

# Blackrock Spire

After the battle of Crestfall, the Horde found itself in a very difficult position. There is this popular saying regarding the situation of the Horde in the last months of the war; "After Lordamere, there could be no victory for the Horde, after Crestfall, there was no hope at all". Although we know this saying does not truly reflect the actual situation, as the fall of Alterac was as much as important for hindering of Horde's efforts in Lordaeron as were the battles on the shores of Lordamere, it bears some truth in it regarding the implications of Crestfall. Without Crestfall, the Horde would be able to evacuate far larger number of its troops from Lordaeron, which would undoubtedly turn the war into a bloody stalemate. With the power of his navies broken, Doomhammer was left without the resources needed to effectively defend the western shores of Azeroth, since most of his remaining armies were either trapped in Lordaeron or still mustering in the east of Azeroth.

And so it was that with a window of opportunity open, the Alliance mustered its fleets and armies and launched a daring assault against the capital of the Horde in Azeroth; Blackrock Spire and its city of Hordemar.

The whole engagement can be divided into two principal parts. The first one we call the Battle of the Burning Shores, for it consisted of the naval battle between the remnants of the Horde fleets and fleets of the Alliance in the bay of Burning Steppes and of the subsequent landing and battle on its shores. The second one, best known as the Battle of Blackrock Spire or the Siege of Blackrock Spire, is considered a legend, as not only was it one of the largest, or perhaps even the largest, battles in the history of Azeroth, but it was also the place where beloved Lord Lothar lost his life.

# Battle of the Burning Shores

## Breakdown of the opposing forces

### The Grand Alliance of Lordaeron



#### Naval strength

200 warships divided into four fleets. Three fleets fought under the banner of Kul Tiras, one under the banner of Azeroth. Commanded by Grand Admiral Proudmoore.

90 transport vessels divided into three fleets. Flying the banner of Lordaeron, commanded by several Lordaeronian fleet commanders.

#### Ground strength

40 000 men under the banner of Azeroth.

70 000 men under the banner of Lordaeron.

10 000 elite marines of Kul Tiras.

5 000 support troops hailing from Khaz Modan. Both of the dwarven and gnomish origin.

10 000 men under the banner of Quel'Thalas.

All ground and aerial forces under the command of Lord Lothar and his lieutenants, with the exception of the Tirasian marines commanded by Grand Admiral Proudmoore.

## The Great Orcish Horde



### Naval strength

100 warships divided into two fleets. One flying the banner of the Blackrock Clan, one of the Burning Blade Clan. Both commanded by Warchief Doomhammer and his naval lieutenants.

### Ground strength

60 000 troops of the Blackrock Clan. Commanded by Warchief Doomhammer, Teron Gorefiend and Commander Tharbek. Another 10 000 under the command of Varok Saurfang present at the Blackrock Spire.

25 000 troops of the Burning Blade Clan. Leaderless, but acting upon the orders from Doomhammer.

## **Objectives**

### **The Alliance**

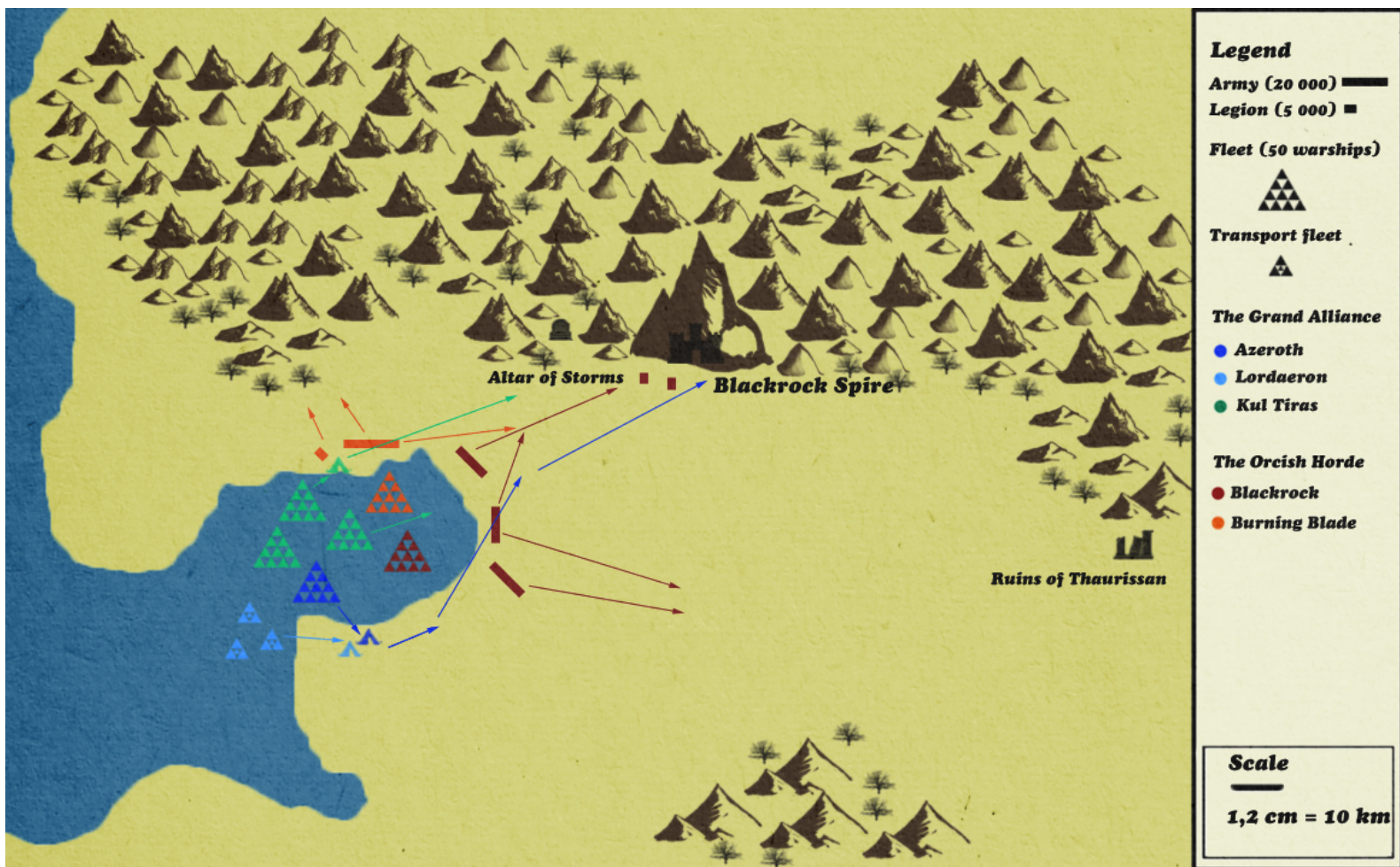
The objectives of the Alliance were clear. What Lothar wanted to achieve was to vanquish the remainder of the Horde fleets and successfully storm the shores of the Steppes. If possible, his aim was to cut through the defensive line of the Horde at several different spots, encircle and destroy as many of their forces as possible and then rush for Blackrock Spire before any orcish reinforcements can arrive.

### **The Horde**

The primary objective of the Horde was clear as well; hold the ground. With the battle of Crestfall lost, Doomhammer ordered the clans in the east of Azeroth and Khaz Modan; Black Tooth Grins, Dragonmaws and Bleeding Hollows, to muster as many troops as they can spare and reinforce his position in the west. While Bleeding Hollows were pinned down by the fighting in Khaz Modan, Dragonmaws and Black Tooth Grins obeyed. However, mustering of the force large enough to be of any use took some time. And so did the travel. As such, Doomhammer was left on his own for a time being and had to hold on until the reinforcements could arrive. To achieve this, he took all the forces available to him bar 10 000 troops he left at Blackrock Spire under the command of Varok Saurfang and built a line of fortifications on the shores of the Steppes. As he was aware that the Alliance would have a clear numerical superiority both on the land and on the sea, Doomhammer took some drastic measures to make his line of defense as effective as possible, including the placement of fully loaded Oil Tankers meant to dump the oil into the sea behind his war fleets in case they are defeated and enriching local oil platforms with explosives, so that he could set the bay at fire if necessary.

## The Battle

Map depicting the Battle of the Burning Shores.



Once the mighty fleets of the Alliance entered the bay, there was no point in waiting. As Tirasian fleets engaged the Horde, Lothar ordered the armies of the Alliance to land in two different parts of the bay and lead an attack from sides instead of a direct assault, as he suspected some sort of unpleasant surprise.

First group, comprised of Tirasian marines and Lordaeronian knights and paladins, landed on the north shore of the bay and assaulted positions of the Burning Blade Clan. This group was under the command of Uther the Lightbringer and Barean Westwind and saw heavy fighting against the mad blademasters of the Burning Blade. Dagren the Orcslayer led the vanguard that cut through the lines of the Burning Blades, splitting their forces in two and distinguished himself when he killed four blademasters in single combat.

Second group, comprised of the remaining land forces under the command of Lothar and his lieutenants, landed in the south and immediately started its march against the orcish forces in the northeast. Once Doomhammer saw Lothar's intentions, he reorganized his defenses in the south, reinforcing them with a large number of his dragons and death knights under Teron Gorefiend. He also gave the order to set the bay on fire to deprive the Alliance of the naval support, as his fleets were unable to stop Admiral Proudmoore, but in the end, the Alliance prevailed. The vanguard, led by Gavinrad the Dire, managed to push through the lines of the Horde, giving them no reprieve, while the rest of the forces followed, cutting the orcish forces into half. The battle was finally decided when Kurdran Wildhammer personally slew the largest of the Blackrock dragons, whose body crashed into orcish headquarters, killing Commander Tharbek in process and sending the southern armies into disarray. Once Doomhammer understood that all is lost, he ordered a retreat towards Blackrock Spire, but many of his forces, including a fair number of death knights under Gorefiend, were cut off and fled to the east.



## Battle of Blackrock Spire

With the opportunity at hand, the Alliance pursued retreating armies of the Horde and managed to trap them within Blackrock Spire. Outnumbering the Horde by a fairly large margin, Lothar prepared for a long siege. But Doomhammer was not the one to wait for his end hidden in a fortress and with the reinforcements coming from the east, he took the battle directly to the Alliance.

### Breakdown of the opposing forces

#### The Grand Alliance of Lordaeron



#### Strength of the besieging armies

40 000 men under the banner of Azeroth.

60 000 men under the banner of Lordaeron.

5 000 elite marines of Kul Tiras.

5 000 support troops hailing from Khaz Modan. Both of the dwarven and gnomish origin.

10 000 men under the banner of Quel'Thalas.

All ground and aerial forces under the command of Lord Lothar and his lieutenants.

## The Great Orcish Horde



### **Strength of the forces in Blackrock Spire**

45 000 troops of the Blackrock Clan. Commanded by Warchief Doomhammer and Varok Saurfang.

10 000 troops of the Burning Blade Clan. Under the command of Doomhammer himself.

### **Strength of the reinforcements from the east.**

60 000 troops of the Black Tooth Grin Clan. Under the command of Rend Blackhand and Maim Blackhand.

10 000 troops of the Dragonmaw Clan. Commanded by Zuluhed the Whacked.

10 000 survivors of the Blackrock Clan. Under the command of Teron Gorefiend and his knights.



## **Objectives**

### **The Alliance**

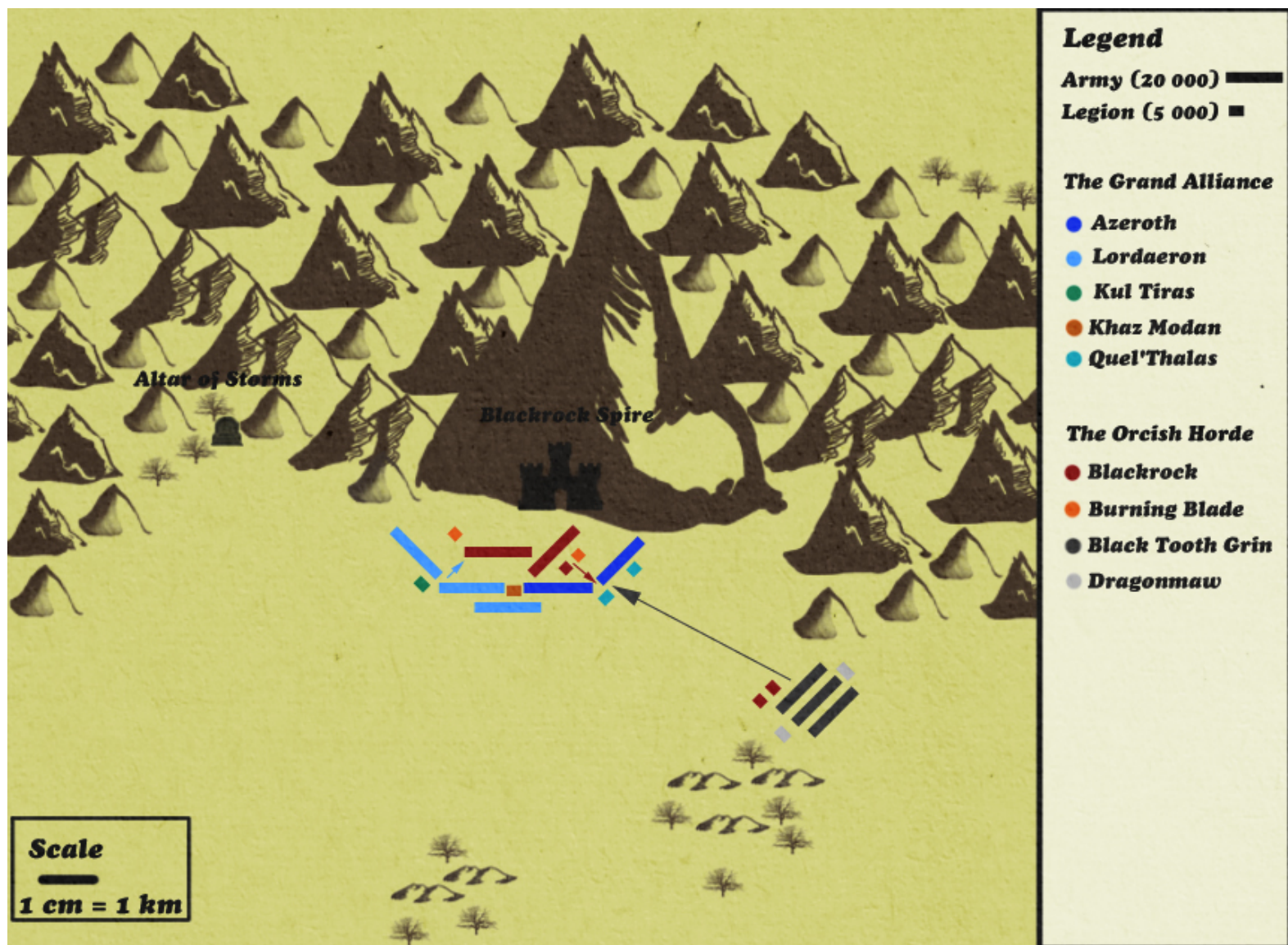
Once Doomhammer has been trapped within Blackrock Spire, Lothar made his intentions clear. He wanted to stray away from a direct engagement if possible, as it would certainly entail a huge loss of lives and intended to force Doomhammer to surrender. For this, he built a large number of field fortifications and siege weaponry, preparing his forces for a long siege. Even after he learned of the incoming orcish reinforcements, he still went on with this plan, only he ordered to build an outer ring of defenses to repel any possible attacks. Once everything was in place and it was plain clear that the Horde would have very hard time getting out of the Spire, he sent Doomhammer his terms; surrender unconditionally.

### **The Horde**

There can't be much said about Doomhammer's strategic objectives, as they were plain clear. Break the siege and if possible, repel the Alliance. What is far more important, and serves as a testament of Doomhammer's tactical prowess, was his plan of battle. Once he learned of the exact position and strength of the incoming reinforcements, he decided to empty Blackrock Spire and Hordemar and launch a full frontline attack against the Alliance positions. The objectives were clear; attack the weakest spot of the Alliance line from both sides, with him and his elite troops being at the vanguard of the western attack, split the Alliance armies in half and destroy them piece by piece. If successful, not only would he destroy a considerable number of the Alliance forces present in Azeroth, but he would also gain clear numerical superiority and would force them to retreat, buying him enough time to bring more orcs from Draenor and reinforce his strength. And so it was that when he finally managed to inform the Blackhand brothers of his plan, everything was set in its place for the largest battle of the whole war to begin.

## The Battle

Map depicting the Battle of Blackrock Spire.



It is said it was a fairly quiet morning when the battle has begun. Lord Lothar sent his offer to Doomhammer day earlier and learned his answer with the first rays of the sun. Doomhammer led his vanguard comprised of loyal Ogre maulers, reavers and mages, Troll berserkers, Burning Blade blademasters and the very best of his Blackrock warriors against the lines of the Alliance, cutting through them like a sharp knife cuts through the flesh, while the relief armies attacked the Alliance from the east. Although Lothar ordered his forces to reinforce the area under the attack, the fury of Doomhammer seemed unstoppable.

At this point, all seemed lost, for Doomhammer was very close to breakthrough, but Lord Lothar was not a kind of man to give up. Knowing that Doomhammer's victory would most certainly prolong the war for many months, maybe even years, he took his personal retinue, together with as many knights and paladins as was possible at that moment, and rode to stop Doomhammer himself.

With the situation in the east dire, the western wing of the Alliance armies took it upon itself to attack the Horde. At certain point, it seemed as if the Horde was given wings, as it almost managed to encircle some of the attacking forces. Only when Commander Mograine led the charge against this force comprised of the Burning Blade blademasters and Blackrock warlocks was this prevented.

But the situation in the east was far more important. As Lothar and his paladins clashed with Doomhammer's vanguard, Azeroth found itself at the crossroads of history. We do not know much about what happened next, as there are many conflicting sources. At certain point, Lord Lothar was separated from his men and attacked by bloodlusted Ogres. Although he somehow managed to survive and even slay those Ogres, it wasn't before they ripped his horse apart and mauled his shield. Doomhammer, seeing this from a far, saw a grand opportunity, as not only would Lothar's death surely break the fighting spirit of the Alliance armies, but it would have left them leaderless and easier to obliterate, ensuring the much needed reprieve for his forces and time to reinforce his holdings in Azeroth. And so he fought his way towards exhausted Lothar, leading to one of the most known single combats in history. As they fought, it became clear that they were evenly matched, the fact that every witness, either human, orc or another, seems to agree with. In the end, Doomhammer prevailed, but it wasn't thanks to his skill in arms, youth or even the fact that Lothar was already tired. Only after Lothar's sword, the fabled Great Royal Sword of Azeroth, broke, did Doomhammer manage to slay the great Knight.

But Lothar's death did not have the effect Doomhammer hoped for. The last survivor of the Lion's personal retinue and his personal lieutenant, Turalyon, took his broken sword and rallied the men around him in a mad charge against Doomhammer while chanting the words "For Lothar!", pushing him back at the last moment. As the message of Lothar's death spread, his men entered a state of frenzy, chanting the words "Lothar! Lothar! Lothar!" like one and crushing any sort of resistance. Never has the Alliance been as saddened and glorious at same time. The Horde couldn't stand before their might and Doomhammer had to retreat back to the Spire. It was of no use, as the enraged armies of the Alliance tore it down and put him and his remaining men into chains, while the Blackhand brothers and their forces ran towards the Great Portal.