

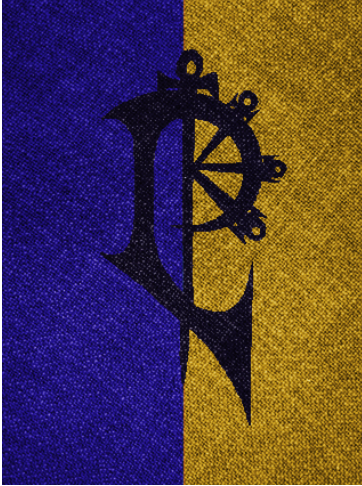
Battle of Tyr's Bay

With the battle of Darrowmere won, Doomhammer moved yet one step closer to his strategic goal; isolation of the Northlands and Quel'Thalas. As Gul'dan used the powerful magiks of the ancient Runestone at Caer Darrow to grant countless ogres the power their ancestors once held, the Horde found itself strengthened by yet another powerful asset. Knowing that after the fall of Stromgarde, most of the surviving Stromic forces withdrew either west or towards the bay of Tyr, leaving the way across the kingdom wide and open, he ordered the sons of Blackhand to march north, vanquish the Stromic forces and secure the bay. This, together with the forces coming from Darrowmere to secure the river of Avalon, would allow him to completely isolate the Northlands, just as he desired. And so the forces of the Black Tooth Grin Clan marched through the lands of Stromgarde, towards the bay of Tyr, to slaughter yet many other of its sons.

Since most of Stromgarde's generals fell during the battles in the south or were trapped in the western Arathi Highlands with their king, the leadership of the defense force in the bay fell to Commander Armen, a soldier of low origin. Knowing his forces were far too small to oppose the Horde for long, he asked the High Command for immediate assistance, while informing them of the Horde's movement. Unable to spare any of the troops stationed in western Lordaeron, the Command sent Lord Uther, who was on an errand to Stratholme at the time, to muster a force as force as possible in the area around Tyr's Hand and reinforce the men of Stromgarde.

Breakdown of the opposing forces

The Grand Alliance of Lordaeron



Naval strength

20 ships divided into two squadrons. Flying the banner of Stromgarde, under the command of Commander Armen of Stromgard and his captains.

20 ships divided into two squadrons. Flying the banner of Lordaeron, under the command of Lordaeronian squadron commander.

Ground strength

5 000 men under the banner of Lordaeron, including 400 Knights of the Silver Hand. Led by Lord Uther the Lightbringer.

10 000 men under the banner of Stromgarde.

Men of Stromgarde under the command of Commander Armen of Stromgarde. Garrison of the Fortress of Tyr's Bay under the command of Lieutenant Orman of Stromgarde.

The Great Orcish Horde



Naval strength

50 ships divided into four squadrons, flying the banner of the Black Tooth Grin Clan. Under the command of Maim Blackhand and his captains.

Ground strength

25 000 troops of the Black Tooth Grin Clan. Commanded by Maim Blackhand and OGRE-Mage Warosh.

Objectives

The Alliance

One could say the warriors defending the Fortress of Tyr's Bay had simple objectives. Hold the ground and wait for the reinforcements. But that statement, although practically true, is slightly problematic, as Armen couldn't simply hold the ground. The Horde had clear numerical superiority, both on the land and sea, and the small island that held the Fortress itself couldn't support all of his men. As such, he had to split his forces into two groups and ensure the Horde wouldn't be able to encircle any of them. Being a commander used to a position of attacker, not defender, he also came to a decision to rely upon an active defense, not a simple stationary defense. In effect, this transformed his objectives from a simple "hold the ground" to "establish a line of active defense, prevent any encirclement of your forces and cause the enemy as many casualties as possible until the reinforcements arrive".

The Horde

The Black Tooth Grins clearly knew what their their primary goal was; secure the bay before Doomhammer's forces from the west arrive by the river of Avalon. The question they had to find an answer for was; how? They knew the bay was protected by two powerful fortifications; the Avalon castle and the Fortress of Tyr's Bay, and thanks to their troll scouts, they learned the Alliance was amassing a new force at Avalon. Maim realized he had to act fast if he wanted to crush the resistance without severe losses, or even at all. He knew he had to destroy the force at Avalon before it could grow large enough to pose a serious threat, as well as to keep it separated from the forces of Stromgarde. To achieve this end, he and his chief advisor Warosh, freshly christened Ogre-Mage, formulated the following plan. Since they knew the Alliance was unaware of their exact numbers, they would split their forces and use the larger half to launch a ruse assault against the positions of Stromgarde, drawing all of their attention, while the smaller half would sail around the islands and attack the Alliance from the rear.

The Battle

Map depicting the Battle of Tyr's Bay.



Who was the master mind behind the Horde operational plan, we may never know. There are conflicting sources, some saying it was Maim Blackhand himself, some suggesting it was Warosh, with Maim playing only a supporting role in its conception. What is important though, is that it worked almost seamlessly. Stromic forces completely failed to successfully monitor the activities of the Horde, as trolls of the Horde knew this land very well and managed to capture and murder any Alliance scout. With his eyes blind, Armen was unable to foresee the Horde intentions, and ran directly into their trap.

Once his fleet came under attack, he sent word to Avalon, asking for reinforcements,

and redirected all his forces towards the attacking force. Although his aggressive tactics were successful in holding the Black Tooth Grins at bay, he unwittingly aided their plan in doing so, as his forces drew out southeast, while only a small garrison under the command of his own son has been left to guard the Fortress. But there was something even the Horde didn't anticipate. The speed with which Lord Uther assembled all available men and sailed to help Armen. With their plans being put into jeopardy, Warosh decided to attack Lord Uther, even though he didn't have clear advantage. But, perhaps by the will of fate, perhaps by sheer luck, he gained favorable winds and thanks to his position managed to take his left wing by surprise. Tough fighting ensued, with ships boarding each other and their crews fighting bitterly until last man. In the end, Warosh prevailed, if only for the fact that he managed to sink many vessels before the Alliance could regroup and react. Lord Uther himself received a severe wound and remnants of his fleet survived only because of his tactical decision to withdraw to the north, as the Horde cut off their way back to Avalon. Warosh did not pursue these survivors, as he knew there was no time to spare, and instead decided to act upon the favorable situation. He knew that with Lordaeronian fleet defeated, Avalon would be defended only by a token force and as such, he decided to split his forces in half, sending one part to assault Avalon, while the rest was to continue with the former plan under his personal command.

Since Armen and his men were unaware of what happened in the north, for Warosh had managed to slaughter all the messengers that tried to get through, their attention continued to be fixed on Maim and his forces. And so when Warosh attacked the Fortress, its defenders, outnumbered ten to one, stood no chance. The Fortress was leveled and most of Orman's men slaughtered, although some, including Orman himself, managed to flee. When Armed learned of the attack, he immediately turned to help his son, but Maim, anticipating this move, gave him no reprieve and pressed hard against his forces. Surrounded by enemies on all sides, his fleet sank and he was forced to retreat back onto the larger of the islands, where he made his final stand under the rays of rising sun. In the end, he fell together with all of his men, their blood turning the beach and surrounding waters red. Ten thousand sons of Stromgarde lost their lives that day and Maim was henceforth known as the Butcher of the Bay.