

Undead - *Sempre Mortis*

Tactics

By The Mordheimer,
based on work at [Archive Pestilen](#)
& [Mordheim Strategy Guide](#).



Heroes: Well, when starting off get all the heroes: Vampire, Necromancer, and 3 Dregs. Your Vampire is one of the toughest units in the game! He can easily handle most opponents due to his great Wound stat. He is also immune to psychology, poison, treats all Stunned results as "Knocked Down" and causes fear! Not bad at all for the points he costs.

The Necromancer is a nice Spellcaster. You can, later on, he can provide you with the nicest ways to get a good Henchman. Cast the spell *Spell of Awakening* of one of your opponents' killed heroes and watch the horror in their eyes when you re-animate his dead hero to join your band! The only drawback is that your new Henchman will no longer gain any experience and can not use any other weapons or armor and can no longer run... just think of him as a super Zombie now!

Dregs are not really great hero choices but they are cheap. I dislike their poor BS skill (2) and WS (2). They have a lousy Initiative so two-handed weapons are a no-no if you want them to last in hand-to-hand combat (unless everyone else is playing human warbands). Remember!! You need as many heroes as possible when you start your band in order to get as many exploration rolls as possible so... You may be tempted to bypass Dregs for Ghouls but don't as you can purchase more Ghouls at a later time. Try to get Dregs on horseback, warhorse preferably, to get you speed. If you get your Dreg "Knight" in good Gromil armor, a shield and lance (you'll need *Combat Master* skill) he would have a 2+ save, and with a lance a powerful punch, alternatively you could give your Dregs long-range support, and on horseback it'll allow them to quickly get to firing position. You may be wondering, undead on horseback? Well horses are for humans only, but Dregs are humans... and undead warhorses would be an alternative!



Henchmen: Ghouls are a bit of a mixed bag. They have nice Toughness (4), you get 2 attacks and cause *Fear*. Ghouls start to shine if you can get one promoted with "The Lad's Got Talent" skill. Then you can finally get some nice skills. These Ghoul heroes cannot use weapons or armor of any kind so you are very limited in the equipment department, but Ghouls have a maximum of 5 attacks (the only other Hero capable of this is The Possessed) so you can potentially create a very nice killing machine. You can easily substitute one of these Ghouls for a Dreg.

Dire Wolves are nice BUT, expensive! They have the best Movement rating in your warband (M 9") The spell *Call of Vanhel* will let your wolves move into combat quickly. Wolves also cause fear, are immune to psychology and poison and they treat all "Stunned" results as "Knocked Down".

Last, the Zombie. Do not underestimate them. Zombies are cheap, cause *Fear* and are easily replaced. Sure they are slow and get no experience, but if one dies it is no great loss. You could cast *Re-animation* or *Awakening* and you could bring some of those fallen in battle. Your band will be hampered by a lack of speed. The spell *Call of Vanhel* will help increase your range of movement, but it only works for Zombies or Dire Wolves. If you face a more mobile band you may be at the mercy of missile fire.

If you feel your band to be lacking fill it out with a Hired Sword, such as a Warlock or an Ogre.



Fighting Style: Undead warbands are more divided than any other warband: the Vampire and Necromancer really standing out, henchmen as an undead mass, and Dregs mostly just messing about, licking the Vampire's heels. As a typical formation, you'll keep your frail Necromancer well covered by the undead henchman; that way he can make the best of his spells to aid the warband. Keep enough space so he has line-of-sight to cast offensive spells too. Note that Zombies and Dire Wolves are immune to psychology, so they rarely need the leader's Ld for tests. Place the Vampire a bit back, along with Dregs and Ghouls, to pounce the enemy once they are engaged.

With this in mind, form a wall of Zombies, and put your Necromancer an inch or so behind them. Put the Dire Wolves along a side, to ward off flank attacks. Put Dregs and Ghouls along another side, and the Vampire behind them. Alternatively, you can put the Vampire with the Dire Wolves, allowing him to quickly survey the battlefield while the Dire Wolves cover him.

When approaching the enemy, protect the heroes by placing them so they cannot be charged without a Zombie intercepting. Use the Zombies also as cover against missiles. Though your Dire Wolves can charge an amazing 18", you shouldn't send them up front without backup, for they will easily fall once surrounded. Use them to attack the flanks or stray warriors, or keep them back as a quick-response force. Use the Vampire to finish off fallen warriors.

Don't bother about shooters too much: once in close combat, they can't target you anyway. When close combat is finished, chances are they will have to start taking rout-tests, and they probably aren't worth going after. You could try using spells against them.

If your Necromancer has the Reanimation spell (difficulty 5), he has a 5-out-of-6 chance to immediately recover any Zombie that just went Out Of Action in close combat. This is an awesome spell, making your Necromancer likely the most important warrior in your army, and your opponent will definitely want to take him out, so protect him well.

Despite their extraordinary toughness, undead warbands have some really weak spots that need attention.



Fearless opponents: The *Fear*-causing effect of your undead warband is perhaps your single most important strength. Warriors that are fearless can really mess up your strategy. Beware of all opponents that are *Fear*-causing themselves, or fearless in some other way: Ogres, The Possessed, Darksouls, Flagellants... they will certainly play a crucial role in your opponent's strategy. Much worse is a warband grouped closely around a leader with high Ld, as they will pass almost all fear-tests; try to take out the leader ASAP. But worst of all, is a warband drunk on Bugman's ale...they are all fearless no matter what, and you'll better adjust your tactics accordingly! At least they spent a lot of gold on buying the stuff.

 **Ranged attackers:** They can target *Fear*-causing creatures without taking a fear-test. Once a warrior is down, opponents no longer need to take a *Fear*-test to engage him. Your best defense against archers are the necromantic offensive spells, and your Vampire once he can acquire some speed skills. You can strengthen your anti-missile defense more by hiring a warlock who can use lesser magic.

 **Sigmar:** The prayers of Sigmar are particularly potent against undead, and any priest is a major enemy. Sisters of Sigmar may well present the biggest threat of all, featuring many skills and the holy Sigmarite Warhammers that make them much stronger against undead. Any battle against them will prove quite a challenge.

 **Garlic:** Enemy heroes may carry garlic to prevent your Vampire from charging them. The effect is minor though, and your army should be strong enough to handle them even if your Vampire can't.

 **Leaders:** Undead have little need of the leadership characteristic, yet if both Vampire and Necromancer are gone, the warband is entirely lost! If either of them leaves the mission, make sure the other one stays safe; consider taking a voluntary rout rather than risking everything.

 **Campaign Tactics:** Undead make some of the strongest starting warbands. Make your way through cover, and trample your opponent in close combat. Take special care of the Vampire and Necromancer: they can use every point of experience they can get. Search-type missions are more challenging; speed is critical here, and the zombies are too slow to protect your scouting warriors. The fast Vampire can do an excellent job in scouring the field, but it's risky to let him go about on his own, so send some dire wolves along to back him up.

 **Skills:** Choosing advances for undead shouldn't pose much difficulty, as the options are limited. Dregs must concentrate on Combat and Strength skills. The Vampire has a wider selection, including Academic and Speed skills. Which skills you choose depends on your own taste, and what plans you have for these warriors. The *Weapons Training* skill may be an attractive option for Vampire or Dregs, should they come across better stuff than their limited equipment list allows them to use.

Now after a few games as you get levels, the first thing you need to do is get you Vampire:

 **Jump Up:** Treats "Stunned" as "Knocked Down" and ignores "~~Knocked Down~~"! may ignore Knocked Down results when rolling for injuries, unless he is Knocked Down because of a successful save from wearing a helmet or because he has the *No Pain* special rule. See [FAQ Section 11.4 Skills](#). **Thanks to Eric for the heads up!**

 **Strong Man:** enables the ability to wield a double handed weapon on his initiative.

 **Sprint and Leap:** if you also buy a tome of magic, get the academic ability *Arcane Lore* and hopefully you'll get *Flight of Zimmerman* or *The Sword One*. It will take quite awhile to acquire these, but with *Sprint*, *Leap* and *Flight of Zimmerman* your Vampire could move up to 36".

The Necromancer should try to get as many spells as possible. The *Warrior Wizard* skill will allow him to wear armor, so this may be a good choice if you can afford it. *Sprint* skill will allow him to move around

more easily (remember he can run and cast spells the same turn).

Promoted Ghouls should take the strength- and speed-skill-lists; the combat-skills are of little use, as Ghouls can never take equipment (not even with the weapons training skill).

Advanced Tactics

By Archeonicus,
Edited by The Mordheimer.
PDF at [Downloads!](#)

About the author:

Archeonicus is a living relic when it comes to gaming. Years of knowledge, experience and love for the game have made him a great Mordheim player. While he is the unofficial European Mordheim Champion, he still is a humble avid player. If you visit the Netherlands or play at the EuroGT, feel free to challenge him and take his title home! Many thanks for all his kind words and collaborations!

I. Characters: Knowing the Gang

This is one of the warbands in the Mordheim setting which draws a lot of attention because of the eye catcher and initial combat monster: the Vampire. [insert Oh's en Ah's]

Then often they get played and the difficulty of play repeatedly goes way beyond what a lot of people expect or imagine. Players have also a vague feeling of insurance: you can buy back a vamp if his predecessor dies. But do not think it is easy to round up the money. The average earning in a normal warband will be around 45-65 gold crowns and often you have to replace stuff or pay of hired swords. Also, if the vampire is staked and you loose your necromancer before collecting the hefty fee to buy a new one, the whole warband goes by-by... believe me it happens...

Undead are a quirky warband:



The only warband who is allowed to buy back their, rather expensive, leader.



Warband with the least attractive hero: the dreg.



A Spellcaster, of which half its spells rely on a non-mandatory henchmen choice: The necromancer.



The only warband that can disappear in one fell swoop... (It happens).

These are great obstacles and yet the fun things which make the undead worth playing. But first let's take a glance at the characters in the warband

Vampire

A combat monster *per se*. Starts with WS4, S4, T4 and to top it of 2 wounds... Do not forget he has M6 and BS4 and not to forget I5... but more about that later.

Necromancer	A very important Spellcaster in the warband, though rather restricted in his spells, which are in my opinion too specialized in one direction. Later more on this...
Dreg	This is not a bad character and they fit the fluff, but as far as other warbands considered the least attractive hero in the lot. Youngblood stats for hero prices...
Ghoul	In fact the henchman of choice was it not for his price. T4 and causes fear... yummy...
Dire Wolf	A good companion for accompanying the vampire, even has 2 attacks when it charges... its full 18".
Zombie	If there ever was canon fodder, it is this one and then nice abilities to boot...

II. Starting Tips:

So how would you begin with a warband, what is important to look at when you start?

1. If possible buy as much heroes as possible! They are the guys that actually bring in the money, after a battle. The money... I cannot stress that enough! In one-time-only games that fact does not matter, so then there is more room for experimenting.

III. Warband Types:

So now you know something about the characters and about important starter points. Now let's get to the warband designing. Of course there are a lot of options, but often they come down to the following three types of warbands.

A. *The "Fast Movers" warband*

Here you make the most of the M6 of your vampire. The ones that can follow are the Dire Wolves. Backup then needs to be provided by your Dregs and Necromancer. These then are either filled up with ghouls or zombies. What is very important here is how much money you want to spend on your fast movers.

Vampire with sword and mace

Necromancer with a bow

3 Dregs with a mace

5 Dire Wolves

This makes for 10 members in total. This could easily spell victory in the first combat. By the way, there is a great chance that your necromancer will have a useless spell

Pro: Very fast warband indeed!

Con: Replacement wolves costs 50 gc each, which is rather steep.

Strategy: You try to make use of the speed of your vampire and dogs, though the surprise will only work once against a same opponent... I guess.

A. *The "Shambling Horde" warband*

This is from the start in the hero department equal as the sample above, but instead of Dire Wolves you go for the zombies... so you should be starting with 15 members.



Vampire with sword and mace, heavy armor, helmet and shield



Necromancer with a bow, sword, light armor, helmet and shield



3 Dregs with a mace



10 Zombies

Do not worry about the movement penalty (M -1) for wearing heavy armor. It is absolutely of non-interest here. The necromancer might even have a use for the spell he gets!

Pro: Maxed out warband. Zombies are cheap and spells (necromancy) are there to bolster them and make them really fearsome.

Con: Lack of speed, as the "shamblers" are restricted to normal move except when charging... This can opt you to move and hide, shooty warbands really hates this and it is very very slow...

Strategy: This one just overwhelms the opponent by hordes of creatures which almost only can be Knocked Down and (if the necromancer has reanimation) keep coming back if they are killed. Protect your necromancer, as he is the most important in this type of play. The Vampire can concentrate on protecting himself and give assistance where needed.

A. *The "The Living Undead" warband*

This warband has only one undead member and that one only is there because he is mandatory: the vampire. You start again with the 5 heroes, as we know now. Then for the rest you buy Ghouls. Probably one of the best henchmen around. They need (may not even think about it) no equipment have toughness 4 and 2 attacks.



Vampire with sword and mace, heavy armor, helmet and shield



Necromancer with a bow, sword, light armor, helmet and shield



3 Dregs with a mace



6 Ghouls

Pro: All move at least 8" when running.

Con: Ghouls do cost 40 gc, not as expensive as a Dire Wolf... but very close. It also means a lot of poison is effective. Do not underestimate that fact... just think about weeping blades, or blowpipes!

Strategy: This is HtH with a knack. Most people do not expect a T4 elf that hits with S5.

IV. Undead and Skills

Vampire

The vampire is the one undead which can combine all those nice special undead abilities and certain skills. He causes *Fear*, which is very nice if your opponent has a low Leadership value. You can count on 1 in 3 the your enemies will keep behind standing shaking in their boots. This also makes the *Fearsome* skill useless, but who complaints...

The vampires are immune to many things. They are *Immune to Psychology*, which officially means they cannot get *Stupid* or *Frenzied*. Also, vampires are *Immune to Poison*, which is nice as dark venom (or other poisons) and scorpion tail attacks add no bonus. This also means that potions and drugs do not work. Vampires feel *No Pain*, treating Stunned results as Knocked Down. This is very very nice, especially if you give the guy *Jump Up* skill... Oh, no! This does not work anymore since the last rules review. See our [FAQ](#), section 11.4 Skills for details. Doesn't matter is is just a free helmet that works all the time instead of only 50% of the time.

Though obvious combinations are clear to the most people (i.e. *Resilient* and T4 is always nice, as are *Step Aside* and *Mighty Blow*.) There are other skills which are very handy for your main fighter. If you are in combat, your goal is to take out the enemy. So how this is best accomplished? You need to hit and wound first, which is not that big a problem as the vampire is WS4 and S4. But after that it gets tricky. You have 33% chance to take out a character, 16% if he is a dwarf. So to pull this to 50/33%, think about *Strike to Injure*. Furthermore your vampire has M6, so with Scale Sheer Surfaces he will be the bane of all people high up. A nice one I noticed is the skill *Leap*, as this not only give you a random distance advance, but also a way to avoid interceptors, as you are allowed to jump over them. Of course if you then even add *Sprint*, you come very close to that Skaven sorcerer with Black Fury spell.

Dreg

Now let's get to the Dreg, the so-called pitiful excuse of a hero. He has couple of advantages though, and should not be underestimated. Firstly he advances rather quickly, gaining 4 advances within 8 XP. Secondly you are allowed 3 of them! If they get killed, it is a bit sad for the earned experience, but they are cheap to replace. But what skills are handy? First, a Dreg needs to survive, so with their meager skill list I think *Step Aside* is almost mandatory. Then extra skills will be added fast. From that point on they turn into small combat monsters very quickly.

Do not forget armor on these guys, though replacing them gets more expensive then...

Necromancer

Finally we get to the Necromancer. A not so unimportant character with rather specialized spells. The first thing to do at warband creation is to see what spell the necromancer will get, as this influences warband creation a lot in my opinion. I dare say it has the most influence of all warbands. If the Necromancer gets a skill advance, most often it is handy to choose a spell as a lot of spells have low difficulty rolls. But let's get to the spells and all relevant commentary with that.

V. Necromantic Magic:

1. **Lifestealer:** Difficulty: 10. This is actually a great damage spell and it even gives your caster a nice bonus. Downsides are there too: the high difficulty. This almost screams for the sorcery skill, a familiar or Mind Focus. Furthermore it has only a range of 6", which means every model I know except for a dwarf with a leg wound, can charge you. This is a very unfavorable situation... Better hand out weapons to the poor dude.
2. **Re-animation:** Difficulty: 5. I will say that this is the zombie boost spell. Someone take them out, you take them back in. Even from a relative save distance. This spell has only a big use if you have zombies in your warband. This one only works on that mindless canon fodder. It can really stress your opponent, or it might bolster his XP-earnings. Of course the shambling horde warband is the way to go for max profit. The nice bonus of this spell is, that if you do not lose too many heroes, route tests will be of the past, as all zombies turn up again... Though this is made a bit harder after the rules revision. As the zombies need to be taken Out Of Action in the previous turn.
3. **Death Vision:** Difficulty: 6. I started a warband thrice now and every time this was my starting spell. I rather hate it at the moment. In my experience it has almost no extra value, cause if they charge your Necromancer, do not expect him to put up a great fight. In my opinion this could have been a special skill for undead Heroes.
About the only advantage (yup there is one) is that it only needs to be cast once in a battle. That is why my necromancer always have a bow and my last also had Hunting arrows.
4. **Spell of Doom:** Difficulty: 9. The multi-wound killer; doesn't matter how strong, tough, skillful, or lucky a character is. If your necromancer gets within 12" (very nice!) and the spell works... your enemy is toast! Either he goes Out Of Action, or models that charged him take care of the rest... I rather like this one as it gives the necromancer distance, difficulty is not overly high and it can take out everything.
5. **Call of Vanhell:** Difficulty: 6. This is a rather strange spell. The workings are clear, but the effects are strange in my opinion. This one also works on the smelly wolves. Like they need that extra move, or that Ol' necro can keep up... This also makes it again one of the specialized spells, only useful if you use zombies and/or wolves. But what is the use? If you have several zombies and/or wolves it does not make the horde faster. It does not make the model charge anything extra. If it charges in the call's move, it could have done it on its own too... Although this is a mandatory fluff spell, I at least expect

giving a model an extra attack if the spell succeeds, or make a full march/charge move. Or at least let you move D3 models or so... (Now you may guess what my second spell was after I started with Death Vision and no zombies or wolves...)

6. **Spell o' Awakening:** Difficulty: NA. A lot of people think this is the spell of the lot; it always works and can give great benefits. But remember the chance that a hero dies is about 14%. On the upside is that I once fought beastmen and they lost 2 heroes, permanently. I gained 2 zombies with great stats (both of course 2 wounds).
On the nice side is also, that you only need to have the spell, no further testing etc. Of course if you have re-animation it is a beauty...

VI. Hired Swords: It is difficult to find good help this days...

Now onto a rather important chapter for the Undead. They are always in need of something that has own initiative, earns experience and will move faster than 4". In fact, up till now there are only 4 Hired Swords available for the undead warband:

1. **Ogre Bodyguard:** This one comes with a hefty price and hefty upkeep - where is that *Return Favor* (Random Happenings' event) when you need one? But his impressive stats are worth it. 3 wounds, move 6 and *Fear* causing are just a few. There is only one important question, do you go for two regular weapons, or for one 2-handed weapon. My personal favorite is the latter, as taking out enemy is more important in my eyes. Though more attacks should give you more chance on that. But say for yourself, do you like 3 rolls with 25-33% chance of making an injury roll, or do you like 2 rolls of 33-40% of making your opponent bleed (though you tend to hit last in this option, in the beginning.)
2. **Warlock:** Always a good choice. Not too expensive, although some bad rolls in the spell department and you can end up with a rather less useful character. Though chances on that are not so great. And with the arrows, you got a chance on probably one of the best spells in the game.
3. **Witch:** What can I say, I think she might even be better as a warlock. Prices are the same, but the "spells" are inherently better. Mostly because they have more subtle effects. With special mention to *Scry* and *Age of Stone*.
4. **Imperial Assassin:** Though a bit more steep in price, this one is a definite catch. Cost can even go up more if you want to equip him with other special things. He has some nice special skills, of which the *Hide in Shadows* must be my favorite. The dwarfs in my campaign hate it... :-). Though pricey, I would suggest giving him a crossbow and using him as a canon. S5 hits are nothing to sneeze and there are not many shooters that can fight too, or was it fighters that can shoot too?

So I hope this helps starters a bit out, if they like Undead. But remember this is a bit from my perspective. And half way the campaign my warband fell to pieces...

Archeonicus