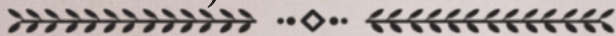




ARES, GOD OF WAR



Ares, a deity whose very mention is said to bring about bloodshed and ruin, has made its mark on the destiny of countless heroes. His origins, woven from the threads of divine lineage, mark him as a being of unparalleled martial might and the embodiment of war's dual nature: as a force of destruction and a crucible for greatness.

Ares' domain extends beyond the mere clash of steel and the din of battle. He reigns over the complexity of warfare, encompassing the heart-pounding thrill of victory, as well as the grueling training that precedes it. His influence permeates the strategies that turn the tide of conflicts, the valor that inspires soldiers to surpass their limits, and the fear that can break even the mightiest of warriors.

The temples dedicated to Ares are not merely places of worship but bastions of martial knowledge and power. Within these sacred halls, one can find the greatest warriors of the age, both mortal and divine, seeking the God of War's favor or offering tribute in hopes of averting his gaze. These temples are filled with relics of ancient battles, weapons imbued with divine might, and armor that can turn the tide of wars. One can seldom call them temples, for they are more akin to divine garrisons, where young adventurers come to learn and train. They serve as both a reminder of Ares' power and a beacon for those who aspire to greatness in warfare.

Ares' essence is multifaceted. He is the protector of cities in times of peace, but only when they promise him devotion in the coming godly or human wars. To his followers, Ares embodies the pinnacle of martial prowess and this harsh truth—peace is not the opposite of war, but the fruit of it.

Ares, God of War (Avatar)

Gargantuan god, chaotic evil

Armour Class 22 (godplate, shield)

Hit Points 390 (20d20 + 180)

Speed 60ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 30(+10) | 14(+2) | 29(+9) | 12(+1) | 13(+1) | 22(+6) |

Saving Throws Str +18, Dex +10, Con +17, Cha +14

Skills Athletics +18, Perception +17

Damage Immunities fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities frightened, unconscious

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 27

Languages Celestial, Common

Challenge 26 (90,000 XP)

Avatar of War. Ares always goes first in the initiative order.

Godly Arsenal. Ares' weapon attacks are magical.

Godplate. Any critical hit against Ares becomes a normal hit.

Innate Spellcasting. Ares' spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 22). Ares can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect evil and good, fireball, magic weapon*

3/day each: *blade barrier, flame strike, raise dead*

1/day each: *dominate monster, heroes' feast*

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Ares fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Limited Magic Immunity. Ares can't be affected or detected by spells of 5th level or lower unless he wishes to be. He has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. Ares can use his Barbed Chains. He then makes one Godspears attack and one Shield attack, or uses Sear the Flesh.

Godspear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (2d12 + 10) piercing damage and 14 (4d6) fire damage.

Shield. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (1d8 + 10) bludgeoning damage. In addition, the target must succeed on a DC 26 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone and become stunned until the end of its next turn.

Barbed Chains. Ares shoots three chains at one, two, or three creatures within 60 feet of him. Each creature must make a DC 26 Dexterity saving throw or take 16 (3d10) piercing damage and become chained. Each animated chain is an object with AC 20, 30 hit points, resistance to piercing damage, and immunity to psychic and thunder damage. While chained, a creature's speed is halved, it can't teleport or use the dash action, and it takes an extra 11 (2d10) piercing damage at the start of each of its turns. The chained creature or another creature within 5 feet of it can spend an action to remove the chains.

Sear the Flesh (Recharge 5-6). Ares' shield spews fire in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 26 Dexterity saving throw, taking 70 (20d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Spirits of Battle (2/Day). Ares conjures the spirits of great warriors, summoning 1d8+4 gladiators that appear in unoccupied spaces within 60 feet of him. They act on Ares' initiative and obey his vocal commands (no action required). The gladiators remain for 1 minute or until dismissed by Ares, slain, or until Ares dies. When summoned this way, their creature type becomes undead, and they gain resistance to all damage types except bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage.

Legendary Actions

Ares can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Ares regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Call to Arms. Ares lets out a battle cry that echoes across the battlefield. All allied creatures within 60 feet of Ares are emboldened, gaining a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls until the end of Ares' next turn.

Bolster Defenses. Ares readjusts to a defensive formation, protecting both him and nearby allies. Ares and all allied creatures within 60 feet of Ares gain a +3 bonus to their AC and saving throws until the end of Ares' next turn.

Phalanx Command (Costs 2 Actions). Ares commands all his warriors to move in tandem. Ares and all allied creatures within 60 feet of Ares can move up to their speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

No Escape (Costs 3 Actions). Ares pulls all chained creatures to the nearest unoccupied spaces next to him, dealing 16 (3d10) piercing damage to each creature pulled this way.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside his lair, Ares can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Ares takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- **Drums of War.** Ares sounds the drums of war within his lair. He and any allied creatures within 30 feet of him become bloodthirsty until the end of the round. When a bloodthirsty creature takes the attack action during its turn, it can make one additional attack as a bonus action.

- **Horrors of the Battlefield.** Ares highlights the horrors of the battlefield. Each hostile creature he can see must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw, becoming frightened for 1 minute on a failed save. An affected creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

- **Final Showdown.** Ares creates a barrier to prevent outside intervention from affecting his glorious battle. A 50-foot radius dome of force forms originating from Ares, lasting until the end of the round. All creatures and objects are barred from passing through it. Spells and other magical effects can't extend through the dome or be cast through it.