent beforehand. If you play in any Battleground event (such as a tournament), they may not be used without the organizer's agreement.

Faction Abilities

Bravery: You may spend a Command Action to mark the Bravery box on one of your units. While the Bravery box is marked, a unit gets +3. If a unit with a marked Bravery box fails a Rout Check or passes a Rout Check but would have failed without the +3 bonus, then erase the mark.

Strategic Insight: When you draw purchased Command Cards before the game, draw one more Command Card than you purchased. Choose which cards(s) to keep and shuffle the extra Command Card back into your deck.

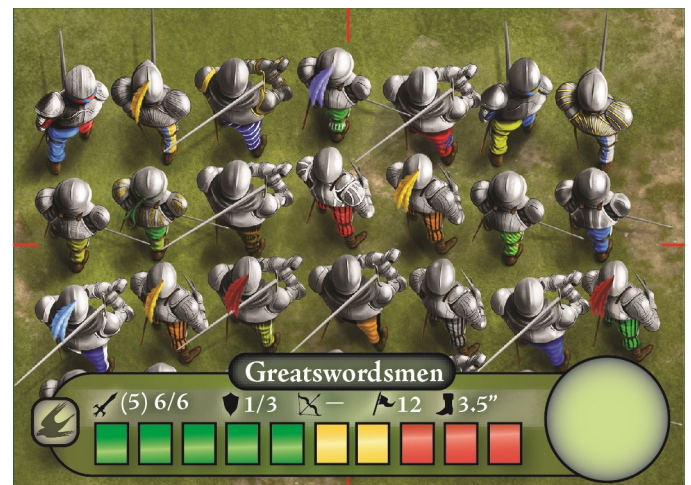
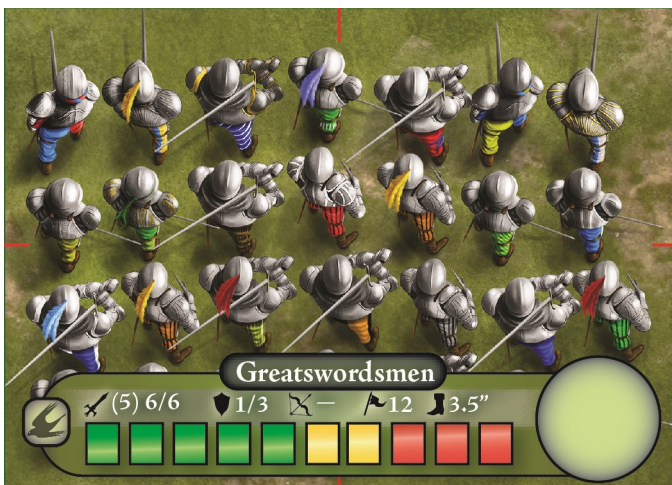
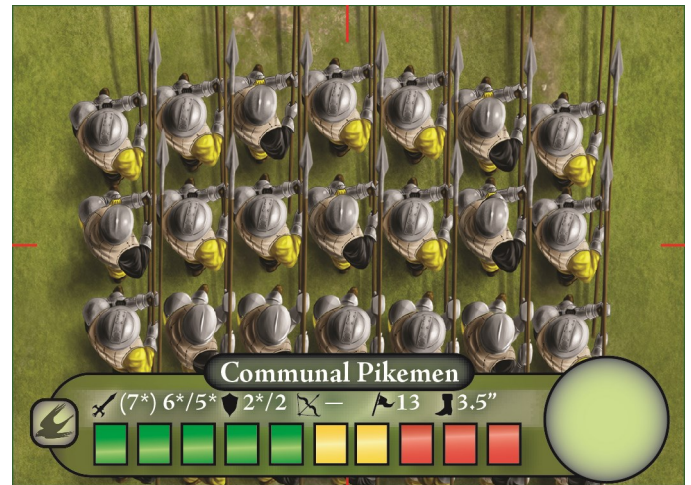
ex: if you purchased 2 Command Cards, draw 3 and choose 2 Cards to keep, shuffling the extra back into your deck.

Hawkshold Command Cards		
#	Card	Effect
2	The Plan	Play during your Movement and Command Phase. Gain two Command Actions. You may not use these Command Actions to draw Command Cards.
2	Echelon Defense	Play during an attack, before your opponent rolls to hit. The attacking unit gets  (-1) -0/-0 this attack, and choose one: Your unit gets  +1/+0 this attack. OR Your unit gets  +0/+1 this attack.
2	Oblique Assault	Play during an attack, before you roll to hit. Choose one: Your unit gets  (+1) +1/+0 this attack. OR Your unit gets  (+1) +0/+1 this attack.
2	Surge to Victory	Play during an attack, before you roll to hit. If your unit is not Charging, it gets  (+0)+1/+1 this attack. If it is charging, choose one:  (+0)+1/+0 this attack OR  (+0)+0/+1 this attack
2	Stand Firm	Play during an attack, before your opponent rolls to hit. If your unit is not Charging, it gets  +1/+1 this attack. If it is charging, choose one: Your unit gets  +1/+0 this attack. OR Your unit gets  +0/+1 this attack.

Units										
	Attack	Defense	Range	Courage	Move	Hit Boxes			Cost	Type
Spearmen	⚔ (6*) 5* / 5*	♥ 2 / 2	–	12	3.5"	5	2	3	220	Core
⚔ (-1) -0/-0 while Charging. ⚔ (+0) +1/+0 vs. Cavalry and/or Large units. ⚔ (+0) +0/+2 while Holding vs. Charging Cavalry and/or Charging Large units.										
Swordsmen	⚔ (5) 5 / 5	♥ 2 / 2	–	12	3.5"	5	2	3	197	Core
Bowmen	⚔ (4) 5* / 5*	♥ 1 / 1	14"	12	3.5"	3	3	2	162	Core
⚔ (-0)-2/-2 when Engaged										
Militia	⚔ (5) 4 / 5	♥ 2 / 1	–	11	3.5"	3	3	4	115	Core
Lancers	⚔ (6) 5 / 5*	♥ 2* / 2	–	12	6"	3	2	1	240	Core
Cavalry. ⚔ (+0) +0/+1 and ♥ +1/+0 while Charging (This is in addition to the normal Charging Bonus.)										
Peasant Mob	⚔ (5) 4 / 4	♥ 1 / 1	–	10	3.5"	3	3	3	70	Standard
Great Swordsmen	⚔ (5) 6 / 6	♥ 1 / 3	–	12	3.5"	5	2	3	279	Standard
Communal Pikemen	⚔ (7*) 6* / 5*	♥ 2* / 2	–	13	3.5"	5	2	3	328	Standard
⚔ (-1) -0/-0 while Charging. ⚔ (+0) +1/+0 vs. Cavalry and/or Large units. ⚔ (+0) +0/+2 while Holding vs. Charging Cavalry and/or Charging Large units. ♥ +1/+0 while Charging (This is in addition to the normal Charging Bonus.)										
Scout Cavalry	⚔ (4) 5 / 5	♥ 2* / 1	–	12	7"	2	2	2	136	Standard
Cavalry. ♥ +1/+0 while Charging (This is in addition to the normal Charging Bonus.)										
Longbowmen	⚔ (4) 6* / 6*	♥ 1 / 1	21"	13	3.5"	3	3	2	347	Elite
⚔ (-0)-2/-2 when Engaged										
Knights	⚔ (6) 6 / 6*	♥ 2* / 3	–	13	5"	3	2	2	413	Elite
Cavalry. ⚔ (+0) +0/+1 and ♥ +1/+0 while Charging (This is in addition to the normal Charging Bonus.)										
Dismounted Knights	⚔ (6*) 5* / 5*	♥ 3 / 3	–	13	3.5"	3	2	3	293	Elite
⚔ (-1) -0/-0 while Charging. ⚔ (+0) +1/+0 vs. Cavalry and/or Large units. ⚔ (+0) +0/+2 while Holding vs. Charging Cavalry and/or Charging Large units.										

Unit Proxies

Most of the unit revisions are minor enough that a player could use their existing Hawkshold cards. Below are the three units that are either new or saw major revisions. Simply print them, cut them out, and place them in card sleeves over another unit card.



Command Card Proxies

Below are proxies of the revised Hawkshold Command Cards. To use them, print out two copies of this page, cut them out, and place them in sleeves over the existing Hawkshold faction-specific Command Cards.



design notes

"I'll play the Hawks against anyone, anytime, anywhere."
—Chad Ellis

When it comes to design, Hawkshold is a solid faction. We could easily get by with putting some new art on the cards and calling it a day. However we wanted to take this as opportunity to look at a few units that need some work, but also to bring Hawkshold to life. The art & rules would be used to “tell the story” of that unit & the Grand Duchy of Hawkshold.

The story we wanted to tell was of a kingdom in transition. The new Grand Duke wants to transform his realm by having a professional, standing military rather than one dependent on feudal levies. However this is still a work in process and so the Hawkshold we have here is a portrait of that.

There are standing troops in the Spearmen, Swordsmen, Bowmen, and Lancers (formerly Light Cavalry) but there simply isn't enough of them yet. They must be supplemented by feudal Knights, Scout Cavalry, and Militia. In addition, the Grand Duke has incorporated mercenary units into his army in the form of Great Swordsmen, Longbowmen, as well as Pikemen from the mercantile free cities along the rivers & coasts.

From a game point of view we reflect this by moving Lancers to Core. Originally Battleground didn't use Core, Standard, and Elite units and so a Hawkshold player could field entire armies of cavalry. We felt losing that opportunity diminished Hawkshold's playability a little bit, and so we rectified that.

To make room Peasant Mob was shifted to Standard. We felt their cheapness undermined Core requirements, and so this was a positive change on two fronts. Besides, the Grand Duke feels that the realm is better served with the Peasants in the wheat fields than on the battle field.

Those two changes are minor to the units, but they have a major impact on the faction. It gives Hawkshold a versatility that is almost unparalleled. That flexibility plays to Hawkshold's combined arms style and keeps your opponent off balance when building and deploying their army.

Other unit changes are much more radical, starting with the Great Swordsmen. This one was perhaps one of the more controversial changes we considered. Previously the Great Swordsmen was a carbon copy of the Orc Axemen, except the Greatswordsmen moved at 3.5” (and had a different army ability). The speed difference was essentially because they wore heavy plate armor.

This bothered me personally because the “knights in armor were waddling turtles” myth has been thoroughly debunked. Any historical European martial artist will tell you that you can run, jump, tumble, and bounce to your feet from flat on your back while in full plate armor.

More importantly, Great Swordsmen moving slowly diminished the fun for a lot of players. Especially because this unit was one of the factions “beat stick” units. We adjusted the unit's movement, but wanted to make sure it was differentiated enough from Orc Axemen so as not to be a carbon copy. We did this by

adjusting its hit boxes (keeping them in line with the rest of the Hawkshold faction), but also reducing their Courage stat.

The story this let us tell is that the Great Swordsmen evolved from knights-on-foot to dedicated infantry units, that trained to fight on foot. These third and fourth sons of Hawkshold nobility hired themselves out, and the Grand Duke recruited as many as he could. And although they were loyal subjects to the Duke (hence they still have the Bravery ability), they're still mercenaries and so their Courage stat is only average.

With Pikemen we made more radical, yet I think less controversial changes. In short, we scrapped it and started over. The issue was that Pikemen were highly specialized units that again suffered once they became Standard units. A player could get most of the utility, and more flexibility, from Spearmen. And to top it off, the Spearmen were Core, which freed up points to buy other units. Pikemen often were a stay-in-the-box unit.

Our first thought was to move them to Core but we opted not to do that because when you have two units that fill the same role, usually one will simply be better at it. And the other unit stays in the box.

Therefore we decided with Pikemen to give them a different role in the Hawkshold army. And again, we wanted to tell a story with this unit. We decided to reimagine the Pikemen as militia belong to the free cities in Hawkshold.

These mercantile cities on the rivers & coasts negotiated their freedom from the crown and local lords, sometimes using force or arms as an extension of that diplomacy. Once these conflicts ended a new cadre of young urban militias existed in Hawkshold, wielding long spears to fend off the heavy cavalry of the Knightly nobles. As before the Grand Duke stepped in to provide these mercenaries gainful employment (also making sure they were occupied fighting Hawkshold enemies, rather than causing troubles inside the realm).

The Pikemen are a highly motivated and highly skilled unit, reflected by their Offense Skill and Courage. However they are more specialized than the Great Swordsmen, and their skill is slanted towards offense (rather than having a corresponding increase in Defense Skill). We also gave them a bonus when they charged to signal that this was not a unit meant to sit back and receive the enemy. Against all but heavy cavalry, they are better served to get stuck into the fight rather than hanging back.

The last unit we changed was the Heavy Infantry, and again we redesigned it so severely that we basically scrapped it and started over. The issue with Heavy Infantry was two fold. First there was the movement issue. Having a 2.5" was as frustrating for players as for the Great Swordsmen, but it still felt wrong to us. The second issue was also an issue of feel: why are they fighting with sword & shield?

The sword is a backup weapon. It's what a warrior used when the spear was broken or dropped. It'd be like modern soldiers leaving the M16 in the barracks and fighting on the open field with a sidearm. Sure there are CQB contexts where that makes sense, not on the open field.

We debated round & round what to do, and ultimately came to borrow something from history: the Dismounted Knight. Many times when the terrain or enemy wasn't suited to Knights, a commander would have them dismount and use their lances as spears. These formations were thin on the ground, but they were durable and eventually evolved to become the norm.

The Dismounted Knights preserve the defensive stats of Heavy Infantry, and their Courage as well. They also have the same offensive stats (except they gain an extra attack and the Spears modifiers). When designing the artwork, we took the Knight artwork and said “draw these exact same guys, with the same tunics & colors, only on foot.”

You may ask why they have only average offensive stats? Two reasons. One, they’re not as skilled fighting on foot in a spear formation. And Two, their numbers are bolstered by their squires and pages. The cumulative effect degrades their combat effectiveness. Similarly, although their numbers are doubled only one Red box is added vs the Knights hit boxes. This is because the unit isn’t as cohesive a fighting force; it’s an ad hoc formation.

The other major changes we made were to the Command Cards & faction ability. We added Strategic Insight as a secondary ability, because as Battleground has evolved many factions get a secondary ability. This ability is useful but doesn’t define the faction in the way Bravery does.

As for Command Cards, many of them had already received an errata and so this change was codifying them. The only change we made was to rename Attack Formation and Defensive Formation into Oblique Assault and Echelon Defense, just to make them sound a little more fun.

With Stand Firm and Surge to Victory, the feedback we’d received is they were dead cards on the first turn of combat. A lot of players reported it wasn’t fun and they preferred having the option to play them even if they were less effective. This fit with the theme of tactical flexibility for Hawkshold and so we made that change.

Similarly, The Plan could be a dead card in your hand if it was drawn at the wrong moment. And often it was hard to get full value out of it. How many times do you need 4 Command Actions but only to change Standing Orders? What you often did need though was a few extra Command Actions for Bravery, direct control, rallying, or changing an order.

We redesigned the card to give less, but provide more flexibility. At the right time the Hawkshold player will have 6 Command Actions to execute their battle plan. We liked the card well enough that we felt it was worth replacing Uncommon Valor with a second The Plan card. This not only freed up Uncommon Valor to be used in the future, but really drove home the theme of Hawkshold as a drilled, tactically flexible army.

We hope you’re as excited as we are about the revised Hawkshold. We agonized and analyzed little things like adding a red box here or removing a yellow box there, because we wanted every unit and card to help tell Hawkshold’s story. So that this faction isn’t just “generic humans,” but instead to have the beginnings of a plausible and rich background that we could build upon over time.

Till the Next Missive. . .

The Outlaw Alchemist