



# SLAVELORDS OF CYDONIA

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This product uses the CORE MECHANIC task resolution method:

- . Roll a d20.
- . Add any relevant modifiers.
- . Compare the result to a target number to determine success or failure.

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# Grim Tales' Mass Combat

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The Strategic Mass Combat system is designed to resolve combats between large numbers of combatants, on both a strategic and tactical level, with or without a visual, tactical representation (such as a battle map and counters). The Strategic Mass Combat system is designed to resolve quickly through a number of simplifications, assumptions and abstractions.

## Battle Summary

- Both sides create armies made up of one or more units.
- The GM determines the current battleground.
- Each general chooses a strategic objective.
- Both generals make a Command check to determine strategic advantage.
- Each unit rolls initiative and the battle begins. Every unit on the side with strategic advantage gains a +2 bonus to initiative.
- Each unit chooses a battle action (attack, hold, etc.) in order of initiative.
- The battle ends when one side or the other is eliminated, when both sides hold their ground (as in a stalemate), or when one side retreats or withdraws.
- Both sides recover casualties.
- The victor of the battle achieves his strategic objective.
- Unless one army is completely destroyed, the fighting may continue with a second battle (after a few hours, the next day, when the battleground shifts, and so on).

## Creating Units

Units can be created from any number of creatures of any type. Generally speaking, the players and the GM should come to an agreement on the minimum number of combatants that make up a single unit, which will generally be based on the smallest unit from either side, though the following rules scale all the way down to single individuals.

### Dedicated Units

Dedicated units are units that are composed of identical creatures with roughly identical equipment and trained to attack as a group. Dedicated units have tactical abilities that enable them to perform actions specific to their type. Individuals may be seconded to a dedicated unit without compromising the unit's homogeneity, though if the unit is capable of a specific kind of movement (flight or burrowing, for example) all individuals must be able to keep pace with the unit.

### Mixed Units

A mixed unit is a hodgepodge of creatures of differing abilities. A prime example of a mixed unit is a typical adventuring party, but mixed units are also useful when small numbers of extraordinary creatures are mixed in among more numerous allies. Alone, such special creatures may be too small to warrant a unit of their own, so they are mixed into a larger force. Mixed units may only include tactical abilities that are shared by all members.

### Formations

Units are trained to fight together and generally begin each battle in what is called close formation. As the battle rages, units will tend to spread out into open formation.

Special units (such as skirmishers or phalanxes) can be more open (dispersed formation) or more close (tight formation).

### Armies

An army is made up of one or more units. Each unit has an opportunity to act in the battle, according to their initiative, in much the same way as individuals act in a combat.

### Individuals

Heroic individuals may fight battles either as part of a unit or on their own. An individual that is seconded to a unit increases that unit's Battle Rating normally. He may also lead that unit, lending his heroic influence to Command checks made by the unit. When a unit containing an individual is defeated (reduced to 0 BR or less) the individual is assumed to somehow escape.

Individuals may also fight alone. Their Battle Rating is based on their character level and EL, as normal. An individual whose BR is reduced to 0 or less may be killed or captured, at the victor's option.

## Battle Rating

A unit's Battle Rating is equal to its EL (as determined in *Grim Tales*, Chapter 14). Total the CR of every combatant in the unit, then adjust the EL based on the number of individuals in the unit. Unlike EL, the Battle Rating (BR) can move downwards during a battle to represent the effects of damage and casualties. At the end of a battle, a unit may be able to recover some of its losses and restore its BR. A unit reduced to 0 BR is wiped out, destroyed or scattered, unless its forces win the battle.

### Battle Check

A Battle check is generally made when two units collide and combat takes place.

A Battle check is made by rolling 1d20 + acting unit's BR against a DC equal to 10 + opponent unit's BR.

The effects of a successful Battle check vary, depending on the action being taken, but will generally entail “damage” in the form of lost BR.

### Behind the Numbers

The mass combat system presented here is based on a few simple underlying principles of EL:

- 1) Doubling the number of creatures in a group increases EL by +2.
- 2) Opponents who are evenly matched in EL have a 50/50 chance of victory, requiring an expenditure of 100% of their resources.
- 3) A reduction of 2 EL either means a unit has lost half its members, or all of its members are reduced to 50% of their fighting resources.

Using this system requires confidence that the EL system accurately predicts the outcome between two groups. The accuracy of the EL system increases with multiple iterations (or, the law of averages), making it an excellent choice for the core of an abstract mass combat system.

Because EL is based upon CR, and CR encapsulates all of a creature’s combat capabilities, there is no need to further break down the mass combat system into BAB, armor class, or the other particulars of a creature’s statblock, including special abilities and qualities.

The system presented here does make accommodations for those abilities that specifically interact with battlefield movement, position, formation, and scale: whether the unit can fly, has ranged weapons, area of effect attacks, etc.

GMs should resist the urge to extract additional details from the statblock and to trust to the EL system to handle all other details.

## Command Check

A Command check is used at the start of a battle to determine strategic advantage, and periodically throughout a battle to maintain order and discipline.

A Command check is 1d20 + Charisma modifier (if positive).

As this is a Charisma-based check, a character may also receive a Reputation bonus. Make a Reputation check before the start of each battle; if the check succeeds, the character receives a +4 bonus to Command checks. A commander leading a unit he has led before can Take 10 on his Reputation check.

A commander may receive a synergy bonus to his Command check if he has applicable skills, such as Knowledge (tactics) or Knowledge (military history).

The GM is encouraged to be generous with synergy bonuses. For example, during a Siege, a Command check may receive a +2 synergy bonus if the commander has Knowledge (engineering).

Finally, the GM may grant a unit’s commander a special “chain of command” synergy bonus of +1 if his superior has a higher Command bonus (including Charisma, Reputation, and all applicable skill synergies) than his own.

## Staging the Battle: Strategic Scale

Before battle takes place, the GM must determine where the battle takes place, and what the strategic consequences of victory or defeat are. If you are not concerned with the strategic aspects of the battle, you can skip directly to tactical scale.

### Types of Strategic Control

#### Controlled

Territory is considered controlled if one or more armies are in the field in the area. A territory can be controlled by more than one army at a time; as long as you have at least one unit remaining in a territory, you may consider it controlled.

You can disrupt control by pursuing the Cut Communication Lines strategic objective.

#### Fortified

Territory is considered fortified if it includes fortifications where a commander may entrench his forces for defensive advantage. A territory may include fortifications from several opposing armies.

You can disrupt fortifications by pursuing the Cut Supply Lines strategic objective (in unsettled territory) or Siege (in settled territory).

#### Settled

Territory is considered settled if it includes farms, villages, towns, or other non-combatants who can provide additional support, succor, and resources to armies.

Within the scope of these rules, it is not possible to settle a territory. The GM can determine which territories are settled based on his knowledge of the campaign world.

You can disrupt settlements by pursuing the Demoralize strategic objective.

### Types of Ground

#### Open Ground

On open ground, armies may generally come and go as they please. A battlefield qualifies as open ground if it is not yet controlled by either force and it does not include terrain, settlements, fortifications, or other impediments to the movement of troops.

Strategic Objectives: Control, Divide, Outmaneuver, Overwhelm.

#### Marginal Ground

Territory that is not settled, but is controlled by one force, with or without fortifications.

Strategic Objectives: Control, Cut Communication, Cut Supply, Divide, Fortify, Outmaneuver, Overwhelm.

## GRIM TALES' MASS COMBAT

### Contentious Ground

Territory that is not settled, but controlled by two or more opposing forces, with or without fortifications.

Strategic Objectives: Control, Cut Communication, Cut Supply, Divide, Fortify, Outmaneuver, Overwhelm.

### Intersecting Ground

Territory that is not controlled by any force but which is settled or occupied by some neutral, non-combative party. A neutral town caught between two opposing armies is an example of intersecting ground.

Strategic Objectives: Control, Divide, Demoralize, Outmaneuver, Overwhelm.

### Dispersive Ground

Territory that is controlled and settled by one force, but not otherwise fortified. This includes unwallled towns and settlements, or long-term military encampments that include non-combatant support who must be defended.

Strategic Objectives: Control, Cut Communication, Demoralize, Divide, Fortify, Outmaneuver, Overwhelm.

### Critical Ground

Territory that is controlled, settled, and fortified by one force.

Strategic Objectives: Divide, Fortify, Overwhelm, Siege.

### Difficult Ground

Territory with natural terrain features that are generally disadvantageous to movement: forests, marshes, valleys and ravines, etc. Difficult ground is not generally settled, as once it includes roads, bridges, supply lines or encampments, it is no longer difficult to move through. Dangerous ground that is merely controlled does not change type, but it may be fortified to change it to marginal or contentious ground.

Units in dangerous ground take a -2 penalty to Command checks when performing the Maneuver or Change Formation battle actions. Units may not perform the Charge battle action in dangerous ground.

Strategic Objectives: Control, Divide, Fortify, Outmaneuver, Overwhelm.

### Surrounded Ground

Territory where the entrance is narrow and the exit difficult. This may be a condition of the terrain as well as a tactical advantage, regardless of terrain, that is gained through superior generalship.

Strategic Objectives: Outmaneuver, Overwhelm.

### Deadly Ground

Territory where the complete destruction of the opposing force is the only option. Deadly ground is not so much a condition of the battleground as it is a state of mind. Battles do not generally begin on deadly ground but changing conditions

may lead one or the other force to make this critical shift of perception and go "all in."

Strategic Objectives: Overwhelm.

## Strategic Objectives

Once the battleground is staged, each general should secretly choose a Strategic Objective, chosen from the list of objectives available for the battleground.

After the battle, the victor reveals his strategic objective and adjudicates the results as shown below.

- **Casualty Rate:** Each strategic objective has a casualty rate. Generally speaking, the more risky your objective, the greater the casualty rate you risk. Your casualty rate will be higher on ground that you do not control and your opponent's casualty rate will be lower if your forces are more intent on their objective than on capturing or killing their fallen foes.

When the battle ends, some loss of BR is permanent, while some losses can be recovered. A 100% casualty rate means that all BR loss is permanent; units do not recover any BR. A 50% casualty rate means that units recover 50% of their lost BR, while 50% is permanent. A 25% casualty rate means that 25% of lost BR is permanent and 75% is recovered.

Units that are reduced to 0 BR recover casualties only if they are on the winning side of a battle.

- **Changes to Battleground:** Depending on the strategic objective, the battleground type (open, marginal, contentious, etc.) may change to another type.



Because a battle may end before one army is completely wiped out, a general may fight several battles in a single conflict, achieving several strategic objectives along the way.

### **Control**

Casualty Rate: 50% victor, 50% loser

The victor has gained or kept control of the battleground. This strategic objective may also be seen as "holding your ground."

You receive a +2 bonus to Command checks on ground you control.

- **Open Ground:** May change type to marginal ground (if controlled by one force) or contentious ground (if controlled by two or more forces).
- **Intersecting Ground:** The victorious general must make a Diplomacy check against the prevailing attitude of the local populace. If the check result is friendly, the battleground becomes dispersive ground under the control of (and settled by) forces friendly to the victor. If the check result is hostile, the populace turns against the victor, and the territory is considered dispersive ground under the control of the enemy general. For all other Diplomatic results, the territory remains intersecting ground, and the victor does not achieve control.

Alternately, the victorious general may make an Intimidate check, rather than a Diplomacy check. Apply the Intimidate check result to the Diplomacy table as normal to determine the result. However, a friendly result lasts only while the general is victorious. If the general subsequently loses a battle amidst an intimidated populace, their attitude changes to hostile.

- **Other:** Other types of ground do not change type when controlled.

### **Cut Communication Lines**

Casualty Rate: 50% victor, 25% loser

You may only choose this objective if your opponent has units in control of the battleground. The objective is to disrupt that control.

If successful, the loser is no longer in control of the battleground.

- **Marginal Ground:** If previously under control of the loser, becomes Open Ground.
- **Contentious Ground:** Becomes marginal ground under control of the victor.
- **Dispersive Ground:** If previously under the control of the loser, becomes intersecting ground.

### **Cut Supply Lines**

Casualty Rate: 50% victor, 25% loser

You may only choose this objective if your opponent is fortified in unsettled territory. The objective is to cut his supply lines,

forcing him to leave his fortifications. (On critical ground, territory that is both settled and fortified, you must choose Siege to achieve this.)

### **Demoralize**

Casualty Rate: 100% victor, 50% loser

The purpose of this objective is to destroy the opponent's will to fight by carrying the fight to non-combatants. The process may include rape, pillage, carpet bombing of civilian targets, interment camps, etc.

- **Dispersive Ground:** Becomes intersecting ground.
- **Intersecting Ground:** Becomes open ground. At the GM's option, the devastation may suffice to create a condition of dangerous ground.

### **Divide the Enemy's Forces**

Casualty Rate: 100% victor, 25% loser

After the battle is over and casualties have been determined, divide the loser's surviving units into two groups as follows: The victor chooses one unit and places it either to the right or the left. The losing commander chooses a unit and places it either to the right or to the left. Continue alternating in this way until all of the loser's units have been placed in one group or the other. Both players now make an opposed Command check. The winner of this check now chooses one of the three armies involved (either the victor's army or one of the loser's two armies); that army must fight its next battle on surrounded ground.

### **Fortify**

Casualty Rate: 50% victor, 25% loser

You may not chose to Fortify at battleground until you Control the battleground.

The victor uses the opportunity to entrench himself in existing fortifications. A fortified force receives a +2 bonus to Command checks and morale checks.

- **Dangerous Ground:** Becomes marginal ground (if fortified by only one force) or contentious ground (if controlled by two forces).
- **Dispersive Ground:** Becomes critical ground.
- **Marginal ground and contentious ground** may be fortified, though their type does not change.

### **Outmaneuver**

Casualty Rate: 25% victor, 25% loser

This objective is intended to mitigate losses on both sides and to put the victor in a strategically advantageous position. The victor uses this maneuver to escape from territory that is strategically disadvantageous or to move the battle to territory that is strategically advantageous.

- **Open, Marginal, or Contentious Ground:** The victor makes an opposed Command check against his opponent. If the victor

## GRIM TALES' MASS COMBAT

succeeds, he may choose to fight the next battle in this territory on surrounded ground.

- **Dispersive Ground:** The victor makes a Command check. The DC for this check is 10 + the highest BR in the opposing force. If the Command check succeeds, the victor may choose to fight the next battle in this territory on surrounded ground.
- **Dangerous Ground:** The victor may choose to fight the next battle in this territory on surrounded ground. No Command check is required.

If you are using a map, instead of using the above options, the victor may also choose to move his forces beyond the battle to another territory:

- **Dangerous Ground:** The victor may move out of dangerous ground to any adjacent territory.
- **Surrounded Ground:** The victor escapes surrounded ground and may move to any adjacent territory he controls. If he controls no adjacent territory, he must choose an uncontrolled territory. If all adjacent territories are controlled by enemy forces, change the type to deadly ground.

### Overwhelm

Casualty Rate: 100% victor, 100% loser

In this aggressive attack, the victor has swamped the loser with overwhelming strength. Casualties are high on both sides.

- **Dangerous Ground:** Becomes surrounded ground.
- **Surrounded Ground:** Becomes deadly ground.
- **Other:** An army that chooses Overwhelm and scores three successive victories has made plain its intentions. The battleground changes to deadly ground. Otherwise, except as noted above, the battleground does not change.

### Siege

Casualty Rate: 50% victor, 25% loser

You may only choose this option on critical ground (controlled, fortified, and settled by the opponent).

The victor has successfully besieged a fortified and entrenched defender.

- **Critical Ground:** Both generals should make an opposed Command check. The victor receives +2 to his check for each successful consecutive Siege. If the victor wins this check, the territory becomes dispersive ground under the control of and settled by the besieged loser.

## Waging the Battle: Tactical Scale

Once the units are created and arranged into armies, the battleground is staged, and the generals have secretly chosen their strategic objectives, the battle can begin.

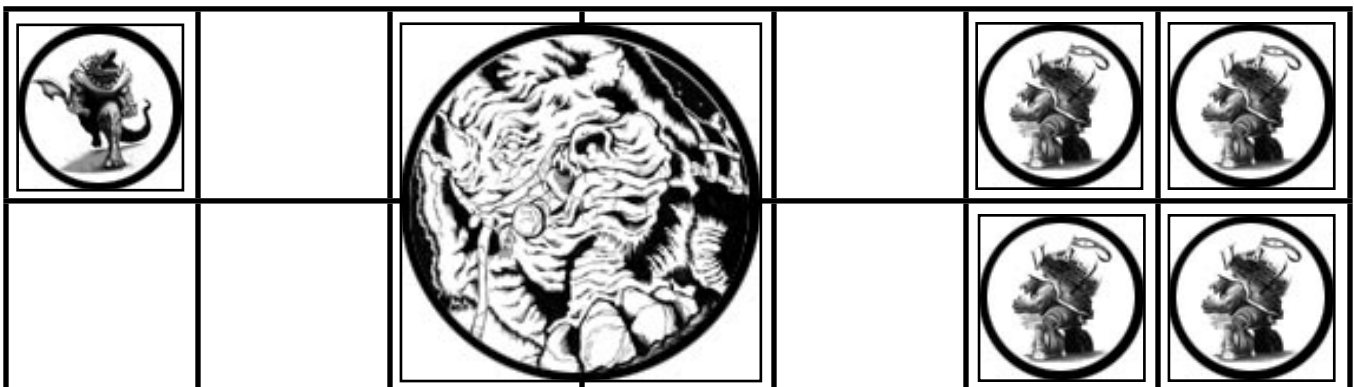
Remember that as long as an army has any units able to fight, several battles may take place before the conflict is finally resolved.

A single battle turn may last up to 10 rounds, though this number is highly flexible and abstract. A battle may take several battle turns to resolve; the larger the units, the longer it will take. Unless there are special circumstances, units must still rest and sleep. In some cases, nightfall or sheer exhaustion on both sides may end the battle before either side is wiped out.

### Using a Battle Mat

You may use a battle mat marked with either squares or, preferably, hexes. First, you must determine the scale of measurement for your map.

Map scale should be based on the smallest unit involved in the battle on either side. The GM should try to enforce consolidation of smaller units into larger units whenever possible, to ensure that the battle does not grow beyond the size of his battlemat.



**Table F-1: Map Scale**

Unit Size	Map Scale	Unit Size	Map Scale
1-4	10 feet	170-196	70 feet
5-9	15 feet	197-225	75 feet
10-16	20 feet	226-256	80 feet
17-25	25 feet	257-289	85 feet
26-36	30 feet	290-324	90 feet
37-49	35 feet	325-361	95 feet
50-64	40 feet	362-400	100 feet
65-81	45 feet	401-441	105 feet
82-100	50 feet	442-484	110 feet
101-121	55 feet	485-529	115 feet
122-144	60 feet	530-576	120 feet
145-169	65 feet	577-625	125 feet

If you are using counters or miniatures designed for a 5 foot scale, you can continue to use them even on a larger battlefield scale, as their relative size to each other remains consistent. Find the unit size in the left hand column, then read across to find the appropriate map scale. For example, a unit of 100 medium-sized bru warriors can be represented by *a single medium sized counter* occupying a single map square that is 50 feet across: 100 bru, each occupying a 5-foot space, can be lined up shoulder to shoulder and formed into a square that is 50 feet x 50 feet.

Using the same 50-foot map scale, a unit of 100 large barruk would thus be represented by *a single large counter* that covers a 2x2 area of squares on the battlemat: 100 large creatures, each of which occupies a 10x10 space, would also line up shoulder to shoulder 10 creatures wide and 10 creatures deep, for a battlefield facing of 100x100, as represented by a 2x2 section of battlefield squares.

As our final example, consider a unit of 400 medium sized yul shock troops. Because we have settled on a 50-foot map scale (based on the 100-man unit of bru warriors) we will need four counters to represent the 400-strong unit of yul. The GM could keep these units together, moving all four counters at the same time each time the unit moves, or he could choose to split the unit up into four smaller units of 100 skreet each.

Ultimately, you simply need to remember that one counter always represents the same number of individuals, given the same map scale.

### Unit Size Modifier

Many battle actions require Command checks, and this check is often modified by the unit size modifier. This modifier is in fact equal to the modifiers shown in *Grim Tales*, Table 14-2. This table is reprinted below and expanded for your reference.

As most Command checks where unit size is a factor start at DC10 + unit size modifier, you can easily see from the table why commanders prefer to divide armies up into smaller units and delegate command to their subordinates. To command a single unit of 50,000 men would require a Command check DC41. Possible, yes, but only by the most capable leaders.

**Table F-2: Unit Size Modifiers**

Unit Size	Modifier	Unit Size	Modifier
1	0	384-511	17
2	2	512-767	18
3	3	768-1023	19
4-5	4	1024-1535	20
6-7	5	1536-2047	21
8-11	6	2048-3071	22
12-15	7	3072-4095	23
16-23	8	4096-6143	24
24-31	9	6144-8191	25
32-47	10	8192-12287	26
48-63	11	12288-16383	27
64-95	12	16384-24575	28
96-127	13	24576-32767	29
128-191	14	32768-49151	30
192-255	15	49152-65535	31
256-383	16	65536-98303	32
Each doubling of size = +2 to the modifier.			

## Sequence of Battle

1. Each general rolls an opposed Command check to determine strategic advantage. The side with the strategic advantage gains a +2 bonus to initiative.
2. Each unit then rolls 1d20 to determine initiative, adding initiative bonuses only as follows:
  - Dedicated units use their Dex modifier and any feats (such as Improved Initiative) normally.
  - Mixed units may not add any bonus (Dex, feats, or otherwise) to the initiative check.
3. Each unit acts in order of initiative, choosing a Battle Action from the list below. Each unit gets one Battle Action before moving to the next unit, down through all units involved in the battle in order of initiative, before a new battle turn begins and the sequence starts anew.

## Battle Actions

### Move

This action is used to move the unit around the battlemat. Though a Battle Turn is about 10 rounds, it is assumed that units moving in formation through a dangerous battlefield move at a slower, more deliberate pace.

A unit in dispersed formation may move in any direction up to the limit of its movement. Units in dispersed formation do not have a facing.

A unit in open formation may move forward in a straight line only, but may make one turn of up to 90 degrees (or one hex face) at any point in its movement.

## GRIM TALES' MASS COMBAT

A unit in close formation may move forward in a straight line only.

A unit in tight formation may move in a straight line only, and only at half speed.

Any unit may make a movement action to turn in place, choosing any facing, and maintain formation.

A unit can *run* with a successful Command check (DC = 10 + unit size modifier):

- If the check is successful, the unit can move more than twice its base move (x3, x4, and even x5 with the *Run* feat). Remember that heavy armor and encumbrance limits an individual's maximum run multiplier.
- If the check is failed, the unit may not move more than x2 its base move.
- At the end of its movement, a unit that attempted to run (whether successful or not) drops to open formation.
- A unit may only run in a straight line.

A unit can only move as fast as its slowest member. If the battlefield scale exceeds the maximum movement of the slowest member, the unit may move a single square or hex only. A unit may always move at least one square or hex, regardless of map scale.

### Attack (melee)

This represents an attack *and* counterattack from the opposing unit. It represents about 10 rounds of combat.

The acting unit chooses a target opposing unit in an adjacent space.

Both units make a Battle check (1d20 + unit's current BR) against a DC equal to 10 + opponent's current BR.

A unit gains a +1 bonus to this Battle check if the opponent is in open formation, as the attacker is able to bring more combatants to bear against the defenders.

If the check succeeds, the opponent loses 2 BR, +2 BR for each 4 full points by which the Battle check exceeds the DC.

Remember that a melee attack involves an attack and counterattack; both units involved resolve their Battle check at their current BR before resolving any damage.

After a melee attack, the acting unit's commander must make a Command check (DC 10 + 1 per battle turn) to keep his unit in close or tight formation. If the check is failed, the acting unit drops to open formation.

### Attack (ranged)

Units armed with appropriate weapons may attack at range. The acting unit chooses a target opposing unit within range or in an adjacent space. Unlike a melee attack, the target of a ranged attack does not get to counterattack.

The attacking unit makes a Battle check (1d20 + unit's current BR) against a DC equal to 10 + opponent's current BR.

A unit attacking with ranged weapons gains a +1 bonus to this Battle check if the opponent is in close formation and a +2 bonus against units in tight formation, as the likelihood of striking *someone* amongst the tightly packed defenders is increased.

If the check succeeds, the opponent loses 2 BR.

### Charge

Units must charge in a straight line, and only against targets that are not already adjacent.

Only skirmishers may change facing before charging.

The charging unit and the target unit make Battle checks as with the attack action, above. Both units gain a +2 bonus to the Battle check (both the charging unit and the defending unit are more likely to strike successfully after a charge).

Note that some dedicated units (such as pikemen) are specifically trained with weapons designed to counter a charge.

After a charge, the acting unit drops to open formation (unless the unit was skirmishing beforehand).

Units on dangerous ground may not charge.

### Change Formation

The acting unit's commander must make a Command check (DC 10 + unit size modifier); the larger the unit, the harder it is to change formation.

The commander may change formation by one category (dispersed, open, close, or tight). Only dedicated units capable of fighting in dispersed or tight formation may choose those options.

Units on dangerous ground suffer a -2 penalty to their Command check when performing the Change Formation action.

### Form Detachment

The acting unit's commander must make a Command check (DC 10 + unit size modifier); the larger the unit, the harder it is to form a detachment.

The acting unit splits in half, forming two equal units. Each unit has a BR equal to the previous BR -2, and a unit size equal to half the previous total.

### Hold

The unit holds its ground and takes no other action.

If every other unit involved in the battle also holds, and this unit's action comes up again, you may choose the Hold action again to immediately end the current battle and proceed directly to the Battle Resolution (below).



## Battles Without Maps

On occasion you may wish to resolve a battle without going through the trouble of setting up a battlemat or using counters. In those situations, the following rules apply:

### Attack (melee or ranged)

The acting unit may choose any target unit. When making a ranged attack, the target unit does not get to counterattack.

### Charge

A unit that has not yet acted may charge any target unit. Resolve the charge attack following the Charge rules above. Units on dangerous ground may not charge.

### Maneuver (replaces Move)

When no map is available, this action is used to offset the abilities of dedicated units on the opposing side: charging the archers, flanking the phalanx, and so forth.

The acting unit's commander makes an opposed Command check against the target unit's commander. If the acting unit wins the opposed check, the target dedicated unit may not use its tactical abilities against the acting unit until the end of the acting unit's next action.

Units on dangerous ground suffer a -2 penalty to their Command check when performing the Maneuver action.

### Retreat

The unit attempts to flee the battlefield. It immediately loses 2 BR and moves to open formation.

In addition, the unit must make a Command check (DC 10 + total BR loss). If this check is failed, the unit commander is unable to keep discipline and the entire unit is scattered and destroyed (reduced to 0 BR).

After the battle, these casualties may be recovered as normal.

### Withdraw

A unit may attempt to make a fighting withdrawal from the battle. Other units may attempt to prevent this withdrawal, but at risk to themselves. Until the start of this unit's next action, any opposing unit that attacks the withdrawing unit suffers a -1 penalty. If the withdrawing unit has at least 1 BR remaining when its next action comes up, it is removed from the battle.

After the battle, the withdrawing unit can recover casualties as normal if the retreating unit is on the winning side of the battle.

### Morale

As a unit suffers casualties, it loses morale.

A unit that has lost 50% of its initial BR has poor morale. The unit must make a Command check (DC10 + total BR loss) in order to perform any battle action other than hold, withdraw, or retreat. If the Command check is failed, the unit may only hold.

If the unit is attacked in melee combat, it may counterattack as normal.

A unit that is down to 25% or less of its initial BR has very poor morale. The unit must make a Command check (DC15 + total BR loss) to perform any action other than withdraw or retreat. It may counterattack if attacked in melee, as normal. If the Command check is failed, the unit must retreat.

## Dedicated Units: Tactical Abilities

### Aerial

Aerial units may not be attacked by units that cannot fly. If an aerial unit chooses the melee attack action, the target unit may strike back as normal. If an aerial unit also has the ranged attack tactical ability, it may attack from range, but enemy units with ranged attacks may also attack until the start of the aerial unit's next action, when it has an opportunity to gain altitude and move away.

### Cavalry

Cavalry units add +1 to their Battle check against unmounted opponents.

A cavalry unit may make a Command check after a charge (DC 10 + unit size modifier) to maintain close formation.

### Magical

Creatures with breath weapons, spell-like abilities, and most spellcasters can take out multiple creatures with a single attack, making them inordinately powerful in mass combat.

Magical attacks receive a bonus to their Battle check to represent the devastation of area of effect attacks. Find the shape and size of the spell or magical effect on table F-3 to determine the maximum number of targets the spell can affect.

If the target unit is already smaller than the maximum number of targets the spell can effect, use the unit size modifier from Table F-2 instead. (Obviously, the spell cannot effect more targets than there are individuals in the unit.)

The result from Table F-2 indicates the bonus the magical attack receives to its Battle check.

The attacking unit makes a Battle check. If the check succeeds, the target unit loses 2 BR + 2 BR for every 4 full points by which the check exceeds the DC.

If the spell or effect allows a saving throw, the target unit makes a single saving throw (either negating the effect or reducing the BR loss by half). Dedicated units may add their normal saving throw modifier

Remember that for all saving throws, a natural 20 is always a success, and a natural 1 is always a failure.

Magical attacks may have a cost. If the magical attack cannot be produced at will, and is instead limited in use (for example, a number of uses per day), the attacking unit loses 1 BR after the resolution of the magical attack, to represent the loss of magical resources.

## GRIM TALES' MASS COMBAT

**Table F-3: Magical Attacks/Area of Effect<sup>1</sup>**

Size (feet)	Square (side length)	Cone (length)	Line (length)	Radius
	# Targets <sup>3</sup>	# Targets <sup>3</sup>	# Targets <sup>2,3</sup>	# Targets <sup>3</sup>
5	1	1	1	3
10	4	2	2	13
15	9	4	3	28
20	16	7	4	50
25	25	11	5	79
30	36	16	6	113
35	49	22	7	154
40	64	28	8	201
45	81	36	9	254
50	100	44	10	314
55	121	53	11	380
60	144	63	12	452
65	169	74	13	531
70	196	85	14	616
75	225	98	15	707
80	256	111	16	804
85	289	126	17	908
90	324	141	18	1018
95	361	157	19	1134
100	400	174	20	1257
105	441	191	21	1385
110	484	210	22	1521
115	529	230	23	1662
120	576	250	24	1810
1 Spells with a fixed number of targets (i.e. 1 target per caster level) may also be used. Simply look up the number of targets on Table F-2.				
2 Per 5' width of line.				
3 Maximum number of Small or Medium creatures that can be affected. For smaller or larger creatures, use the modifiers below:				
Fine	x100	x100	x10	x100
Diminutive	x25	x25	x5	x25
Tiny	x4	x4	x2	x4
Large	1/4	1/4	1/2	1/4
Huge	1/9	1/9	1/3	1/9
Gargantuan	1/16	1/16	1/4	1/16
Colossal	1/36	1/36	1/6	1/36

### Phalanx

Some units, such as the phalanx, are trained to fight in tight formation, allowing fewer men to defend against many. A phalanx receives a +2 bonus against units using the attack action whose BR is 2 or more greater than the phalanx.

After making an Attack action, a phalanx who fails a Command check (DC10) moves from tight to close formation. A phalanx

does not need to make a Command check to maintain close formation after defending against an attack.

Against ranged attacks the attacker receives a +2 bonus against a phalanx; a phalanx suffers a -2 penalty to saving throws against magical (area of effect) attacks.

### Ranged Attacks

Archers, crossbowmen, musketeers, or other units uniformly equipped with ranged weapons may make ranged attacks. Unlike a melee attack, the target unit does not get to strike back against a ranged attack.

### Reach

Units armed with reach weapons (such as pikemen) have a decided advantage against a charging foe.

Units with reach strike first against a charging attacker, and any wounds dealt to the charging unit are resolved before the charging unit makes its Battle check.

### Skirmishing

Skirmishers are trained to keep their distance from one another. Ranged attacks and volley fire suffer a -2 penalty against skirmishers, and skirmishers receive a +2 bonus to saving throws against magical (area of effect) attacks.

Skirmishers are at a disadvantage against massed melee attacks. A unit whose BR is 2 or more higher than the skirmishers receives an additional +2 bonus to its Battle check when using the attack action.

### Teleporting

Units capable of teleporting automatically succeed at Maneuver, Withdraw, and Retreat actions (no Command check required). These units cannot be out-Maneuvered.

## Heroes In Combat

Player characters and particularly heroic NPCs may be seconded to a unit to lead them, as well as to provide the unique assistance that only a hero can bring to a unit.

Remember that in most cases, a character attached to a unit is already increasing its EL/BR by his simple presence, and it is assumed that he is already contributing to the success of his unit through the expenditure of his resources, whether in the form of spells cast, hit points, equipment, and so forth.

The heroic actions presented here are extracted from the normal EL-based system, not because they deserve special consideration within the system, but rather so that the players feel they can make some positive contribution to the battle beyond simply being lumped into a unit's overall EL. (Indeed, if you want to resolve a battle quickly, you may choose to disallow heroic actions of any kind and trust fully to the EL-based system.)

The GM may decide to create additional heroic actions, but be aware that the more you extract the characters' abilities from

the EL-based system, the more you will skew their impact on the system.

### Heroic Charge

A player character may attempt to lead a small band of men directly to the heart of the enemy unit. The character should make a Command check (DC 10 + enemy unit modifier). The GM may allow the heroic character to fight a mini-encounter against the enemy commander, a monster, a large group of elites, etc. If this mini-encounter is not resolved within 10 rounds (the duration of 1 battle turn) the PC is swept away in the clash of battle. He may not try again in the same battle.

Compare the result of the Command check to the table below to determine the difficulty of the mini-encounter:

Command Check	Heroic Charge Result
up to DC -4	The PC is unable to penetrate to the heart of the enemy unit. (No encounter.)
DC -4 to DC -2	The PC finds the enemy commander prepared for his assault. (Enemy EL + 2)
DC -2 to DC	The PC meets the enemy commander in equal combat. (Enemy EL +0)
DC to DC +4	The PC finds the enemy commander in a compromised position. (Enemy EL -2)
DC +4 or more	The PC strikes to the heart of the enemy unit and confronts the enemy commander alone. If the PC survives an encounter against a superior foe, the GM may award him an action point.

A character may choose a result on the table lower than the achieved result, if desired.

If the PC defeats the enemy commander, the enemy unit's morale is immediately downgraded by one step (poor or very poor).

### Heroic Sacrifice

An individual may make a heroic sacrifice in combat, shouldering a greater portion of the unit's losses. If a unit is damaged, the individual may make a Command check (DC equal to the maximum BR of his own unit). If the check is successful, the character may expend his own resources to prevent a loss of BR to his unit, as follows:

For each point of BR damage dealt to a unit, the individual takes 25% of his own maximum hit point total in damage instead. A hero slain in this way cannot later be recovered from casualties.

### Use Devastating Magic

The character must cast a number of spells of "sufficiently devastating effect." This is defined completely at the GMs discretion, though the following are good guidelines:

- The spell must affect at least 4 creatures within its area of effect, and
- The spell must be either a *save or die* spell or inflict at least half damage on a successful saving throw.

If the spells cast are deemed sufficiently destructive and the number of spell levels cast is equal to 2x caster level, the character may make a special Battle check equal to 1d20 + caster level against a DC equal to the target unit's BR.

As with a magical attack (see above), the acting character receives a bonus to his Battle check for casting an area of effect spell. Resolve the damage exactly as for a magical attack.

### Use Healing Magic

It is not a simple matter to use healing magic in the midst of a mass combat. The healer must either place himself in harm's way, moving from wounded to wounded, or make certain that wounded individuals are moved to the safety of the rear and fresh combatants are sent in to replace them.

The character must make a caster level check against a DC equal to the normal, maximum BR of the unit (also its EL). A character must cast a number of healing spells whose total spell levels is at least equal to his own caster level. Add +1 to the caster level check for each additional healing spell level cast. A caster may not cast more than 10 healing spells (of any level) in one battle turn. If the check is successful, the unit recovers 1 BR.

### Other Magic

Characters may use other kinds of magic, provided they have some tangible effect on the battlefield: movement, position, concealment, cover, and so forth.

### Battle Resolution

A battle may end for a number of reasons:

- All opposing units are reduced to 0 BR;
- All opposing units have withdrawn or retreated;
- All units (friend and foe) have held their action and the battle ends by default.

Once a battle is ended, the GM should resolve strategic objectives and casualties. If the story dictates, another battle may then be fought (after a few hours, the next day, etc.).

### Resolving Casualties

Because BR is based on EL, a loss of 2 BR is essentially a loss of half of a unit's fighting readiness. This does not necessarily mean that half of the combatants are killed, however; in this abstract system, it may represent a loss of hit points spread throughout the unit, or the depletion of resources such as ammunition or spells.

The victor's strategic objective determines what percentage of lost BR is permanent loss. The remaining BR is recovered after the battle ends, as wounds are patched up, the combatants recover their wits, resupply, and so forth.

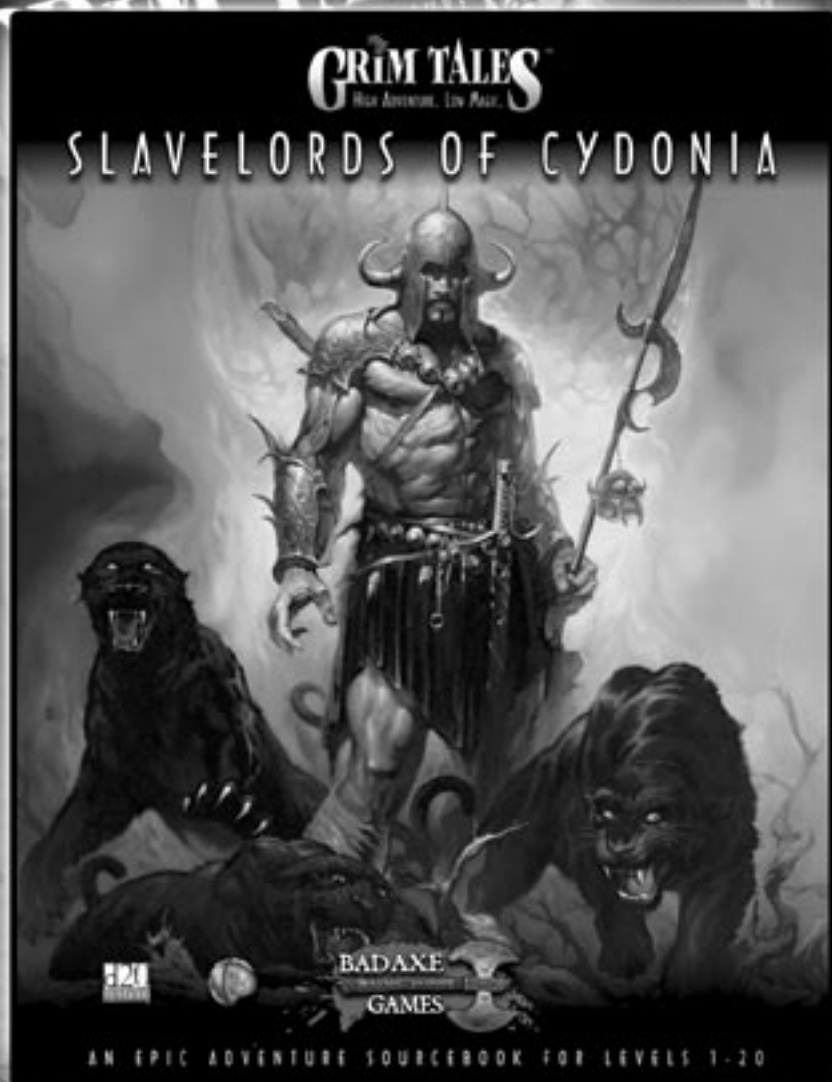
A unit that is reduced to 0 BR cannot recover casualties unless its army wins the overall battle. Such a unit, when on the losing side of a battle, will be destroyed or scattered by the victorious enemy forces.

HIGH ADVENTURE... LOW MAGIC... ALL GRIT.

# GRIM TALES

HIGH ADVENTURE. LOW MAGIC.

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