

Narrator: Coming up next on “Warriors of the World,” it’s the untold history of the legendary elite defenders of Ylelon, the Harbor Storms. That’s “Warriors of the World” up next on the Historical Channel!

Opening Sequence: “Warriors of the World”: Montage of fanciful images of warrior traditions from across Rond set to upbeat music.

Opening images: Collection of Ylelon beach vistas.

Narrator: Ylelon has known many masters over the ages. Time and again one nation or another has annexed the tiny city-state for its mineral wealth, its strategic value, or both. Rarely did any power keep hold of the nation for more than a few decades before some other power wrested control away or, more frequently, plucky Ylelon herself fought for her freedom.

Visuals: Shots of a traditional Yd village.

Narrator: Ylelon’s warrior heritage dates back to its original people, the Yd. The habits and attitudes of this fierce aboriginal race left an indelible mark on the society that succeeded it. Ylelon has long been known for its independent nature and pronounced reluctance to answer to any other nation.

Visual: Graphic map of continent Dorug, highlighting Ylelon in the southwestern corner.

Narrator: Ylelon shares a continent with a handful of other nations that are segregated from her by the mighty Sentinel Mountain range. Foremost of these is the enormous Attenz Empire, which at one point or another in history has controlled every square inch of the continent. Even in the modern age Attenz comprises over ninety percent of Dorug’s landmass.

Visual: Zoom in on Ylelon.

Narrator: Since the discovery of the immense value of Ylelon nearly a thousand years ago, Attenz has fought for, conquered, and lost the tiny nation dozens of times.

1852: A violent coup in Attenz ends a three-year period of political upheaval with the royal family reclaiming much of the power it had lost nearly three decades before. The new regime quickly decreed a campaign to reclaim much of the territory it had lost over the years. First on the list: Ylelon. Retaking the rebellious city-state was seen as an ideal way to announce that Attenz was once again asserting itself as a world power. All across the globe, other nations watched and waited, at once relieved that they were not first on the list of Attenz’s renewed expansionist plans and terrified that they might be next.

Images: Rapid graphics of each vessel class used by the Attenz fleet.

Narrator: An enormous invasion fleet consisting of the entire Attenz navy and numerous conscripted merchant and transport vessels was assembled and hastily equipped. The ships ranged in weight class from sloops and junks used as support to steam frigates and the ultimate naval innovation of the age, ironclads. Altogether the armada surpassed seven hundred ships in number, one of the largest naval forces in world history.

Housed among the ships was a landing force of over twenty-one thousand soldiers. By contrast, Ylelon’s navy at that time consisted of thirty-nine total warships, plus a handful of conscripted and volunteered civilian ships, while the standing Ylelon Civil Defense Force numbered less than nine hundred full-time combatants.

Under the cover of darkness on the morning of April 11th, the Attenz Navy approached Ylelon Bay having launched three days before from shipyards in and around Anamo in Attenz three days before. A strike force of sixty ships led the colossal fleet, moving toward the sleeping city under the belief that Ylelon would be caught completely off-guard.

Image: Silhouettes of armed men lined up in front of a red background.

Narrator: They were wrong.

Commercial: A family of four pulls up in front of an attractive country house in a moving truck and exits the vehicle.

Dad: Say hello to your new home, kids!

Son: Man, that move took forever!

Dad: Yes, but now we’re here and our troubles are over.

Daughter: (Pointing at the sky) What’s that?

Image: The family watches as a huge meteor plummets out of the sky and demolishes their new

house in an enormous fireball.

Voiceover: Hartman and Grimes insurance. "Because life can *always* get worse!"™

Image: The family watches as a chunk of rubble from the meteor sails overhead and destroys the moving truck behind them.

Narrator: We now return to "The Harbor Storms" on "Warriors of the World."

Images: CGI recreation of the Attenz fleet approaching Ylelon.

Narrator: The flagship of the Attenz fleet, the *Swift Saber*, led the strike force into the bay while the rest of the fleet held back to await the signal to move forward. The plan was simple.

Image: Tactical map of the ship's movements.

Narrator: The initial strike force would move forward and attack Fort Sorrin, which defended the north side of the bay. The attack was a decoy. Fort Sorrin was built atop the last reaches of the cliffs on the north side of the bay. This gave the fort an excellent vantage point to view, and fire upon, the bay. It also made the structure visible from most of the city.

The strike force was to engage the fort, causing as much light and noise as possible. The distraction would alert the city's defenders--and send them running in the wrong direction. While Ylelon's sparse forces were rushing to support Fort Sorrin, the bulk of the Attenz armada would sail into the bay and attack Fort Crump, which stood watch over the southern reaches of the city. Under the fire of hundreds of ships the fort would be reduced to rubble, allowing the invading troops to stream into the streets.

The cruxes of the plan were surprise and brute force. The organizers of the invasion plan were depending upon Ylelon's forces being completely ignorant of the strategy being used. Fortunately for Ylelon, this was not the case.

Image: Dramatic reenactments.

Narrator: Not being strangers to Attenzian expansionist policy, Ylelon has a long tradition of spy networks planted in Attenz cities. Over the preceding months these networks had fed startling intelligence back to their mother country: Attenz was amassing a gigantic invasion force and the rumor mill listed Ylelon as its first planned stop.

Ordinarily, this information would have been of little use other than to inspire panic, but the YDF had secretly engaged a new program designed to even the odds against a larger invading force. Consisting of a tiny number of hand-picked, elite YDF soldiers, the program sought to fashion them into a supreme fighting unit and thereby counter quantity with quality.

Even today, the identities, histories, and even the exact number of members of the original program remains a secret. What is well known is the dramatic effect it had on what would otherwise have been a devastating invasion of Ylelon.

Image: CGI illustration of narrative.

Narrator: As the strike force led by the flagship *Swift Saber* moved into position to attack Fort Sorrin, the sky was suddenly lit by a tremendous explosion. One of the *Saber's* sister-ship escorts, the *Mirage*, had been enveloped by a huge fireball. No sightings of hostile ships had been reported, nor did any of the mainland guns appear to be firing, yet one of the fleet's capital ships had been reduced to a floating funeral pyre for its own crew. Worse, the force's position had been given away in dramatic fashion.

Signal lanterns began to flicker among the strike force as the order was given to open fire. The lead ships surged forward, leaving the wreckage of the *Mirage* behind, sinking rapidly.

Even as the strike force moved into position to barrage Fort Sorrin, alarms were sounding in the city as the YDF and civil servants rushed to defensive positions. There was no sign of what had caused the loss of the *Mirage*, but the other vessels remained on high alert. If Ylelon's navy had been mobilized and destroyed the *Mirage* with a lucky shot it would still be no match for the strike force, let alone the entire invasion fleet.

This determined surge forward was the beginning of the legend of the Harbor Storms. In truth Ylelon's navy was largely undeployed, but many of the elite agents that would come to be known as Harbor Storms were still moving into the bay. Aboard sloops, schooners, skiffs and even rowboats the

agents moved among the advancing warships, invisible in the darkness. This incredibly risky maneuver allowed the agents to approach the strike force undetected. At such close range, the agents were able to attempt the even more daring feat of boarding the enemy ships.

Focused on creating their diversion, the crews of the strike force ships were not expecting boarders. Details of what really happened next are sketchy, but it is known that for the forward ships and crews, the results were disastrous.

At least one vessel was scuttled when Harbor Storms pulled alongside the hull and planted explosives at the waterline. Several others were destroyed by explosions, consumed by fire or disabled by sabotage. The lead force of a supposedly unstoppable armada had lost a third of its number and been reduced to utter confusion by a few score men in rowboats and pleasure craft.

The Harbor Storms were certainly impressive in their legendary first engagement, but the credit was not solely theirs. Even the most devoted admirer of the Storms has had to wonder how a group of soldiers in rowboats managed to destroy the *Mirage*.

The truth is, they didn't. That fateful event, the blast that nearly panicked the Attenz fleet and cost them the element of surprise was also what alerted the Harbor Storms to their presence in the first place. The quasi-mythical status that has been ascribed to the Storms over the years allowed the average citizen to assume that the Storms had caused the event through some type of "super-agent trick," but the truth was they were as surprised as anyone else. The difference was in how they handled themselves.

Since the spy networks had begun bringing the dreadful warnings of invasion, the experimental super-soldiers had been on constant watch, ready to deploy as needed. When the *Mirage* exploded and lit the horizon as it burned the Storms acted first and left questions for later. They were quick to act but the cause of the blast that alerted them to the presence of the enemy was, and is, as much a mystery to them as anyone else.

Narrator: While the strike force was floundering the commanding body of the rest of the fleet decided to move on with the landing, reasoning that the diversion of Fort Sorrin was merely a supplemental tactic. Diversionary measures or not, the landing force would be enough to overwhelm the city by sheer force of numbers.

Doctor Daniel Reed, Historian: The actual landing of the Attenzian forces in the southern parts of Ylelon City is one of the great, legendary moments of military history. It's notable not only because of the scope of what happened but also because we know so little for sure about *how* it happened. The fighting was very, very chaotic, taking place in narrow, uh, winding streets that were poorly lit or, in some places, not lit at all. The Attenzian troops were coming ashore in groups ranging from single squads or platoons in rowboats to hundreds of men disembarking from larger ships that managed to moor at the docks. As soon as they reached the city they were met with huge crowds that were equal parts panicked residents and city defenders, both civilian and military.

Narrator: The infamous warrior mentality of Ylelon met the Attenz forces head-on that night. So numerous are the tales of ordinary citizens defending their homes with kitchen knives and chair legs, of platoons ambushed as they ran down blind alleys, that it is all but impossible to separate fact from folktale. What is known is that the supposedly unstoppable invasion found itself fought to a standstill in the dead of night by a handful of YDF soldiers and an ornery citizenry that refused to be conquered.

Here, again, the legend of the Harbor Storms grows deeper. Many have contended that no collection of untrained citizens, however obstinate, could have staved off an armed and equipped military body thousands strong. They reason that the Harbor Storms must have had a presence in the area, participating in or perhaps even guiding the defensive efforts. While no official records place any of the Storms in that area at the time of the battle, the debate still continues and only helps to ensure the perpetual mystique of Ylelon's defenders.

In truth, none of the Harbor Storms were anywhere near the battles that raged in the southern stretches of the city. Every last one of them was in the bay, fighting and dying for the sake of their

country. It truly was the people of Ylelon rising to face the threat of invasion, facing the enemy in the streets with whatever they could find to serve as a weapon. They fought, and died, in numbers lost to history with the sort of courage only seen among a populace during the worst of times.

But they were not alone.

The things that owned the night in Ylelon, the monsters that preyed upon the people of the city now fought for them. Not for their sakes, but to keep dominion over them. Just as the people would not accept dominion by a foreign power, the creatures that preyed on them were unwilling to tolerate the annexing of their hunting grounds. They joined the slaughter with a savage fervor and though a great number of them fell, their sheer power was an undeniable asset in halting the Attenz troops in their tracks. The invaders found themselves fighting not only angry mobs, but creatures out of their worst nightmares.

One monster in particular left a mark on local legend...

Mere Price, author of "Legends of Ylelon": The Purple Woman is one of the land's most enduring stories, so it only makes sense that this figure would find its way into tales of one of Ylelon's most important historical events. Of course, like the legend itself, this only reflects the fears and outlook of the cultures that tells it. This gives us the strange notion that the bogeywoman that supposedly terrorized the poor sections would fight to protect them.

You have to love historians. They do *mean* well.

Ylelon's Purple Lady was on the battleground that night, through it would be more accurate to note that she began on the outside and worked her way in. For the people of Ylelon and even most of the monsters the fighting was about defending their home, their way of life, the status quo. For the Crown of Thorns, the bloodshed, chaos and fear were about the same thing they always were: her own enjoyment.

She came to the battle by a wide, open lane. Angry throngs swarmed the street, tramping over gutters running red with blood as they charged ranks of Attenz soldiers firing into them, but when they saw her calmly walking down the middle of the street, wearing a deep purple gown and bearing the fanged grin that made one's blood run cold, they parted to keep as far away from her as possible.

An Attenz rifleman in the front rank lined her right eye up in his sights and fired. The Crown cocked her head in a coy motion faster than the bullet traveled. A second gunman took a shot at her: she weaved away from the shell in flight with a motion impossibly fast, as graceful as ballet.

Now the Attenz ranks were taking serious notice of her. An order was shouted and dozens of rifles aimed. The Crown of Thorns continued to walk calmly toward the firing line as frantic citizens ran the other way or disappeared down side streets.

The next order was given. A swarm of bullets flew forward, enough to tear a body to pieces. The woman skipped aside in a blur and vanished into a nearby doorway.

The front rank of soldiers moved up, taking aim into the doorway. Their lieutenant stood behind them, ready to use any excuse to command the execution of an unarmed woman.

The Crown of Thorns descended on him from above, landing just behind him. Five long talons ripped through his body and out again in the blink of an eye. His corpse had not even struck the ground when the vampire tore into the two men nearest to him, splattering the others around them with blood.

A nearby soldier turned and lunged with his bayonet. Two slender fingers found the blade in the air and passed it into the belly of another man. The first soldier had only just realized what he had done when the rifle was torn from his hands and the butt used to brain him.

Another officer back among the ranks gave the order to fire. A horrified soldier in the first rank was pulled off his feet just as his compatriots followed the order. Bullets ripped through the shocked men and they fell in bloody heaps. The captured man hung in the Crown's grasp, riddled with wounds from friendly fire. She let him fall at her feet. Some of the rounds had passed through her shield and struck her, leaving a dozen wounds trickling stolen blood. The Attenz soldiers stared at her as she looked back at them, unmoved by her injuries. Somewhere an officer shouted for another volley, but as the ranks took aim the Crown of Thorns only smiled. Then she was running at them, leapt and came down in their midst. Their horrified shrieks were lost amidst the sounds of a city at war.

Narrator: Exaggerated stories and local legends aside, the Harbor Storms played an undeniable part in preserving the independence of their country that day. Between the damage being inflicted on the initial strike force and the difficulty the first wave of landing teams was experiencing, the command body of the Attenz fleet found itself reevaluating the attack.

Mark Burroughs, author of “A Brief History of Attenz Military Campaigns”: That council aboard the Attenz command ship is one of the pivotal historical moments for Ylelon. Even with the losses the Attenzites were suffering, they would likely have easily won the battles at hand if the entire fleet had committed to an all-out attack, but they didn’t realize that. The mysterious damage the first task force was taking and the difficulty the troops were having in a supposedly poorly-defended city made the command body think, really believe, that Ylelon had some kind of defenses that they didn’t know about. If they had signaled the charge, Attenz likely would have controlled Ylelon again in a matter of days, if not hours. But they didn’t and the reason they didn’t is that they couldn’t imagine, let alone know, that they were having so much trouble because of one hundred sixty men in boats and some rowdy civilians.

Narrator: The crucial order to withdraw was given. The mission overseers simply could not fathom that their overwhelmingly superior numbers and supplies could be experiencing such difficulty without outside intervention. Signal lanterns and horns recalled the scattered ground forces to their ships. Modern estimates hold that fully one-third of the troops in the city never made it back to their transports, having been either killed, lost in the city itself or left behind when the ships hastily departed, abandoning them to the tender mercy of the locals. The strike force, now a mass of confusion and sinking derelicts, also prepared to withdraw, ceasing the bombardment of Fort Sorrin and changing their heading to lead out of the bay. Again, the results are disastrous.

The remaining Harbor Storms, still largely undetected as they weave among the distracted strike fleet in the dark of night, see the ships turn to run and redouble their efforts. Several Attenz warships suddenly find their rudders disabled or their screws damaged and are unable to flee. At least one cruiser suddenly stops signaling, changes course and fires a single broadside volley at a nearby frigate before charging into another cruiser at flank speed, sinking both vessels. In the confusion, some of the panicked ships’ crews open fire on each other, convinced that Ylelon warships have somehow infiltrated the battle group. The mighty Attenz armada, which had been inspiring panic in nations across the world, has been reduced to limping away from a humiliating defeat that was supposed to be a swift, resounding victory.

Though demoralized, the armada was still the most powerful military machine on the planet at that time. At first, the decision was made to withdraw out of the bay completely, assess losses and revise the plan of attack.

Doctor Reed: The admirals of the fleet were determined to demonstrate that the power of the Attenz Empire was unstoppable--certainly not something that could be defeated by the meager civil defenses of a bumpkin nation the size of a dinner plate that, by its own tradition, was considered part of the Attenz commonwealth. The entire fleet regrouped, a new line was arranged to form the first wave and that’s when things got *really* weird.

Narrator: The suspicion that Ylelon had an unknown array of ships was soon reinforced. The first wave of the revised landing arrangement was sent ahead of the rest. The plan was to allow them to draw fire from whatever nautical force had been doing so much damage, allowing subsequent waves to pinpoint the source and destroy it.

Eighteen ships steamed forward in a battle group. The ships behind them watched carefully, waiting for any sign of the enemy.

The legacy of the Harbor Storms would be remarkable enough at this point, but it was rendered indelibly into legend by what happened next. The first wave steams at full power toward Ylelon City, with the entire armada standing by, watching. Then, the lead frigate explodes into flames.

The armada looked on astonished as the landing force scattered. There were no reports of canon fire, no sightings of any other ships, but the thunderous sounds of canons filled the air and one by one the frantically separating landing ships began to burn. In a matter of minutes every one of the vessels was on fire, sinking, or both. Some of them continued to steam forward on their last course until they sank. Three

of them ran aground in the city.

To this day the Ylelon government refuses to disclose any hints of how their elite agents managed to perform this miracle. Casual speculation over the years has resulted in theories ranging from the reasonable to the outlandish and bizarre and has only served to deepen the mystique of the Harbor Storms.

Of one hundred and fifty-nine original Harbor Storms that participated in that fateful battle, less than forty are believed to have survived to return to the mainland. For all of the resourcefulness, courage, innovation and sheer gumption they demonstrated with their daring counterattack, it was still an act of desperation, barely more than a suicide mission. While they did manage to inflict considerable damage on a vastly superior force, in practical terms it was a futile gesture with a terrible price. The Storms were caught trying to board ships, shot during fierce melees or unable to escape from vessels upon which they had rigged explosions.

For all their sacrifice, the Storms' efforts alone would have had little effect on the outcome of the battle. In the end, it was two events that would alter the course of history: the destruction of the *Mirage* and the annihilation of the second landing force.

The armada was stubbornly determined to complete the invasion after its initial defeat, but the complete loss of the second wave gave the fleet pause. Something beyond their understanding was happening, something far more significant than the rumors already circulating of intruders caught committing sabotage and small ships circling the fleet. After much deliberation, the decision to abort the entire invasion was given.

Naturally, Ylelon played up the victory in public relations to an absurd degree. They proudly presented the Harbor Storms to the world stage. Credit for everything from the loss of the *Mirage* to the standstill battle in Ylelon's streets to the obliteration of the second landing wave was given to the Storms. They were heralded as a new generation of super-soldiers in a time before that phrase had been coined, warriors that could sink warships without canons, stop armies in their tracks, kill without being seen. Ridiculous claims about them were made in rumor and innuendo: that their training made them no longer require sleep, able to fight for days, even that they were impervious to bullets.

Of course, it was all a desperate bluff. The retreat of the Attenz armada was owed entirely to the loss of the second wave, a final blow that convinced them that they were somehow outmatched. The credit for the event being given to the Storms was the logical political tactic, but the Ylelon government, and the Harbor Storms themselves, were as mystified by its occurrence as everyone else.

The truth that no one knew, that no one could know, was simple. As with the people of Ylelon, even with many of its monsters, there were those who would not accept another period of dominion of the city-state by Attenz. Unlike those others, there was one who knew about the armada and how powerful it was. Also unlike those others, that one was able to do something about it.

As the *Mirage* steamed toward Fort Sorrin, the men shoveling coal in the engine room were startled by a sudden impact against the port hull. For just the next moment they stopped their labors and looked upon the bulkhead, wondering what it meant.

Their silent question was answered when the riveted plates were torn open high above the deck. A colossal hand, black-scaled and bearing enormous claws, ripped open the armor of the great ship, pulling it apart as though it were nothing. The squeal of metal tearing drowned out the terrified screams of the workers as the hand reached inside on an arm thicker than an ancient tree and clutched the boiler. Those immense claws drove into the ship's heart, breaking it, strangling it, condemning it to the explosion that would warn Ylelon of the armada's approach.

Terek Domar wasn't finished. While the battle raged on land and by sea, the dragon kept beneath the waves. While the Harbor Storms were waging their desperate gambit, more than one of the strike force ships they never touched still sank, rent through the hulls from below the waterline or consumed in huge conflagrations.

When the fleet withdrew Terek Domar watched from a distance, a black nightmare swimming in the black sea. Only the dragon's eyes gave it away, two baleful red glows that traveled beneath the surface

but sometimes rose high into the air above the waves before diving again. Observers in the distance both on land and ship saw the lights. Some wrote them off as just two more fires among the burning hulks. Others looked hard enough to see that they were nothing like fire and felt a shiver run up their spines.

When the second wave moved forward the lights disappeared, diving too deep to be seen. There was no hint of them when the ships passed directly above where they had been, but moments later they were looming above the deck of one of the landing ships. When the ships scattered after the first vessel began to burn, the lights followed after them. Sometimes in high arcs through the night sky, others plunging into the sea and traveling amidst a patch of luminous red water, the lights could always be seen approaching each ship just before its destruction.

Many legends were born that night. For Ylelon and much of the world, it was of the invincible Harbor Storms: for Attenz, it was the phantom lights that brought the sound of cannonade--or thunder--and sank whole fleets while their crews screamed.

For reasons only known to Terek Domar, the dragon had taken an active part in Ylelon's fate--and single-handedly changed it.

Narrator: The loss of the second wave was the final straw for the invasion fleet commanders. Convinced that they were facing some radical new tactic or technology, they decided to move on to the next stop on their world tour. This stunning decision was the beginning of a tremendously successful campaign, but the failure to recapture Ylelon with such favorable odds was a black mark the Attenz regime never lived down. It was also the beginning of the enduring tales of the invincible warriors that defend Ylelon with their very lives.

Even today the Ylelon government remains tight-lipped about the frequency and degree of Harbor Storm involvement in military confrontations, forcing the world at large to continue speculating about the defensive capacity of the tiny nation...and allowing the legend of these unique Warriors of the World to grow ever greater.

End credits

Bumper: Up next on the Historical Channel: "Myths of the Modern Day: Woodland Terrors."