

INTRODUCTION.....	9
QUICK OVERVIEW.....	9
Installation	9
Game concept.....	9
THE MENU SYSTEM.....	10
Main menu	10
Single-player	10
Local network.....	12
Options.....	12
Gamespy.....	15
Game menu	16
Save.....	16
Load	16
Restart mission	16
Mission objectives.....	17
Message list	17
Options.....	17
End current mission.....	17
End program.....	17
Diplomacy menu.....	17
Chat.....	17
Name.....	17
Colour	18
Nation.....	18
Status.....	18
View	18
Tribute.....	18
Chat window	19
SCREEN DISPLAY	20

Resources bar	20
Construction/Research menu	21
Castle construction	21
Village expansion.....	21
Unit training	21
Machine construction menu.....	22
Research menu	22
Selection info.....	23
Game toolbar	23
Minimap.....	23
Select inactive serfs	24
Military map/Economic map/Normal view	24
Set signal	24
Centre on last message	24
Contextual information.....	24
Battle modes	24
Aggressive.....	25
Defensive	25
Maintain position	25
Banner portraits	25
CONTROLLING THE GAME	26
GENERAL	26
Context-sensitive mouse pointer	26
Standard.....	26
Map rotation.....	26
Attack	26
Inaccessible target	26
Invalid target.....	27
Build/Repair	27
Cut wood.....	27

Mine ore/stone	27
Deliver raw material	27
Set bomb/Tear down wall.....	27
Bomb blocked/Tearing down wall not possible.....	27
Mount up	27
Open gate	27
Move in	28
Heal	28
Climb onto wall/tower.....	28
Descend from wall/tower	28
Target out of viewing range	28
Moving units.....	28
Riding on horseback	29
Grouping units	30
Staggered instructions.....	30
Training units.....	30
Upgrading units.....	31
Experience.....	31
Building siege machines.....	31
Constructing buildings.....	32
Designing and building castles.....	33
Controlling the camera	34
Raw materials and resource management.....	35
Wood.....	35
Stone	35
Ore	35
Gold	36
Serfs and serf management.....	36

Put out fires.....	37
Repair	37
Build	37
Boil oil	38
Wait for orders	38
Trade.....	38
Battle.....	39
THE COUNTRIES.....	39
The Germans	39
The English.....	40
The French.....	40
THE UNITS OF ALL COUNTRIES	41
Standard units	41
Single-handed fighters.....	41
Polearm fighters	41
Shortbow archers.....	41
Crossbow archers	42
Spearmen	42
Scouts.....	42
Harquebusiers.....	43
Elite units.....	43
Lancers	43
Two-handed swordsmen (Germans only).....	43
Longbow archers (English only)	44
Paladins (French only).....	44
Mercenaries	44
Arsonists (Germans only)	44
Outlaws (English only).....	45
Crusaders (French only)	45

Specialist units.....	45
Saboteurs	45
Sappers	46
Monks	47
Plague victims	47
 SIEGE MACHINES	 47
 Stationary attack weapons.....	 48
 Mobile attack weapons	 49
 Defensive weaponry for castles.....	 50
 Special weapons	 51
Siege tower	51
Scaling ladder.....	51
Body shield.....	52
 Elite machines	 52
Multi-barrel cannon (Germans only).....	52
Hollow Hannah (Germans only).....	52
Multiple-armed ballista (English only).....	52
Giant ballista (English only)	53
Multiple trebuchet (French only).....	53
Giant trebuchet (French only)	53
 THE HEROES.....	 53
 Recruiting heroes	 53
 Banners	 54
Formation 1	54
Formation 2	55
Formation 3	55
 Thorwald Von Rabenhorst	 55
 Duke Hagen Von Rabenhorst	 56

Svea Von Rabenhorst	56
Prince Bartholomew Von Hohenstein.....	56
Geoffrey The Calm.....	57
Branwyn	57
Prince Alrich Von Drachenfels	58
Thibaut De Chatnois.....	58
Inquisitor Athanasius Dominico.....	58
Mervenor	59
Abdul Al Hazred.....	59
Benvenuto Di Sorto.....	60
BUILDINGS AND UPGRADES.....	60
Castle buildings	60
Castle centre (keep, dungeon).....	60
Signals (war drums, battle horns, storm bells)	61
Sources of water (well, cistern, fountain)	61
Servants' quarters	62
Barracks.....	62
Prisons (dungeon, tower, cage)	62
Healing buildings (infirmary, aid station, hospital).....	62
Stables.....	63
Bowmakers.....	63
Smithy.....	63
Village buildings	64
Village centre (official residence, parish rooms, town hall).....	64
Woodcutters	64
Stonemasons	64
Ironworks.....	65
Agricultural buildings (pig farm, sheep farm, mill)	65
Tax collectors.....	65

Town square	65
Hostelries (tavern, inn)	65
Workshop	66
Sacred buildings (chapel, church, cloister)	66
Alchemists	66
CREDITS	67

Introduction

Welcome to the world of **Castle Strike**, the strategy game from Data Becker. **Castle Strike** will take you back to the European Middle Ages, and give you complete command over three countries. To help you live up to your responsibilities as commander-in-chief of the armies, this manual will give you all the information you require to be able to hurl yourself into the slaughter with a sense of confidence.

Quick overview

The next few pages contain descriptions of all the important elements of the game. Please read the manual through carefully. The ReadMe file in the parent directory of the Castle Strike CD contains the latest information that did not make it into this manual before going to press.

Installation

Place the Castle Strike CD in your computer's CD-ROM drive. If the installation program does not start automatically, click the Windows start button and select "Run" from the resulting menu.

Type in "X:\setup\" with X being the letter of your CD-ROM drive. Then confirm with OK.

Follow the instructions given by the installation program. The standard folder for the game's installation is "C:\Program Files\Data Becker\Castle Strike." If you do not enter a different path during installation, the links for starting the game will then appear in the usual place in the Windows start menu.

Game concept

Castle Strike is a real-time strategy game with a great deal of action. In the game, your mission will be building and defending castles, fighting mighty

battles and keeping your subjects healthy and chipper to ensure your empire is adequately supplied with raw materials.

The single-player campaigns are all part of a complex story in which they first determine the fate of the von Rabenhorsts and finally fly you into the face of the dangers of the Hundred Years' War, fighting side-by-side with Svea von Rabenhorst and her lord Geoffrey. In the final campaign, you can take on the character of the Paladin Thibaut and bring the fight for law and order to a successful conclusion.

The campaigns' individual missions must be played in the prescribed order for the story to maintain its consistency. But you can replay any missions you have successfully concluded at any time by selecting them in the Missions menu.

The menu system

When the game starts, you will see Castle Strike's main menu.

Main menu

This is where you can select single-player mode, start a game within a local network, change the game settings via the Options menu, or begin a multiplayer game via the Gamespy Arcade. From the main menu you can also call up the list of names of the people who worked on the development of Castle Strike. And you can end the program and return to the desktop.

Single-player

To start the game in single-player mode, you must first create a profile by entering a profile name in the input field. The game can manage multiple profiles from different players, each containing saved game statuses and the players' progression through the campaigns.

Campaign

This menu item will take you into the selection mode for the single-player campaigns. There, you can start the first of the three campaigns that you have

to work through in the order specified. After losing a mission twice, the next mission will be available. At any time, you can use the list display to replay missions that you have successfully concluded within the campaigns.

This is also where you have the option of playing the introductory missions to acquaint you with the game's control system.

Three different difficulty levels are available for all the missions in the campaigns, suitable both for beginners and for experienced players. You can select the level of difficulty individually for every mission.

Your own game

Here, you can fight a duel against a computerized opponent. You can configure various parameters to suit your preferences. The settings are identical to those you would also use for a game on a Local Area Network (LAN).

Just as in the multiplayer game, there are three different game modes when you play against the computer:

Every player versus every other player. In this mode, you must destroy all village and castle buildings and conquer the castle keep. The last player still alive at the end of the game wins.

Each player must try to move one of his or her units into an enemy castle centre. This can only be done after the enemy's keep has been destroyed down to 1600 points. The last player left alive is the winner.

Each player has a damsel who can be captured by the other players (by attacking and causing her to faint).

The Configuration menu allows you to determine the setting for your game. You can specify how big the map should be, what sort of landscape it should contain, and how many computer opponents you want to take on.

Load game

If you have saved a previous game, you can click this button in the selection menu to load this game and start up at the last saved point.

View autoplay

Castle Strike lets you save battles fought in "Your own game" or "Local network" mode and then view them again later. Here, you can load a previously saved game and watch it again.

Local network

This menu item will take you to the multiplayer menu for your local network in which you can compete with up to four other players.

To start a game in a LAN, you must first enter a name for yourself. This will be the name the other players see for you. Under the input field you can see a list of the games already open in the network. If the list is empty, no games have been started.

You can join games already open, if they have not yet reached their maximum number of players (4), by selecting the name of the game from the list and clicking "Join."

To start your own network game, click the "Create" button.

A menu will appear in which you can configure all the parameters for a LAN game.

Here, you can select from prefabricated maps or allow a map to be randomly generated. You can also set the playing mode. With random maps you can also specify the map size, the number of players, the map type, the time of year, and the time of day for your game. You can enter any kind of code including letters or numbers in the 'Random value' field. This code affects the map generation. Whenever you enter the same code, exactly the same map will be generated.

Options

Click on this menu item to change the game's settings.

General

This menu item allows you to set parameters that have very general effects on the game.

You can specify whether and which units are displayed when they are hidden behind other objects. You can also specify mouse speed, the speed at which your cursor will navigate across the playing field, how far you can zoom out, and how quickly the game's events should unfold.

In the lower right part of the screen, you can activate various game help systems, or switch them off. Left-clicking on the box in front of each entry will specify whether you want to use the mouse to scroll across the playing field, whether you want to display longer-version game information or just brief tips in the game, and how much freedom you want in controlling the camera.

Graphics

This menu's settings will have a direct effect on performance. Depending on the hardware you are using, you may want to reduce optical display quality to increase playability.

Use this sliding bar to adjust picture brightness for your monitor.

Use this button to set the pixel resolution at which the game will be displayed on your monitor. The dropdown list will show all resolutions supported by your graphics card.

Use this button to control the quality of the units in the game. A high setting will show the game's objects with a greater degree of detail than a low setting, but will require a more powerful computer.

Depending on the setting you select, the computer will display ground textures in greater or lesser detail. If you have a less powerful computer, you can achieve better game speed by not choosing high-resolution ground textures.

Effects in the game are displayed using "particles," ie. a large number of small objects. The more particles are visible on-screen, the more impressive your explosions and clouds of dust will appear. But your PC will also have to work harder. You can use this dropdown menu to reduce certain particle effects. A low setting is recommended for less powerful computers.

All objects in **Castle Strike** cast real-time shadows calculated to comply with the laws of physics. The shadows give the display greater depth and a more realistic look. But real-time shadows also cause your computer to do a lot of maths. To improve game performance, it might be advisable to use this dropdown menu to reduce shadow-casting quality.

Sound

In this menu item, you can adjust the volume of the sound effects and music heard in the game to suit your preferences.

Control system

In **Castle Strike**, you have free configuration of the game's controls. You can use this menu to link most of the actions supported by the game to your own keyboard shortcuts, to speed up your reaction times in the game and in multiplayer missions. However, the following list contains all the buttons that cannot be changed:

Home	Sets the camera to the standard perspective
Return	Opens chat window and sends message
Shift + Return	Opens chat window for allies
CTRL + Return	Opens chat window for selected recipients
CTRL + (1-9)	Designs group
1-9	Selects group
Shift + (1-9)	Adds to group
F1-F3	Selects hero (including banner formation)
F6/F9	Quick-save/Quick-load
P	Pause on/off
TAB	Selects units of the same type in a group
+ (Numpad)	Increase game speed (Single player only)

Gamespy

Using the GameSpy Arcade, you can search for open games on the Internet and take part in them, or host games yourself. The basic requirement is for you to have GameSpy Arcade installed on your computer. The CD contains a version of the Arcade Launcher. You can find complete information about playing with the GameSpy Arcade Launcher on the GameSpy Arcade homepage at www.gamespyarcade.com

We will only explain the basic functions here.

From the main menu you have the option to exit the game to start the GameSpy Arcade. To be able to play **Castle Strike** via GameSpy, you must have a GameSpy profile. When logging in, enter your profile name and password, and click "Connect".

If you still cannot access, select the Login Wizard from the login menu and follow the onscreen instructions.

After you log in, the GameSpy Launcher will start. Select **Castle Strike** from the "Games" section on the left.

If you do not see **Castle Strike**, go to the "GameSpy" menu in the main GameSpy Arcade window, and select the "Scan For Games" command to search your hard drive for games supported by GameSpy Arcade. Alternatively, searching the Castle Strike directory directly will save a lot of time. Afterwards, Castle Strike should be added to your list. Then click on the appropriate button.

In the main window you should now be able to select between either "Main Lobby" or "Play Multiplayer." Both paths will take you to Castle Strike's games lobby, where the system will display a list of existing servers sorted by name, number of players, and ping. Under this, you will find a list of the players currently in the lobby.

Because online **Castle Strike** games have to be loaded simultaneously by all the players, you must next select a game-in-progress that you would like to join, or you must host your own game.

Take part in a Castle Strike match

To participate in a match that has been created but not yet started, double-click to select a room (an open match). The screen will switch to that room. On the right side you will see which players are present. Below, the chat

messages will be listed. Below that is a line where you can enter your own text. When you are ready for a match, press the "Ready" button. A mark by your player name will inform your fellow players that you would like to begin the match. When all players are "Ready," the host can start the game ("Launch Game"). The screen will switch back to **Castle Strike** to the menu where players can select their nations and colours.

Start a new Castle Strike match

When you click the "Create Game" button, a small menu will appear in which you can enter the number of players, the name of the match, and perhaps a brief description of the game mode you recommend. You can now chat with the other players who enter your room to set the conditions for the game. When they have all indicated they are ready to start, click on "Launch Game." The screen will switch back to **Castle Strike**, to the menu where players can select their nations and colours. As the host, you must set the conditions agreed on by the other players. And now you can start the match.

Game menu

During a mission, if you press the ESC key or press the menu button in the upper right corner of the screen, you will access a menu in which you can select the following:

Save

Click on this button at any time to save the current mission.

Load

If you have saved a previous game, you can click this button in the selection menu to load this game and start up at the last saved point.

Restart mission

Ends the current mission and starts it over.

Mission objectives

Here, you can find out information about your current mission objectives. You can access this menu directly by pressing F10.

Message list

All messages, tips and mission objectives displayed to you will be saved in a list that you can view at any time.

Options

Here, you can set some of the options (as described above under "Options"). Only functions that do not require restarting the current game are available.

End current mission

Ends the current mission and takes you back to the standings screen.

End program

Ends **Castle Strike**.

Diplomacy menu

A diplomacy menu is available for network multiplayer matches. It lets you specify some actions taken towards your fellow players. This menu will not work during campaigns. The menu is set up as follows:

Chat

Here you can determine which of your fellow players is to receive a message you send using the chat window. Use the left mouse button to "activate" a box by clicking on it.

Name

This will show you the names of the other players.

Colour

This will show you the other players' colours.

Nation

This displays the other players' nationalities.

Status

The status determines how your units will behave toward opponents' units.

ALLIED You will not be able to attack this nationality's units/buildings, even when you give your units express orders to do so. Remember that your allied players must also be allied to you to ensure that your units/buildings cannot be attacked.

NEUTRAL Your units will only be able to attack neutral units/buildings when you give them express orders to do so. Your units will not be able to attack automatically.

ENEMY Your units will be able to fight enemy units/buildings automatically.

View

View means the selected player will have the same view of the map as you do, ie. they will see what you see. This function is useful when dealing with allied players.

Tribute

When you click this button, the player will receive a tribute from you. You can select more than one player, which will increase your expenditure. Tribute is controlled using the following buttons:

TRANSFER GOLD Every time you click on this button, 100 of your gold units will be taken from your account and transferred to the selected player. If you have selected more than one player, each of these players will receive 100 of your gold units.

TRANSFER WOOD Every time you click on this button, 100 of your wood units will be taken from your account and transferred to the selected player. If

you have selected more than one player, each of these players will receive 100 of your wood units.

TRANSFER ORE Every time you click on this button, 100 of your ore units will be taken from your account and transferred to the selected player. If you have selected more than one player, each of these players will receive 100 of your ore units.

TRANSFER STONE Every time you click on this button, 100 of your stone units will be taken from your account and transferred to the selected player. If you have selected more than one player, each of these players will receive 100 of your stone units.

Chat window

If you press "Enter" while a multiplayer game is running, you will enter the chat window. Here, you can type in a message for the other players. Press the "Send" button or "Enter" to send this message to all of them. If you press CTRL and Enter simultaneously, the message will only go to those players that you have selected in the Diplomacy menu (see above). If you press Shift and Enter simultaneously, the message will only go to allied players.

Screen display

Castle Strike's screen display is a lot like those used in other real-time strategy games. But there are a few special features.



Resources bar

This display shows you the available raw materials. They include gold, wood, iron ore, and stone. Your serfs can mine all raw materials except gold. You can only obtain gold by using tax collectors to extort it from your serfs in the form of tithes.

After the quantitative raw materials displays, you will find the population limit display. The value on the right shows the maximum number of units that you can command. The value on the left shows the actual number of units available. The maximum number depends on the number of buildings available and can be increased by certain upgrades.

Construction/Research menu

You can use the small buttons to open or close the various construction and research menus. You can also do this using the 7, 8, 9, 4, and 5 keys on your keyboard's numeric keypad. The order will correspond to the arrangement of the buttons on the screen.

The five menus you can call up are:

Castle construction

This vertical toolbar contains all the buildings you can construct inside your castle construction site. A building button will only appear when nearly all the conditions necessary to create that structure have been complied with. If a building button is shown in grey, you are lacking the requirements necessary for starting construction.



The Wall button, located in the top right of the toolbar, is particularly important. As soon as it becomes available, click this button to call up the Planning menu in the Game toolbar on the lower edge of the screen. There you will find all the functions necessary for planning your fortress (see below).



Village expansion

This menu is similar to the castle construction menu. All buildings that can be constructed outside the limited castle construction site can appear in this menu and be selected as they become available.



Unit training

Certain prerequisites are necessary before you can train units. For example, when you want to create fighting units you must have a barracks. When you want to train a monk, you must have a religious building. And so on. As soon as a unit becomes available, the appropriate icon will appear in the Unit training menu. Clicking on that unit button will train a corresponding game figure that will appear in the training building after the production time has expired. You can train as many units as you like by clicking the unit button several times in a row.

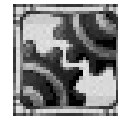


Training will start for the next unit in line as soon as the previous unit exits the training building.

If you find out that you have ordered training for too many units, you can right-click on the icon to reduce the number of figures waiting in the queue. Hold down the "CTRL" key to increase the number of units to be trained by 5.

Machine construction menu

A special feature in **Castle Strike** is the siege equipment, which has to be handled separately and does not simply count as extra units, as is the case in other real-time strategy games. Siege machines are constructed in village workshops and ordered from the Machine construction menu. All siege machines leave the workshop in the form of an assembly kit and are symbolized by an oxcart. Oxcart are easier to manoeuvre and do not require a team of operators to transport. But they are vulnerable to attacks and are not particularly fast. You should think carefully about when and where you want to convert your assembly kit into a siege machine, and which routes you want your oxcart to travel.



The Machine construction menu contains a horse-breeding button that you can use to "manufacture" horses and warhorses in your stables.

Horses do not exit their stables independently. To put a horse under a game figure capable of riding, you must send that figure to the stables. The unit will come out of the stables on the back of a horse.

Research menu

To make the game easier for you to operate, you can use this menu to control all the upgrades available. As soon as a building has been constructed, and an upgrade becomes possible, a corresponding button will become available here. Click once on the symbol to display in the game toolbar all the upgrades available for this building. You can activate them from this toolbar as well.



Double-click on a building symbol to immediately centre the camera on the building in question.

Selection info

Any time you select an object in the game or move the mouse pointer over a button or an object, information will appear in the Info window about the unit, building, or siege machine, such as the fighting strength, the degree of damage, health, endurance, and much more.

Game toolbar

The lower edge of the screen contains a Game toolbar with all the buttons you need to control the game. This is where you can find special fighting commands, formations, and the buttons for setting up and taking apart siege weapons. Game elements related to certain buildings will also be displayed here after you select the structure in question. For example, the "Squeeze taxpayers" button will appear in the Game toolbar after you select the tax collector. Normally, the toolbar is completely filled up with serf management buttons that will always appear when you haven't got anything selected and you have serfs available in the current mission.

Minimap

The Minimap in the lower right corner of the screen provides you with a steady stream of information about what's going on in the world of **Castle Strike**. Here, you can follow the movements of your own and your enemy's troops and view the territory on the map that's already been explored. In the Minimap, attacks on your positions or units will be displayed as concentric red circles. Finished upgrades will be displayed as concentric, expanding, green circles around the building in which the upgrade was developed.

Note that the Minimap will only show you territory in which the Fog of War (FOW) has been removed.

The edge of the Minimap contains small icons that allow you to switch between different views.

Select inactive serfs

Press this button to select all serfs currently "waiting for orders," one after the other.



Military map/Economic map/Normal view

Depending on the view you select here, the Minimap will display either only military, only agricultural, or all information.



Set signal

Use this button to set an optical and acoustic signal for your allies in multiplayer battles.



Centre on last message

Use this button to centre the screen view on the location from which the most recent warning message was sent to your screen, such as on the location of the attack after you receive the message "You are being attacked."



Contextual information

Whenever you move your mouse pointer over any element's button in the game, a context window will appear showing how many raw materials a building requires or how much the training of a unit costs. Red values indicate that you do not have enough of the raw material in question.

You can choose to display a longer-version tool tip for every element in the game as a small help text. You can deactivate this function in the Options menu.

Battle modes

Above the Minimap, you will find the configuration buttons controlling how you want your units to behave in battle. You can change them by pressing the numbers 1-3 on your numeric keypad.

The meaning of the three buttons, from left to right:

Aggressive

Aggressive units will attack and pursue enemies as soon as they come into view. The enemy will be attacked and pursued until they or the unit are destroyed.



Defensive

Defensive units will defend themselves and follow enemies for a short distance. But they will return to their starting point as soon as the enemy leaves their radius of action or is destroyed.



Maintain position

This setting orders units to maintain their current position. Enemies within range will be shot at. Units maintaining position will defend themselves but will not budge from their current location. This button can also be used as a Stop command for units in motion. All selected units will immediately come to a stop when you click on this button.



Banner portraits

In the top right corner of the screen are portraits of all the hero figures under your command in the current mission. In campaigns, the mission you choose will specify these figures. In other game modes, you can give orders to a maximum of up to three heroes simultaneously.

Outside campaigns, heroes are recruited during tournaments at your town square. They cost a lot in gold but are very powerful characters that can prove decisive in battles at the highest level of experience.

Click on the banner button or use one of the F1, F2, or F3 function keys to select the corresponding hero, whose portrait or complete banner will then be displayed. Click again or press the button again to centre the camera directly over the hero in question and/or his or her banner.

Controlling the game

General

Castle Strike can be completely controlled by your mouse. Experienced players can also take advantage of a number of keyboard shortcuts that simplify operation considerably.

The camera in the game is freely rotatable and zoomable by default, but you can also use the Options menu to fix it to give you a better overview.

Context-sensitive mouse pointer

The mouse pointer in the game is context-sensitive. That means players can read actions available for a unit from the shape of the mouse pointer. The mouse pointer can assume the following shapes:

Standard

For selecting and moving units.



Map rotation

Shows that the map is being moved, rotated, or tilted by the middle mouse button.



Attack

If this cursor appears, the selected unit can attack the target in question.



Inaccessible target

This cursor means that the current target is not within range or line of sight of the selected unit. The unit must change position to be able to attack the target.



Invalid target

This target cannot be attacked by the selected unit.

**Build/Repair**

Shows that the target can be repaired or constructed on the site in question.

**Cut wood**

A serf can cut down trees on this site.

**Mine ore/stone**

Stone or ore can be mined here.

**Deliver raw material**

This cursor appears over buildings to which serfs can deliver mined raw materials.

**Set bomb/Tear down wall**

When a saboteur is selected, this cursor will mark sites where bombs can be set. When this cursor appears for a sapper, you can undermine the walls of an enemy's castle here and tear them down.

**Bomb blocked/Tearing down wall not possible**

Indicates a location where you cannot set any explosives or where a sapper cannot tear down a wall.

**Mount up**

The selected unit can climb onto a horse.

**Open gate**

This cursor means that an enemy gate can be opened by a sapper or crushed by a battering ram.



Move in

Shows that a building or a machine can accept units.



Heal

When this cursor appears, the unit in question can be healed by the selected monk(s).



Climb onto wall/tower

The movement target is located on a wall or a tower. To reach this location, the selected unit must climb up a ladder, a siege tower, or a tower stairway.



Descend from wall/tower

The movement target is located on the ground, but the selected unit is on a wall or tower. To reach this location, the selected unit must climb down a ladder, siege tower, or tower stairway.



Target out of viewing range

When this cursor appears over a potential target, the selected unit is capable of attacking the target in principal as soon as the target comes within viewing range. Keep in mind that buildings may be hidden in the fog of war for your units even though you as a player can see them.



Moving units

In the game, you can left-click to select objects and units. A border in the player's colour will surround the selected object. By right clicking, you can call up the actions that can be performed for the selected object.

Right-click a selected unit to another position in the landscape and the unit will move there. If you right-click an enemy figure, the selected unit will move to it

and attack it. Other actions, such as specialized attacks, can be identified by the context-sensitive mouse pointer and executed by right clicking.

If you hold down the SHIFT key, you can set route points that your units will move through, one after the other. While underway, your soldiers will keep an eye out for the enemy and fight any that come into sight.

If you hold down the CTRL key while issuing the command to move, the selected units will patrol back and forth between this point and their starting point, immediately attacking any enemies that turn up.

If you want your fighters to keep an eye out for enemies during normal movement, hold down the ALT key.

Remember that the battle mode you have selected for your units will influence the way they behave.

Most units in **Castle Strike** have two different movement modes. If you double-click with the right mouse button on a point in the landscape, you will instruct the selected game figure to run or gallop to that location. This faster form of movement will cost you endurance points which will only regenerate themselves after the unit comes to a halt or moves slowly. If you exhaust the entire store of endurance, which you can read from the display in the selection information window, the figure will be unable to run until it has regained sufficient endurance to do so. Units weakened in this way will fight with reduced strength until they have had a chance to rest. So always be very careful that you do not send any exhausted soldiers into battle.

Units with particularly serious wounds will be unable to run until a monk, a healing building, or a shrine to the Holy Virgin regenerates their life points.

Some units, such as serfs, plague victims or heavily armoured crossbow archers carrying a lot of heavy equipment, will not be able to run.

Riding on horseback

Some units in the game will be able to ride horses after you carry out the ability upgrade in the stables. To make a game figure climb onto a horse, select a unit and right-click on the appropriate horse or warhorse. To dismount, click on the corresponding symbol in the game menu.



Cavalry units can move faster and have advantages in battle against unmounted units.

Grouping units

To organize units into groups, hold down the left mouse button and drag a frame around the game figures to be formed into the group. A group can contain up to 30 units.

If you want to form a permanent group, you can give it a fixed number by using the combination "CTRL + X," with X being a number between 1 and 9. Later, when you want to select that group quickly, all you have to do is press that number on your keyboard. If you press the key twice in a row, the picture will centre on the selected group.

Staggered instructions

You can give staggered instructions to units and groups. Hold down the SHIFT key and give the orders in order by right-clicking the mouse. The selected units or groups will immediately start to work through the tasks. The commands will be worked through in the order in which you entered them.

Training units

Castle Strike has a wide variety of different units. To create a powerful army, you will first need some serfs that you can recruit if you already have a castle keep or a village centre.

Fighting units are trained in the barracks or at the bow maker's, which you can build on the castle construction site. Other units such as monks or French crusaders will appear in the village church. Plague victims and mercenaries forced into service are recruited from the dungeon. As soon as you build a training building, a number of game figures available for training will appear in the unit construction menu.

Upgrading units

Various fighting units can be improved during the course of the game. Here, the game makes a distinction between upgrades that affect the units directly and upgrades that just generally improve their people's numbers.

Fighting units can receive upgrades for their fighting strength or for their armour. Use a chainmail upgrade to give a shortsword fighter better protection against attacks. Or give him a longsword to allow him to inflict more damage. These upgrades will be visible on the game figures themselves. Other improvements such as harder steel for weapons increase all units' fighting strength but are not shown visually.

The fundamental principle is the more upgrades you carry out, the better your troops will do in battle and the more effectively your economy will function. So you should make sure that you execute as many upgrades as possible before rushing into battle. And your opponents will try to do the same thing, of course, which is why you should also make sure you have explored the map adequately. Don't forget to initiate timely disruptive manoeuvres.

Experience

Each unit in **Castle Strike** can gain experience as time passes. Experience points are collected after winning in battle against enemy units. Once a unit has reached a certain number of experience points, it will be put into a new experience level, identified by a symbol over the unit. The higher the experience level, the stronger and more powerful that unit will be. So make sure you keep units with a great deal of experience alive for as long as possible.

Normal units can reach a maximum experience level of 3. Heroes can collect experience points all the way to Level 8, but they climb up the ranks of experience levels more slowly.

Building siege machines

You will always need a workshop if you want to construct siege weapons. As soon as you have built a workshop in one of your villages, a number of siege machines will appear in the



corresponding construction menu. You can add to this bar specially developed machines for which various upgrades are necessary. Construction time varies for machines according to their size.

Each siege machine will first appear as an assembly kit that can be transported by oxcart to the location where it is to be used. The symbols on the assembly kit will always show which machine components are being transported on which oxcars.

After assembly, transportable siege machines can only be moved by a sufficient numbers of operators. Stationary artillery can be converted back into oxcars at any time. However, assembling stationary artillery and taking it apart takes a lot of time, so we recommend you plan in advance the locations of stationary machines.

Every siege weapon requires a certain number of units for it to be able to move or fire. Apart from the team needed just to operate them, siege towers and body shields can also transport additional units, giving them better protection against attacks.

Right-click the mouse to send units into a siege machine but bear in mind not every unit can operate a siege machine. The mouse pointer will indicate whether one or more selected units are capable of operating a siege machine when you move it over a siege machine while units are selected. If you have selected a mixed group or a banner containing units that are not suitable for operating siege weapons, the cursor shown above will not appear. Use TAB first to select the group's suitable units, and then you can man the device.



Constructing buildings

To construct a building, select the appropriate icon from the Construction menu and move the mouse over the site where you would like to build. The map will darken to show where the terrain is suitable for building a certain structure, and only suitable subgrounds will continue to be shown in bright colours.

If the building turns red, you will not be able to build it on this site. This may be because the ground is too uneven, or because another object is located there already, or because you do not have enough resources. In the latter case, you can right-click to terminate construction and send more serfs to mine stone or

ore until they have gathered enough raw materials or wait for new tax incomes.

Around the building you want to construct, you will see a blue border. This will show the minimum distance that the structure must maintain from other buildings for units to be able to move between them. When constructing buildings, make sure you don't wall any units in.

Before final construction you will be able to adjust the building's orientation by using the "V" key to move the building in 90-degree steps. When you have decided on the site and the orientation, left-click the building onto that location. Scaffolding will appear. If you have released serfs for building structures in the worker management menu, they will automatically walk to the construction site and start to put up the building. If you have assigned all your serfs to other tasks, you can either use the Workers menu to set them to building construction, or you can manually select some serfs and right-click on the construction site. Remember that this method of re-assigning serfs from within automated management will change prioritization.

Designing and building castles

In **Castle Strike** you can design and build your own castles. Clicking on the wall symbol in the Castle construction menu will give you access to all the castle construction options in the game toolbar. The fundamental prerequisite for building a castle is having a stonemason, a suitable construction site, and a castle keep on that location.



Once you have met these requirements, the only limitation to expanding your fortress is the amount of raw materials required for the purpose. You can place available castle buildings on the construction site in any arrangement you like. It usually proves advantageous if you first design some walls to give these buildings optimum protection against enemy attacks.

To design a wall, click the Castle planning icon in the upper right corner of your Castle buildings menu. The cursor will then change to the construction symbol. Now you can use the cursor to draw the shape of your wall around the construction site. Left-click to fix the line you have drawn. The rest of the planning process will branch off from this point. If you want to undo part of your plan, right-click the mouse and everything you have done since the last left-click will be deleted.



In addition to planning your walls, in the ground plan you can also click on buttons in the game menu to add differently shaped corners, gates, and towers, and to move tower entrances and gates to the right locations. The program automatically places tower entrances on the interior of a tower. In unusual cases, however, you may have to change their direction.

When your plans are finished, you can build your walls by clicking the "Conclude planning" symbol.



Note, your designs will not be lost if you are forced to click on the wall symbol in the Castle construction menu to exit the planning mode in order to deal with disruptions from enemy units. But you will not be able to build any castle elements while any enemy units are near your castle!



Existing structures can be torn down or remodelled at any time. Go ahead and experiment with the various construction options. And don't forget that your imagination is limited only by the size of the construction site and the number of raw materials you have available.

Keep in mind, too, that **Castle Strike** does not allow buildings and walls to be damaged by normal units. Your enemy will need heavy artillery to be able to cause harm to your castle. Take advantage of this and choose a favourable design for your fortress, presenting your enemies with as few weak points as possible.

As the game progresses, you can add defensive artillery to your castle's towers, and build openings over the gates for pouring out boiling pitch. Plan for this early on in creating your designs, and you will turn a simple circle of walls into a fortress to be reckoned with.



Controlling the camera

You can move across the **Castle Strike** landscape by using the cursor keys or by moving the mouse to the edge of the map and pushing the picture ahead.

To rotate or tilt the view, hold down the middle mouse key while moving the mouse.

To zoom the view, use the mouse wheel. Check out the Options menu to decide how much freedom you want to control the camera. If you like, you can

reduce the possibilities for free movement to get a better overview of battle manoeuvres.

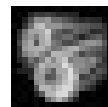
Raw materials and resource management

In **Castle Strike**, there are four different raw materials. To train units or construct buildings, you will need varying quantities of these materials.

In contrast to other strategy games, the sources of raw materials in **Castle Strike** are inexhaustible. So you can use your initial raw materials sources throughout an entire mission without fearing that they will be completely depleted.

Wood

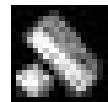
Wood is important for constructing village buildings and siege machines and to enable you to arm ranged combat units and polearm units.



Any tree in the game can be cut down and processed to produce varying amounts of wood that will depend on the size of the tree. Trees start to grow back as soon as they have been cut.

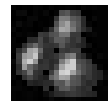
Stone

You cannot construct castle walls and castle buildings unless you have stone. Look around your castle construction sites for a stone quarry and send your serfs there to work. Although you can see no more than four serfs visibly working in the stone quarry, a stone quarry can hold an unlimited number of workers.



Ore

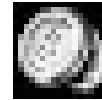
Iron ore is the basic material from which the metals necessary for the manufacture of weapons and armour are extracted. In the iron mine, your serfs will hammer the crude iron ore out of the rocks and transport it for further processing into the village centre, the castle keep, or the nearest ironworks.



Each iron mine can hold an unlimited number of serfs simultaneously.

Gold

Gold is the only raw material in the game that cannot be mined. You have to use taxes to produce it. For every serf you own, your coffers will be enriched by a certain constant sum of money.



However, you cannot start reaping the benefits of tax revenues until you build the tax collector's house in a village and develop the "Squeeze taxpayers" upgrade. This upgrade symbolizes the pressure you exert on your subjects as their lord.



After you employ this upgrade, you will find the Squeeze taxpayers button in the tax collector's menu. When you turn the nut on the screw towards the right, you will increase the tax burden for each of your serfs. This brings with it the advantage of increased income, but the serfs you are increasingly exploiting will start to work more slowly and lethargically as the pressure on them grows. This will slow down your raw materials production and other activities.

Serfs and serf management

In the units training menu, you can train your serfs. In the Middle Ages, serfs were simple peasants who were forced to work for landowners. Your serfs will carry out day-to-day work, construct and repair buildings and mine the raw materials you require for recruiting battle units. Both male and female serfs do the same work, as was the case in the Middle Ages.

Your serfs are the key to the success of your missions. So you should always make sure that you have enough serfs working for you.

To keep the management of your serfs as simple as possible, **Castle Strike** has an easy-to-use work management system. Any time you click on empty ground without having selected a unit or a building, the management menu will appear in the game toolbar.



The centre of the menu contains a control slider that you can use to set the proportions of your serfs engaged in two main areas of work: "raw materials mining" (right) and "other work" (left).

On the right is a triangle with a regulator. This triangle symbolizes the three minable resources (wood, stone and ore) with one in each corner.

All of the serfs that you have used the sliding bar to send to mine resources (right) will automatically start to work as woodcutters, stonebreakers or ore diggers. Moving the small marker around inside the triangle is an easy way to set the proportions in which the three raw materials are produced. For example, if you move the marker all the way to the top tip of the triangle, all serfs assigned to mine raw materials will only cut wood. If the marker is in the exact middle of the triangle, the serfs will divide up equally to harvest equal amounts of wood, stone, and ore. To help you, the exact proportions of raw materials producers are displayed in percentages.

The other activities to the left of the sliding bar are:

Put out fires

If there is a nearby well or village centre, serfs will automatically start to put out fires in burning buildings.



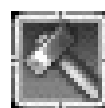
Repair

Serfs automatically repair any damaged buildings.



Build

Serfs construct buildings you have designed plans for.



Boil oil

Serfs go into the servants' quarters and boil oil in large pots. You need this boiling oil for the pitch holes over the gates. When they have nothing else to do, four serfs will always automatically go into the servants' quarters to boil pitch.



Wait for orders

Serfs do not work automatically and wait for manual orders from the player.



Work is arranged in order according to the priorities you place on the various tasks. That means that serfs not assigned to mine raw materials will try first to repair damaged structures before they extinguish fires in burning buildings or boil any oil.

You can drag and drop the work symbols to prioritize your jobs. If you want four of your serfs to get busy boiling oil, click the Boil oil symbol and slide it upwards. In this way, you can set work priorities at any time for the various jobs you have to do.

You can of course also manually assign individual serfs to do certain specific jobs. Simply select an appropriate serf and right-click on an ore mine or other source of raw materials, on a damaged building, on the servants' quarters, or on a fire. The context-sensitive mouse pointer will tell you which action you can execute by right clicking.

Serfs will be removed from the automatic work management system if you manually command them to go to a free area on the map. To return them to the chain of command, click on the "Workers to management" button in the menu, and all your serfs will immediately be available again in the management menu.



Note, serfs cannot run or fight and are not allowed onto walls or into towers.

Trade

When you have constructed a town square/marketplace and executed the "Trade" upgrade there, you can trade surplus goods for gold or barter with dealers for raw materials you require in



return for cash.

Battle

Castle Strike is a game with an emphasis on armed conflict. During the single-player campaigns, you will often find yourself having to use armed force to defend yourself from your opponents. Knowing the individual abilities, strengths, and weaknesses of your units is the key to victory.

The countries

Castle Strike is set in Europe during the time of the Hundred Years' War, around 1339-1453. The background for the war was increasing tension between England and France regarding the legitimacy of the French king.

But the world of **Castle Strike** makes a point of not adhering strictly to the historical facts as they stood. Instead, we have enhanced the "dark" Middle Ages by including a few fantastical elements that add to the gaming fun. For example, the game's three nations should in no way be considered synonymous with any real groups of people in existence at that time. In the game, the three sides represent certain clichés that give a better framework for the story and provide the necessary consistency for the three campaigns. The game's three playable nations are described in detail below, with all their distinctive features.

The Germans

During the late Middle Ages, the Holy Roman Empire was increasingly disintegrating into so-called territorial states with a great deal of autonomy for the individual baronial provinces. The Kaiser's centralized power was slowly being weakened. The crux of the German campaign story thus deals with the fate of a single baronial family living inside German territory; the Rabenhorsts.

The English

In the campaign, the English symbolize the followers of the English king, the rival claimant to the French throne. In those days, close family ties between the Normans ruling in England and their French "cousins" meant that it was not unusual for English nobles to call land on the European side of the Channel their own. A crucial factor in this conflict however, was the son of the English queen. Because his mother was the French king's sister, after the death of his uncle this young ruler was very high up in the succession for the French throne. But he was passed over in favor of a "French" competitor. The result was war. And by the time the war finally ended, almost no one could remember exactly why the whole thing had started.

The French

The French represent the followers of the regular French ruler who was trying to repel the English influence. In the world of **Castle Strike**, the French are also the most god-fearing side, with strong loyalties to the Church and to their religion. In reality though, this was true for everybody in medieval Europe. Nevertheless, even religion was not a politics-free zone. During almost the entire Hundred Years' War, the Pope resided in Avignon, France, and was dependent on the French king. Apart from the pomp and circumstance that went on in Avignon and the selling of Church offices and benefices, which often led to criticism from the ranks of the educated and to mockery and ridicule from the common people, the "French pope" was a thorn in the eye to the powerful Italian cardinals and especially to the proud but somewhat hot-tempered citizens of Rome. The result was political infighting, contested papal elections in which French cardinals, fearing the Roman citizenry's reaction, barricaded themselves inside the Vatican or even refused to take part in elections held in Rome. Until that is, a "Roman antipope" was elected, who fought long years of bloody feuds with his adversaries in Avignon... on the backs of the faithful.

The units of all countries

Standard units

Standard units are the soldiers available to you early on in the game. As time progresses, you can use upgrades to train them and make them more effective.

Single-handed fighters

Each nation's standard soldiers are equipped with a shield and a weapon that is swung with one hand. German single-handed fighters have a sword, English ones a hatchet, and the French are armed with a mace. All single-handed fighters can be upgraded to become better-armed soldiers. This upgrade replaces their shield with a smaller one that reduces their protection but also gives them a longer and more powerful weapon, allowing them to cause more damage. The smaller shield has the advantage that it enables these soldiers can be trained to ride horseback.



All single-handed fighters can also be given better armour.

Polearm fighters

Polearm-type weapons are the most suitable for defending against opponents on horseback. Pikemen, who are available early on in the game, can be given both chainmail and a helmet and can also be upgraded into the more powerful halberdiers. Although replacing the pikes with halberds is somewhat less effective against cavalry, they can inflict more damage in close combat. And if you give them a plate mail upgrade, they have better protection against hits.



Shortbow archers

Archers are indispensable in battle, especially when the enemy has taken a higher position on walls or towers. Shortbow archers can be made more robust with a chain mail upgrade. They can also set fire to machines and buildings with flaming arrows.



Crossbow archers

This human artillery has a lot more penetrating power than the shortbow archers. The disadvantage is that it takes longer to reload crossbows. Light crossbow archers carry a large shield on their backs to protect them against enemy fire while they re-cock their crossbows. During the reloading procedure, they turn their backs to the enemy. Most arrows and crossbow bolts will hit the shield without hurting the man underneath it.



Light crossbow archers can be upgraded to heavy crossbow archers. The heavy crossbow these soldiers carry is cocked using a winch and has terrible penetrating power, taking down any units with only a few hits. Heavy crossbow archers take cover behind a massive and heavy protective shield called a Pavese shield. Setting up the Pavese shield and reloading the heavy crossbow takes a lot of time, during which these archers are practically helpless against enemy attack. So make sure you do not send these units into battle without protection. Crossbow archers are most effective when they are protected by other fighters from the second ranks.

Crossbow archers cannot run because of their heavy shields and crossbows.

Because the medieval church branded the crossbow a 'dirty' weapon since it did not require any training or special skill to use, the god-fearing French are unable to use any heavy crossbows. They grudgingly tolerate the use of the light crossbow.

Spearmen

Spearmen, who possess only moderate strength at the start of the game, are equipped with a short thrusting weapon. You can give them better protection against attacks by providing them with a chainmail shirt. With upgrades, spearmen can be trained to ride horseback.



Scouts

In the world of **Castle Strike**, scouts do many jobs. As lightly armed intelligence operators, they bring news on foot or on horseback and scout out territory before battle. However, they are useless during combat. Their advantages come from their wide



visibility range. Scouts cannot be given armour because that would limit their movement too much. Speed is their business.

Harquebusiers

The development of gunpowder and the invention of handheld firearms heralded the end of the Age of Chivalry in Europe. No armour could withstand the bullets shot by the muskets and the harquebusiers. And **Castle Strike** makes allowances for this, with its harquebusier. It does not become available until very late in the game, and there is no unit capable of resisting its firepower. The only thing preventing this unit from dominating the field is the high cost of its development.



Elite units

Elite units are extremely powerful units that are unique for each nation, with the exception of the lancers, and that have exceptional strength in battle. Elite units cannot be created from other standard units. They are specialized fighters you have to train individually. Elite units cannot be used as operators for siege weapons, because this work is beneath their dignity.

Lancers

These heavily armoured fighters are available to each of the three nations after a series of upgrades. They form the spearhead of each army. High up on their steeds, they attack enemies with a lance. On the ground, they use a striking weapon known as a raven's beaked war hammer (Rabenschnabel). Lancers are powerful all-round fighters, but they cannot run due to their heavy armour.



Two-handed swordsmen (Germans only)

These massive elite soldiers are one of the horrors of war. They are armed with enormous swords that they skillfully wield using two hands. These swords can inflict terrible damage. A two-handed swordsman is superior to all other melee units. When you run into one, you must exercise a great deal of caution. The best thing to do is not let him get close enough to hit anybody. Use bows and arrows or crossbows to eliminate him from a distance.



Longbow archers (English only)

The English longbow archers were the elite warriors of the Middle Ages. Although they were practically useless at short distances and in close combat, almost nothing could withstand the penetrating power of these enormous bows at medium and long range. English longbow archers are very expensive to train. Handling these bows takes a lot of strength and years of conditioning.



Paladins (French only)

In this game, the French stand on the side of the clergy and of religious power. And so only they are capable of commissioning the services of these devout and heavily armoured knights. Paladins have sworn to adhere to the highest knightly virtues and to live a life of charity. Their greatest aim is the spreading of the Word of God amongst the unbelievers, by means of fire and the sword. Paladins are some of the most powerful units in the game. Their thick plate mail gives them good protection against attacks. Armed with sword and shield, they are terrifying enemies in battle.



Mercenaries

Recruiting and maintaining a standing army is expensive. In the Middle Ages, this problem caused many a conflict to grind to a halt for years at a time. To avoid having to rely exclusively on the expensive training of regular soldiers, players can also commission the services of cheaper mercenaries.

Arsonists (Germans only)

Fire was one of the greatest threats in the Middle Ages. A single spark could reduce entire cities to ashes. And so arsonists were threatened with draconian punishments. But beggars can't be choosers. So any players who have captured a German arsonist can use him for their own purposes. This shady character will be waiting in the dungeon to hear the sentence pronounced upon him, and would gladly escape it to wage war in your service. To this end, he is armed with a curved sword. In close combat he is at least equal to a trained soldier. He is also the



only melee unit in the game capable of setting fire to buildings and siege machines with his torch.

Outlaws (English only)

These rogues are always on the run from the law. They have learned to survive in the wilderness and how to hide. Although outlaws are only armed with a wooden club, when they are near trees they will remain invisible to all other units until they attack. English towers always contain outlaws, who would much prefer dying in battle to dying on the gallows.



Crusaders (French only)

Certain crusaders, always a day late and a gold coin short, who travelled to the Holy Land on their own initiative and had to return home with their tails between their legs, are always on the lookout for a fight for God and Justice. These religious fanatics have nothing left to lose. The pope himself sends them on the most dangerous missions, from which normal mortals would flee in fear. Their unshakable faith lets them heal any lost hit points themselves, an ability that makes them good all-round fighters who can travel long distances alone. If a French player has a church, sooner or later some crusaders will wander in, sent by the pope as reinforcements for the normal army.



Specialist units

In addition to your normal soldiers, in **Castle Strike** you command a number of specialist units who can use their unique skills to turn battle outcomes to your advantage.

Saboteurs

The shady saboteur is a specialist in acts of sabotage. In his backpack, he carries explosives that he can set to go off under buildings or machines. To do this, click on one of the two icons in the menu and then right click to select the target. The saboteur



will then walk to the object to be blown up, set his bomb, use flint and tinder to light the fuse, and run for cover. A countdown will show the time remaining before the explosion.

Saboteurs cannot carry weapons or defend themselves against attack in any other way. They are therefore extremely vulnerable while setting bombs and should only be used where they can work unobserved.

In addition to setting bombs, saboteurs can also build roadblocks. They can nail together a wood barricade that is cumbersome for opponents to destroy or travel around. You can build roadblocks by clicking the appropriate icon in the saboteur's menu, and right clicking on the site where the barricade is to be erected.

Sappers

In the Middle Ages, sappers were much-feared tunnel builders who could decide who won or lost an entire siege. These highly qualified units are not part of the armed forces but are instead recruited from the common people. They dig passages that run under enemy castle walls (passages known as a 'sappe' or trench) and use wooden scaffolding to keep the ground from collapsing in on them. By setting fire to this system of wooden supports, sappers can collapse large portions of the fortifications they have undermined.



There is little you can do to protect yourself against tunnel builder, however in **Castle Strike** there are a few upgrades you can run to identify sapper attacks in time and stop them with the aid of a counter trench.

Because sappers are very powerful, only one can work for you at any one time.

At the start of the game, sappers are only able to dig into the enemy's castle courtyards and then open the gates from the inside to allow your troops to storm the castle.

After the "Trench" upgrade, sappers will be able to collapse walls as well. But they will lose their own lives in doing so.



Left-click to select the sapper, click the appropriate icon in the menu to instruct him, and then right-click on the portion of wall in range. He will set to work on his act of annihilation, digging his tunnel. A dotted line will show you how he is progressing. To protect the entranceway to their tunnels,

sappers create a small bastion shaped like a mineshaft. If the enemy destroys this entrance, the sapper will be lost in an underground landslide. Always make sure that the trench entrance is well guarded.

In another drastic deed, deadly for the sappers themselves, tunnel diggers can also try to open enemy castle gates from the inside, letting in their own troops. Click on the "Open Gate" symbol in the sapper menu and then click on the gate to be breached. After the sapper opens the door, he runs outside. You should then get him to safe cover as quickly as possible. Any gate opened by a sapper will take some time to shut and cannot be closed immediately.

Monks

To develop a monk, you need a sacred building; a church, cloister or a chapel.

Once you have built one, you can carry out the "Religious fervor" upgrade. Next, you can use the unit menu to accept a monk into your service. This jovial man of the cloth can use his holy counsels to heal wounded units.



This either occurs automatically or when you instruct the monk to do so by right clicking on a wounded unit. Monks are immune to the harmful influences of plague and can also heal other units from the condition.

Plague victims

As macabre as it sounds, even people suffering from incurable plague can still be of use. Locked into dungeons, all they are waiting for is to surrender to their final fate and wander off as walking angels of death, spreading terrible germs among your enemies. Plague victims move very slowly and can only withstand a few hits. When a unit is hit by their attack, it must deal with both the normal damage and the effects of the disease. The plague is represented by a green cloud that will cause damage until it is dissipated. Dead plague victims leave behind a green cloud that is blown by the wind across the battlefield and can infect more units with the plague.



Siege machines

Another special feature in **Castle Strike** is its detailed siege weapons. Without them, attacking a castle would be a pointless endeavor. In **Castle Strike**, in contrast to other games, normal units cannot damage walls or houses. Only arsonists or archers, after you have executed the flaming arrows upgrade, can set fire to buildings.

Each machine requires a certain number of units to enable it to be moved or to attack. The team of operators can be made up of any foot soldiers, with the exception of heroes, plague victims and specialist units such as the heavy crossbow archer, who are not able to operate machines.

To assign a team to a machine, select a group of units and right-click on the equipment to be manned. Once you have done this, the minimum number of units required to operate the machine will move towards it and will take up position inside the siege weapon.

When you select the machine, a small icon appears in the operating toolbar, giving you a constant overview of the condition of the team operating the device. To remove individual soldiers from the machine, right-click on this icon, but remember the siege machine can only function when the team is at full fighting strength.

The teams operating the siege equipment are an important tactical element. If you assign heavily armed units, you will reduce the enemy's chances of taking over the machine. But if you man the machine with lightly armed units, you may progress faster in the game, because the equipment upgrades are only available much later in the game. Doing this will enable you to attack enemy fortifications much earlier.

In any case, you should never leave your artillery unattended. Loose siege equipment can be taken over by any player, or even by computer opponents.

There are four types of siege machines in **Castle Strike**:

Stationary attack weapons

This heavy artillery, which includes the trebuchet, the giant trebuchet, the bombardier, and the giant ballista, can only be used when they are solidly anchored on the ground. Once assembled, they only have a limited sphere of action. However, these limitations are balanced by the stunning devastation they can inflict when attacking. Stationary attack weapons are more difficult to handle than mobile artillery. To find out whether a potential target is in

range before setting up stationary artillery, use the green attacking range indicator. The viewing cone will give you information about the range of the weapon, even if it is still on an oxcart.

To determine the orientation of a piece of stationary artillery, hold down the right mouse button and drag the direction display toward the desired target. The oxcart will then move to the position indicated by the arrow. When assembling the equipment, the serfs will follow the direction you prescribed.

Mobile attack weapons

Once assembled, all mobile attack weapons such as ballistas, onagers, multiple-armed onagers, cannons, multi-barrel cannons, multiple-armed ballistas, Hollow Hannahs and battering rams cannot be converted back into an oxcart with an assembly kit. But when manned this equipment can move across a battlefield and be brought into play from a different position at any time. The mobile attack weapons are the backbone of your army because they are easier to handle and can be used everywhere due to their mobility. The individual machines are:

Ballista: Inflicts medium damage on buildings, walls and siege equipment, and causes light damage to units. Requires two men to operate. More powerful than the onager.



Onager: Inflicts medium damage on buildings, walls, and siege equipment, and causes light damage to units. Requires two men to operate. Very economical weapon.



Multiple trebuchet: Inflicts light damage on buildings, walls, and siege equipment, and causes severe damage to units. Requires two men to operate.



Cannon: Inflicts medium damage on buildings, walls, and siege equipment, and causes light damage to units. Requires two men to operate. More powerful than the onager and the ballista.



Multi-barrel cannon: Inflicts light damage on buildings, walls, and siege equipment, and causes severe damage to units. Requires two men to operate.



Multiple-armed ballista: Inflicts light damage on buildings, walls, and siege equipment, and causes severe damage to units. Requires two men to operate.



Hollow Hannah: Inflicts very severe damage on buildings, walls, and siege equipment, and causes medium damage to units. Requires five men to operate.



Battering ram: Causes severe damage to gates and light damage to buildings and walls. Requires four to six men to operate.



When you select a mobile weapon equipped with a team of operators, a green attacking range indicator will appear in front of the piece of artillery. Everything inside this zone can be attacked.

Defensive weaponry for castles

These special pieces of artillery, such as tower onagers, tower ballistas and tower cannons are similar to their mobile counterparts when it comes to range and destructive power. The individual machines are:

Tower onager: Inflicts medium damage on buildings, walls, and siege equipment, and causes light damage to units. Requires two men to operate.



Tower ballista: Inflicts medium damage on buildings, walls, and siege equipment, and causes light damage to units. Requires two men to operate. More powerful than the tower onager.



Tower cannon: Inflicts medium damage on buildings, walls, and siege equipment, and causes light damage to units. Requires two men to operate. The most powerful tower artillery.



This equipment is stationary but attached to special gun mounts that can only be built on the platforms of large castle towers. Their immobility is more than compensated for by the 360° range they enjoy, because the gun carriages they are attached to can be rotated.

If a tower containing defensive artillery is damaged or destroyed, you will also lose the machine and its entire crew.

Special weapons

All siege machines that do not fit into the categories described above have been designated as "special weapons." They include siege towers, scaling ladders and body shields, which protect units placed inside them or are used to storm enemy walls.

Siege tower

This powerful construction helps protect your units while they attempt to defeat enemy walls. The first four units push the tower and another four units can fire at the enemy from the tower's platform.



Highlight the tower and move it toward a wall. The attack cursor will appear over sections of wall where the tower can attach its ramp (it requires a battlemented parapet). When the siege tower reaches that wall section, its trapdoor will open and your warriors can storm the enemy's ramparts. The four soldiers that move the tower jump onto the wall automatically. The wall then serves as a staircase for all subsequent soldiers. Docking a siege tower therefore lets you move a large number of fighters onto the walls of the enemy's castle.

Scaling ladder

Almost all standard units can carry a scaling ladder or pick up a finished one in the workshop. Send a soldier with one of these ladders toward the enemy ramparts and right-click on any portion of the wall. The ladder carrier will try to set it up against this wall. If he succeeds, he will climb up it immediately. Once a scaling ladder has been attached to a wall, it can no longer be moved. Until it is destroyed, you can send as many of your soldiers to climb up it as you like.



Body shield

The body shield is a transportable protective shield that can be moved by two units and can protect another two units from enemy fire.



Elite machines

Each nation in **Castle Strike** can construct two special siege weapons not available to the other two sides. But you can of course conquer these machines as well!

Multi-barrel cannon (Germans only)

This rustic device can justifiably be described as a very daring construction. To increase a normal cannon's firing power, they simply nailed five barrels onto a robust framework. This light field artillery is remarkably mobile and causes devastating damage, especially to infantry units.



Hollow Hannah (Germans only)

This gigantic piece of artillery is the most devastating object in the medieval world of **Castle Strike**. It requires five units to operate it. One loading cycle takes a very long time. But when the thousand-pound iron balls exit the barrel, castle walls fall down like a house of cards and the thunder rocks the earth.



This much firepower has its price, however. In rare cases, hanging fire can cause a devastating explosion that blows the thing into smithereens and kills all units near it.

Multiple-armed ballista (English only)

Unlike the standard ballista, this weapon does not fire a single, individual spear at its victim. Instead, it sends a hail of shafts heavenwards. It is extremely effective against 'soft' targets such as foot soldiers or cavalry. It inflicts light damage on buildings, walls and siege equipment and causes severe damage to units. Requires two men to operate.



Giant ballista (English only)

The English king's mechanics developed this monster machine as the ultimate wall breaker. The giant ballista fires a nine-foot spear with an iron point that can reduce smaller buildings to rubble with a single shot. It inflicts very severe damage on buildings, walls, and siege equipment, and causes medium damage to units. Requires four men to operate.



Multiple trebuchet (French only)

To increase the scattering range of the simple onager, the French master builders added a second basket to the catapult carriage. Multiple trebuchets no longer fire individual missiles, but rather a mixture of detritus, gravel and small stones. This makes them mainly effective against normal infantry.



Giant trebuchet (French only)

The elite siege machine controlled by the French is a giant wooden construction that fires boulders across enormous distances. Four units are needed to operate this artillery. The enormous size of the construction means that once assembled, the giant trebuchet cannot be turned. It only has a limited firing angle.



The Heroes

Your units can be led by hero figures. Each hero possesses some unique skills and can unify his or her soldiers into a banner formation.

Recruiting heroes

In single-player missions, you lead the heroes through the game's background story. You can use heroes in some games or network games as well, but will have to recruit them to do so.

To recruit heroes in your own game or in a network game, you must first build a town square for your people.



To do this, you can run the "Tournament" upgrade. Tournaments can be held from time to time and attract travelling knights like magnets.



When you have run the upgrade, you can use the "Hold tournament" button to organize a tournament. The tournament takes a while to complete so make sure you don't miss the end. After the tournament, highlight the town square and three heroes will be available for you to choose from, each offering their services in return for money. You can command no more than three heroes simultaneously.



Use the "Marketplace" and "Tournament grounds" buttons to switch back and forth between these options, both of which are upgrades you can run on your town square.



Banners

To form a banner, group together several units and a hero and then click the "Form banner" button in the lower game toolbar. The selected warriors will then move in a group around their leader and can only be selected as a whole unit in the form of a banner from then onwards.



All units in the banner will profit from their leader's banner bonus. And only banners are capable of taking up battle formations. These three formations are:

Formation 1

The banner formation takes up positions in such a way that its units are better able to defend against attacks. All units in the banner receive the following bonuses:



Hit points: +15%

Ranged combat/close combat: +40%

Formation 2

The banner formation receives the following bonuses:

Hit points: +40%

Close combat/ranged combat: +15%



Formation 3

The banner formation receives the following bonuses:

Endurance: +30%

Speed: +30%

Armour: +1



Detailed below are brief descriptions of all the hero figures in the game, together with their abilities:

Thorwald Von Rabenhorst

Thorwald is the son and heir of the old Duke, Hagen von Rabenhorst. The Rabenhorsts are an old dynasty that over the course of time has been subject to increasing hostilities from the surrounding duchies. As the enemies of Alrich von Drachenfels, the Rabenhorsts' room to manoeuvre has been getting narrower and narrower of late. Thorwald must prove that in him, the old Duke has sired a worthy heir to the throne.



Individual bonus: +500 life points

Banner: 50% more life points

Armour: 5

Damage: 200

Duke Hagen Von Rabenhorst

The old Duke von Rabenhorst remains a tough old warrior, despite his many infirmities. Over his lifetime, he has crushed numerous enemies with his mighty war hammer and defended his realm many times against enemy takeovers. His pride and joy are his two children, Thorwald and Svea. His dearest wish is for them to have a peaceful future.



Individual bonus: Attack on all nearby enemy units

Banner: +50% endurance

Armour: 5

Damage: 200

Svea Von Rabenhorst

Thorwald's sister and the daughter of Duke Hagen. The usual role of women in those days was considered to be that of guardian of the home and hearth. Svea, on the other hand, felt the pull of the arts of war at an early age. Against the Duke's wishes, she developed into a strong warrior able to wield her spear with skill and adroitness. Hagen feared that he would never get his tough-as-nails daughter married off. But then Geoffrey the Calm, an English nobleman, agreed to the nuptials.



Individual bonus: Like a pikeman when fighting cavalry

Banner: +40% polearms damage

Armour: 6

Damage: 200

Prince Bartholomew Von Hohenstein

The Duke's brother-in-law's face is hidden behind a set of very imposing whiskers. He swings his battleaxes with vehemence against enemies of the Rabenhorst family. He is also an



exceptionally gifted military leader and fencing master, and has taught many young warriors the arts of sword fighting and leadership.

Individual bonus: +100 damage (300)

Banner: 20% more damage against all units

Armour: 4

Damage: 300

Geoffrey The Calm

Geoffrey only recently inherited his title and several estates on the southern English coast. He is now trying to expand his territory into continental Europe through marriage. Young Svea von Rabenhorst proved quite an appetizing object. The Rabenhorst dukedom could increase the English king's sphere of influence considerably.



Individual bonus: Ignores armour

Banner: Melee units (axe, hatchet, not polearms however) +20% more damage, -20% less injury

Armour: 4

Damage: 200

Branwyn

The formidable longbow archer Branwyn is the offshoot of a noble family that has fallen upon hard times. She joined the outlaws and is fighting for the interests of the outcasts and the forgotten people.



Individual bonus: Camouflage, ignores armour

Banner: +40% damage bonus for ranged units

Armour: 2

Damage: 200

Prince Alrich Von Drachenfels

Alrich von Drachenfels is a brutal man. To him, human lives count for little when they stand between him and his goals. Recently allied with the High Inquisitor Athanasius, Alrich has long been seeking ways to destroy the hated Rabenhorst family and annex their estates. The fact that this effort, if successful, would be advantageous to the French King and to the Grand Inquisitor, is only of secondary interest to Alrich.



Individual bonus: Arsonists, better prices (-25%) for dungeon units

Banner: Corpse robbery (a certain amount of gold per killed enemy)

Armour: 4

Damage: 200

Thibaut De Chatnois

Thibaut has earned his spurs and the boundless thanks of the French king and the Inquisition in many engagements fought in the name of the Church. As Paladin by grace of God, he is inspired by a nearly fanatical sense of justice. He is also quite willing to follow orders, naively believing that God has ordained his King and his Church with the same infallibility that the pope claims for himself. He is used to winning. He is proud and stubborn, a daredevil and a nobleman.



Individual bonus: Regenerates life points

Banner: Heals units in his banner like a monk

Armour: 4

Damage: 200

Inquisitor Athanasius Dominico

Evil personified. The bony old Grand Inquisitor is the willing myrmidon of the French king. He is also the merciless executor



of the ecclesiastical laws. Innumerable people have been tortured and burned at the stake upon his orders and just as many people despise and hate him from the bottom of their hearts. Athanasius is a master of intrigue and has Alrich von Drachenfels and Thibaut de Chatnois dancing to his tunes without realising it. He is the sworn enemy of the Rabenhorsts, whose estates lie in strategically important locations. To dispose of this noble family, this devil in human form is ready to use any means at his disposal, no matter how low.

Individual bonus: Immune to plague. Units in banner count as serfs when calculating tax revenues.

Banner: Immune to plague. -20% damage from attacks.

Armour: 0

Damage: 100

Mervenor

Since he saved her from the clutches of an evil Sultan in Araby, the beautiful Mervenor has not left Thibaut's side. A strong warrior, she jealously watches over his every move.



Individual: More speed. -50% damage from ranged attacks.

Banner: More speed. -20% damage from ranged attacks.

Armour: 0

Damage: 150

Abdul Al Hazred

Banned from his homeland, this shady giant has roamed into the centre of medieval Europe where instead of finding his fortune, he met Athanasius's henchmen. Since then, he has been serving them as a frightening and exotic warrior, but without understanding the consequences of his actions.



Individual bonus: -50% damage from melee units, +50 damage

Banner: +40% damage for melee units (does not include polearms)

Armour: 0

Damage: 250

Benvenuto Di Sorto

The Venetian nobleman Benvenuto is an adventurer and welcome guest at the courts of many European rulers, thanks to his good looks and aristocratic manners. Despite his less than intimidating appearance, he is an excellent hand with the epee and has proven a true friend in battle.



Individual bonus: Visibility range like scouts. Harquebusiers 25% cheaper.

Banner: Harquebusier range increased by three fields. Harquebusiers suffer 20% less damage.

Armour: 1

Damage: 150

Buildings and upgrades

The following is a description of all the buildings and the upgrades you can carry out on them:

Castle buildings

These structures can only be built on a castle construction site.



Castle centre (keep, dungeon)

These stately tower constructions are the heart of every fortress. They house the castle lord and his family.



Battlements: This upgrade creates a wooden battlemented parapet



on walls that would otherwise not be traversable. You have to run this upgrade before you can build any towers.

Crenellations: This upgrade gives all castle walls a battlemented parapet made of stone. It also increases wall strength.



Hole for pouring boiling pitch: running the pitch holes upgrade allows you to construct large wooden barricades over the castle gates through which boiling pitch can be poured upon the heads of the enemy.



Tunnel construction: Running the tunnel construction upgrade enables sappers.



Secret passage: Lets you dig a secret passage out of the castle. You can place an exit at any point within a set distance from the construction site. After choosing an exit site, you can use the castle centre menu to specify whether units should exit the building through the gate or through the secret passage.



Trench: Enables the training of sappers.



Countertrench: Lets you use pans of water to identify when enemy sappers are at work. Automatically attempts to dig a countertrench to stop the enemy before he can reach your walls. Players have no influence on the success of the countertrench effort.



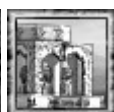
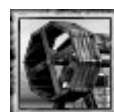
Signals (war drums, battle horns, storm bells)

When danger threatens, you can use signals to call all their serfs back into the safety of the castle. When the danger has passed, the alarm can be ended, and everyone can return to work.



Sources of water (well, cistern, fountain)

A source of water inside the castle lets your serfs extinguish fires, even when the road to



the village centre and its water source is blocked.

Bucket brigade: Improves firefighting efficiency.



Servants' quarters

Four serfs residing in the servants' quarters boil the oil needed for the pitch holes in large pots. The more serfs you have in the servants' quarters, the more oil will be available to you; fewer serfs, less oil. You can either manually click serfs into the servants' quarters or you can use the serf management system to control the oil boiling.



Barracks

The barracks are the training centres for regular soldiers. This is where you recruit scouts, single-handed fighters, polearm fighters, and spearmen. Harquebusiers and lancers are also trained here. For the Germans, the barracks is also the source of the two-handed swordsmen.



Drill: Stricter command structures teach trained units to use their strength more efficiently. This also increases the endurance of all the units.



Discipline: With more discipline, the units can be trained faster.



Prisons (dungeon, tower, cage)

The three nations' prison buildings may also contain allies. This is where you lock up plague victims, arsonists, and outlaws, until you can find a use for them.



Healing buildings (infirmary, aid station, hospital)

Locating units near a healing building will recover their hit points.



Stables

The stables are where soldiers are trained to ride horse and horses are raised.



Stallion: Only the best horses are suitable for breeding. This upgrade will give all your horses more hit points.



You can also upgrade horseback riding in the stables for scouts, swordsmen, and polearm fighters.

Bowmakers

The fortress's bowmakers work tirelessly on developing new and improved firearms. The bowmaker's house is the training site for all archers.



Fletching: Improving the fletching on arrows and crossbow bolts increases their range.



Flaming arrows: The bowmaker fastens a bracket on the tips of arrows and crossbow bolts that can be filled with tinder and set alight. This enables archers to set fire to buildings and siege machines.



V-shaped gouge: This clamping device is necessary for training crossbow archers.



Pavese shield: Heavy protective shield for crossbow archers. Required for the heavy crossbow archers.



Smithy

The local blacksmith is responsible for making weapons and armour.



Tempered blades: A special hardening process makes the blades of the weapons tougher and able to cause more damage.



Damascus steel: Expensive Damascus steel gives weapons an even bigger damage bonus. You need it to make the better grades of armour.



The various armour and weapon upgrades are run separately for each type of weapon in the smithy.

Village buildings

Village buildings can be placed outside the castle area around the village centre, which must be built first. An exception to this is the raw materials buildings, which you can build anywhere on the map, however it is best to build them next to the sources of the raw materials.



Village centre (official residence, parish rooms, town hall)

This large building is in the centre of every village and is where the oldest inhabitants gather and make important decisions. The village centre has its own well, from which serfs can haul water to extinguish any fires that break out in the village.



Storage: Creating underground storage space in the cellars of a village centre allows you to provide more food for the villagers. This increases the unit limit by 10.



Woodcutters

A woodcutter's hut reduces the distance serfs have to travel to collect cut wood. It is a good idea to put your woodcutter in a strategically favorable location near forested areas.



Tempered axe blades: Improving your axe blades will reduce the time it takes to produce wood.



Stonemasons

The same is also true for the stonemason's hut, which can also reduce travel distances. Remember you need a stonemason before



you can build any castle walls.

Tempered chisel: Improving your chisels will reduce the time it takes for stone to be produced.



Ironworks

The ironworks are where crude ore is melted to produce valuable iron.

Blast furnace: Upgrading your oven will reduce the time it takes for iron to be produced.



Agricultural buildings (pig farm, sheep farm, mill)

These small buildings provide food for your people. The upgrades you can choose here will increase your unit limit.



Tax collectors

The brutal tax collectors squeeze tithes out of the people.

Squeezing taxpayers: The squeeze taxpayers display is an indicator for the quantity of gold each serf has to pay to his lord. The higher this sum, the slower the enslaved populace will work.



Town square

Each village should have this type of square in which markets can be held and goods can be sold. In multiplayer games, you can also hold a tournament here that will attract heroes willing to offer their services in return for gold. (See the "Heroes" chapter.)



Hostelries (tavern, inn)

These hospitable places are the meeting point for the working populace, where they can exchange news and hatch plots.



Free beer: Giving away free drinks will increase the amount of money you can squeeze out of your taxpayers.



Denunciation: Criminals and lepers can be caught more quickly when the Watch is informed of violations of the law. Denunciation lets you take advantage of the services of outlaws and arsonists.



Workshop

A large workshop is vital for building siege weapons.

Each nation can run upgrades here that will enable them to build stronger and better machines.



Sacred buildings (chapel, church, cloister)

The three nations' holy sites house monks who offer their healing services to the armies.



To enable the use of monks, you must first run the "Enable monk" upgrade.



Blessing: The Church's holy blessing increases soldiers' motivation and makes their endurance last longer.



Support from Rome: The Vatican sends extra crusaders to aid the French and reinforce their regular forces.

You can acquire them in the Unit training menu.



Alchemists

Alchemists were more or less the medieval equivalent of chemists, apothecaries or pharmacists. Although they were frequently denounced as quacks, they can nevertheless come up with useful inventions.



Firepot: Running this upgrade allows you to load siege equipment with burning ammunition.



Gunpowder: A mixture of charcoal, saltpeter, and sulfur is the basic requirement for the more primitive explosives used by saboteurs and bombardiers.



Improved gunpowder: By improving the composition of your gunpowder, you can produce better propellants suitable for running even the large cannons.



Merlin's mixture: The secret alchemical recipe for highly explosive, coarse-grained gunpowder. Lets you manufacture harquebusiers and the German Hollow Hannah.



Philosopher's Stone: For eons, many alchemists have been obsessed with the idea of distilling gold out of worthless materials. The legendary Philosophers' Stone enables the conversion of large quantities of iron ore into a small quantity of gold. But watch out! The side effects can be explosive when you use it.



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