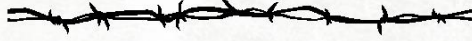


# MUTANT



# MASS COMBAT

VERSION 1.0



**All Your Base Are Belong To Us!** New set of rules for managing attacks against the Ark and military campaigns in the Zone.

by Stéphane Van Cauwenberghe  
(Stefouch)



## AUTHOR

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## COVER ART

*The Battle of Avaí* (Pedro Américo, 1877)

## PREFACE

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**Website:** [stefouch.be](https://stefouch.be)

## SEE ALSO

**Sebedius.** A Discord bot with command utilities for several Year Zero games.

<https://github.com/Stefouch/sebedius-myz-discord-bot>

**Find My Path.** A web application for managing the map of the Zone.

<https://stefouch.github.io/myz-zonemap>

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This document is an expanded set of rules for managing attacks against the Ark and military campaigns in the Zone. A mass combat typically opposes two factions. To see how the battle unfolds, the players roll dice and perform actions for one faction against the GM for the other faction. Mass combat takes longer than regular conflicts, both in real time and game time, and is therefore played out in Waves instead of Turns.

## PLAYERS POSITIONS

Typically, the PCs are divided into the following positions during a mass combat. For very small party, a single person can fill two or even more positions.

- ▣ **Leader:** In overall command of the force in battle. Gives orders, appraises reconnaissance reports and chooses the battle strategy. In an Ark, the leader is usually one of the Bosses. If they're a NPC, a player can still assist them and roll their dice.
- ▣ **Assailants:** Get inside a combat unit, using a large panel of skills to contribute to the battle.
- ▣ **Engineers:** Make emergency repairs, using the JURY-RIG and MANUFACTURE skills.
- ▣ **Medics:** Mend the wounds and get the fighters back on their feet using the HEAL and SENSE EMOTION skills.

## BATTLE POOL

Each leader gathers a pool of dice made of ✘ Battle Dice, ◎ Strategy Dice and ⚙ Support Dice. It's called the Battle Pool.

- ✘ **Battle Dice (Base Dice):** Represent the relative strength of the faction. The leader gets a number of Battle Dice equal to the Battle Level of their side. These dice are the bread and butter of the Battle Pool.

- ◎ **Strategy Dice (Skill Dice):** Denote any strategic advantage the faction has over the other. These dice allow additional roll pushes for the leader.

- ⚙ **Support Dice (Gear Dice):** Symbolize the relative logistic support and defensive structures. These dice can be "repaired."

**Default Battle Level:** Outside of its Ark, the Battle Level of an army is roughly equal to 1 per 20-50 fighters.

**Combat Ready:** If the Ark is alert and combat-ready, its Battle Level is increased by one. If it wasn't, it'll become it on the next Wave of battle.

## RECONNAISSANCE

The opposing factions may get into each other proximity without knowing their foe's exact location. In this situation, a Reconnaissance roll determines if a faction achieves to catch its enemy. The factions' leaders make an opposed COMPREHEND roll, which reflects their abilities to sift through constant reports from patrols, scouts and spies.

Each of the following factors gives a +1 modification to the leader:

- ▣ The faction has a scout or recon unit.
- ▣ The faction is on its home territory.
- ▣ The faction is on a defensive position.

Each of the following factors gives a -1 modification to the leader:

- ▣ The faction has no scout or recon unit.
- ▣ The faction has only flying units.
- ▣ The faction uses many motorized vehicles.
- ▣ The faction performed a forced-march.

**RESULT**

The leader who rolled the most ☢️ wins the Reconnaissance and achieves a surprise attack. If their margin of success equals or exceeds the rating of the Zone sector's environment (see table below), they can choose to prepare an ambush instead.

**SURPRISE**

The faction who achieves a surprise attack gains 🎲🎲 (two Strategy Dice) for the first Wave of battle.

**AMBUSH (OPTIONAL)**

The faction who achieves an ambush gets the surprise effect above and gains an extra ⚙️ (Support Die) for the remaining of the battle. In addition, the ambushers cause CONFUSION to the enemy's ranks. However, an ambushers' leader can't choose a defensive strategy on the first Wave.



**ENVIRONMENT RATING**

The Environment Rating is halved (rounded up) at night and decreased by 1 in bad weather conditions. For both, first halve then decrease.

ENVIRONMENT	RATING	ENVIRONMENT	RATING
Jungle	2	Ash Desert or Glasified Field	4
Marshlands	2	Scrublands	4
Mountain	2	Underwater	2
Thick Woods	2	Ruins in Sea	3
Dead Woods	3	Island, Beach or Coastal Sea	3
Arctic	3	Open Sea	4
Ark or Settlement	3		
Huge Crater	3		
Ruins or Derelict Industries	3		



**CONFUSION**

A CONFUSED force can't choose any battle strategy except for Rally or Full Retreat (see page 4).

**BATTLE MODIFIERS**

These basic modifiers are the most fundamental adjustments to a leader's Battle Pool.

**SPECIAL CLASS**

A faction gains ⚙️ (one Support Die) for each special class it has at least a few units (maximum one die per class). There are six classes of special units for armies:

- ❑ **Aerial:** Hoverdrone, Elysium Attack Hovercraft.
- ❑ **Armored:** Truck, Steam train, Sentinels, Class III & IV Avengers, Armored Drone Vehicle Rhinoceros Model C, Artillery Drone MRS-E, Annihilator Class Colossus Robot, Elysium HBW-700 Karzer, Scrap ship, Rotzilla.
- ❑ **Artillery:** Scrap cannon, Artillery Drone MRS-E, Annihilator Class Colossus Robot.
- ❑ **Cavalry:** Automobile, Motorcycle, Buggy, Steam car, Bitterbeast mounts, Elysium Hoverbike, Elysium Patrol Hovercraft, Jet Ski. (Only relevant in non-siege situations.)
- ❑ **Engineering:** Gearheads, Technicians, Manufacture robots, Mining robots. (Only relevant in siege situations.)
- ❑ **Naval:** Scrap sloop, Scrap ship, Motor boat. (Only in Zone sectors with a connection to a sea or river.)

If the GM deems relevant, other types of units, such as Zone monsters or high-tech mobile infantries, can be considered special class on their own. Very powerful special units can also increase the faction's Battle Level and the number of Battle Dice the leader will get.

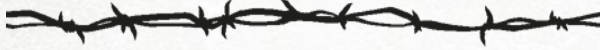
**SUPERIORITY**

A faction will gain an extra ☉ (Strategy Die) if it has at least a 2-for-1 superiority in the numbers of special units. Multiple superiority bonuses are cumulative.

A faction with superiority in both Armored and Artillery elements grants ☉ for Armored Superiority and ☉ for Artillery Superiority, for a net ☉☉ (two Strategy Dice).

**ARK PROJECTS**

Some Ark projects grant extra mass combat related bonuses:



ARK PROJECT	EXTRA EFFECT
Arsenal	+1 ⚙ Support at the Ark.
Defenses	The Ark is protected by a mere palisade.
Explosives Lab	Grants a special artillery unit for each four points of Battle Level, but only if the Ark is besieged.
Hunting Party	Grants a scout unit for Reconnaissance.
Shelter	If the Ark is besieged, the Full Retreat strategy is allowed and a rout doesn't cause a total surrender. A successful retreat means escaping the battle. The leader suffers one less damage from Retaliation.
Ship	Grants a special naval unit for each three points of Battle Level.
Stables	Grants a special cavalry unit or a friendly monster for each two points of Battle Level.
Steam Car	Grants a special cavalry unit for each two points of Battle Level.
Watchtower	If the Defenses project is also completed, the Ark is considered walled.



**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

The GM may give additional ☉ (Strategy Dice) bonuses or penalties from -3 to +3 for any other factors as she sees fit. (E.g. for a brilliant - or stupid - plan described by the PCs; or a low Ark's Food DEV Rating; etc.)

**DEFENSIVE ADVANTAGE**

The Defensive Advantage only applies to the side who chooses a defensive strategy. The bonus depends on terrain, with ☉ (one Strategy Die) in hills or ☉☉ (two Strategy Dice) in mountain, underground bunkers or large urbanized areas (ruined or not).

Notably strong positions such as walled arks and fortresses provide a greater Defensive Advantage and require a Siege (see page 7).

**NEGATIVE STRATEGY**

After applying all modifiers, if a faction comes up with a negative number of ☉ (Strategy Dice), instead the opposing faction gets that many extra dice.

**INITIATIVE & PHASES**

When the battle is about to begin, roll initiative. This works just like in regular conflicts, but only the leader of each faction rolls the initiative.

Each Wave of mass combat has six phases, and each faction gets to perform one action in each phase. All factions perform their action in the phase, in initiative order, before moving on to the next phase.

1. RISK PHASE
2. STRATEGY PHASE
3. ACTION PHASE
4. BATTLE PHASE
5. SUPPORT PHASE
6. END PHASE

## 1. RISK PHASE

Each leader and participating PC has to choose a Risk Modifier between -3 and +3. The higher the modifier, the greater the risks that player is taking in the battle. The Risk Modifier is added to all skill rolls attempted by the player during this Wave of battle.

However, the Risk Modifier also applies to the Retaliation (see page 7). *(Cowardly PCs and those PCs in units held in reserve or who otherwise were not exposed to the full impact of the battle should not pick a Risk above +1. Overconfident PCs should not pick a Risk below -1. Berserk PCs should not pick a Risk below 0.)*

## 2. STRATEGY PHASE

Every Wave, the leader secretly chooses one battle strategy among four categories: offensive strategies, defensive strategies, retreat strategies and harass strategies.

**Choice Restrictions:** A leader of an ambushing force can't choose a defensive strategy. A leader of a CONFUSED force can only choose Rally or Full Retreat.

**Stalemate:** If both leaders chose a defensive strategy apart from Parley, instead switch both strategies for Skirmish.

**Null Battle:** If both leaders chose a retreat strategy, or if one chose a retreat strategy and the other chose a defensive strategy, instead the retreating forces fall back and the battle ends.

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### OFFENSIVE STRATEGIES

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- o **Attack:** A default option with no special modifier.
- o **Total Attack:** Gain ☉☉, but your faction suffers double casualties. If you win this Wave, you inflict +1D6 more casualties to the enemy.
- o **Planned Attack:** Gain ☉, and another ☉ if you have Artillery Superiority. Foe's Strategy Dice from Defensive Advantage are halved (rounded down).
- o **Feinted Attack:** Lose ☉☉, but if you win your margin of victory is doubled. *(E.g. if the attacker succeeds by three ♣ and the defender by one ♣, the margin of victory is 2, then doubled to 4.)* This strategy exemplifies the leader carrying out some risky but rewarding move with their force.
  - Repeated Feinted Attacks have diminishing returns as the foe becomes more vigilant. On the following Feinted Attacks, the margin of victory is only increased by one. Moreover, you lose an extra ☉☉ if you choose a Feinted Attack after another on the very next Wave.

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### DEFENSIVE STRATEGIES

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*(Defending factions also gain the Defensive Advantage.)*

- o **Defense:** Gain ☉.
- o **Total Defense:** Gain ☉☉, but your faction suffers double casualties.
- o **Planned Defense:** Gain ☉, and another ☉ if you have Artillery Superiority. Can only be chosen during the first Wave of battle and only by a force who benefits from a Defensive Advantage and who isn't surprised. If you win or tie, you inflict +1D6 more casualties to the enemy.

- o **Rally:** Only used when a faction is CONFUSED.

If your force survives this Wave, you may attempt a COMMAND or MANIPULATE roll modified by your Risk Modifier during the Support Phase. If you succeed, your faction rallied and is no longer CONFUSED.

- o **Parley:** You try negotiating a truce in the battle to talk with your opponent. They decide whether to agree after all battle strategies have been chosen.

- **Accept:** If the opponent accepts, a cease-fire is declared and the battle momentarily stops. Talks between the opposing leaders can start. All factions skip their remaining phases for this Wave of battle.
- **Decline:** If the opponent declines your offer, the battle proceeds as normal. Your own strategy is switched for Defense, but you lose 1 as you weren't attentive to win this Wave.

*Example: The Ark is besieged by the Helldrivers. Boss Marlotte wants to negotiate and chooses Parley. Ilona, the Helldrivers' leader, accepts and the battle pauses. Both leaders have a talk at the edge of the Ark's fortifications. They agree to settle the issue of this war on a duel between their respective champions.*

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### RETREAT STRATEGIES

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- o **Fighting Retreat:** Gain 2, but you skip your Support Phase, can't win this Wave and your foe's casualties are halved (rounded down). If you win or tie, your faction escapes. Otherwise, it's still fighting.
- o **Full Retreat:** Gain 4, but you skip your Support Phase, can't win the battle and your foe suffers no casualties at all. Regardless of who wins this Wave, your faction escapes and suffers -2D6 less casualties.
  - The Strategy bonus is reduced to 2 if your faction is CONFUSED. (*A Full Retreat is not a rout.*)

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### HARASS STRATEGIES

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- o **Raid:** Gain 1 per Aerial Superiority, Cavalry Superiority and Naval Superiority. If you win, the enemy must skip their Support Phase.
- o **Skirmish:** Gain 2 and another 1 if you have at least Aerial Superiority and/or Artillery Superiority. Your faction suffers -1D6 less casualties. If you win, your margin of victory is halved (rounded down).

## 3. ACTION PHASE

PCs actions may also affect the battle, much like their rolls help the Ark's projects. One assailant for each faction makes a Remarkable Action roll with one of the following skills: ASSAULT, CALCULATE, COMMAND, FIGHT, INSPIRE, SHOOT or SNEAK. Other assailants may help, even if they don't have any of these skills. Each 1 rolled is worth 1 (one Strategy Die) for their leader's Battle Pool during this current Wave of battle, with a maximum of 4.




**Commando Operations:** Assailants may instead carry out a hit and run operation to decrease the opponent's strategic advantage or impede their logistic. This must be chosen before rolling the dice. Each 1 rolled remove 1 from the opponent's Battle Pool, but it can't cause that number to go below zero. In addition, a 1-1 pair rolled may be spent to destroy 1 from the opponent. (*Turn the Support Die on its face and set it aside until the Support Phase.*) However, accomplishing a commando operation increases by one the Retaliation of all players involved in it.






**NPC's Remarkable Actions:** Instead of making Remarkable Actions rolls for NPCs, the GM may just give any number of extra Strategy Dice as she sees fit, usually one die.


## 4. BATTLE PHASE

Determine each leader's Battle Pool with the following:

- The faction's current Battle Level.
- Reconnaissance bonus (if any).
- Basic battle modifiers (special class units and superiorities, special circumstances, etc.).
- Defensive Advantage (if apply).
- Modifiers from the chosen battle strategy.
- Assailant's bonuses from their Remarkable Actions.





Then the leaders make an opposed roll with their Battle Pool. Every  means that something goes right for the faction - it advances, a key position is taken, enemies are killed. All players and the GM should cooperate to describe the scenes of battle. Every  rolled means that the faction suffers losses and loses morale. Every  means that the faction suffers damage to its defensive structures or loses a special class unit.





When both sides have rolled, each leader can, in initiative order, settle or push their Battle roll - reroll all dice that don't show ,  or . A leader can push their Battle roll any number of times they like - irrespective of whether the enemy faction pushes its Battle roll or not - but they must first remove  (one Strategy Die) from their Battle Pool to do so (they can remove one with .

Keep this up until neither leader can nor wants to push their Battle roll anymore. The winning faction is the one who rolled the most .



## 5. SUPPORT PHASE

In this phase, one engineer and one medic for each faction can perform one of the below actions. Other engineers and medics can help their active peer.

 **Emergency Repairs:** An engineer can hastily repair a damaged support structure or unit. They roll for JURY-RIG or MANUFACTURE. Each  pair rolled restores one . (*Turn the Support Die on a numbered face.*)

 **Mend the Wounds:** A medic can hastily mend wounds and comfort. They roll for HEAL or SENSE EMOTION. Each  pair rolled restores one . (*Turn the Battle Die on a numbered face.*)

### DAMAGED SUPPORT


When a faction owns multiple sources of  (*Support Dice*), it can be hard to differentiate which one is damaged by  rolled. The rule of thumb is to first consider damage on fortifications and the ambush bonus, then Special Units.

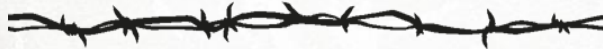
When it comes to identify which specific fortification or Special Unit is damaged, the choice is left to the opponent.

Of course, the GM has the final say.



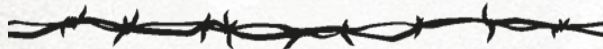
## 6. END PHASE

The difference in the amounts of  by which the leaders achieved (or failed) their Battle roll determines how decisive the victory is.



### MARGIN OF VICTORY: BATTLE RESULT

±0	<b>Inconclusive Battle:</b> Each faction holds position and suffers +2D6 more casualties.
+1	<b>Marginal Victory:</b> The winner suffers +1D6 more casualties and the loser suffers +3D6 more casualties.
+2	<b>Definite Victory:</b> The winner suffers no additional casualties and the loser suffers +4D6 more casualties.
+3	<b>Great Victory:</b> As above, but the losing side also becomes CONFUSED.
+4 or higher	<b>Overwhelming Victory:</b> As above, but the losing side routs and its leader is captured.




### RETALIATION

Each PC who participated in the battle suffers an attack of a number of Base Dice equal to six plus the Risk Modifier they chose.

In addition, each of the following factors gives an extra Base Die of damage to the PC:



- ❑ He participated in a Remarkable commando operation.
- ❑ His faction lost this Wave of battle.
- ❑ His faction is routed.
- ❑ The opposing faction has at least one Artillery unit left.


Each  inflicts one point of damage to the player. Armor offers protection. PCs that only helped another player are inflicted the same amount of damage that player is suffering.

If a PC becomes broken, he might be left for dead, brought back by his comrades, or possibly captured. The GM should decide according to which side won the Wave of battle.

If a leader becomes broken, the person who is next in command must make an immediate COMMAND or MANIPULATE roll modified by -3 and his Risk Modifier. Failure means the faction is immediately CONFUSED.





### CASUALTIES

The faction's force is decreased by 2D6 for each  and by 1D6 for each . Sum the dice and adjust the total according to the chosen battle strategy's effect and the margin of victory. The result tells how many fighters were killed in action.


**Ark Projects:** If one of the factions is defending its Ark and it lost this Wave, roll a Gear Die. On a , one random project in the Ark is destroyed.

### NEXT WAVE


For the next Wave of battle, recalculate the Battle Pool as follows:




- ❑ All dice with  or  are discarded.
- ❑ Adjust the factions' current Battle Levels along with the suffered losses and the destroyed Ark projects. Add or remove  accordingly.
- ❑ All  are discarded since strategic advantages are reevaluated for each Wave.
- ❑ The winning faction gains  for the next Wave if it used an offensive strategy.

### END OF COMBAT

The Mass Combat ends when all opposing factions routed, escaped the battlefield, or have no  left.

## SIEGES

A siege is an assault on a notably strong position. The defenders occupying such a place get a Fortification Bonus to their Defensive Advantage (see page 3) in the form of a variable number of additional  (Support Dice). These dice can be repaired in the Support Phase if they are damaged.


FORTIFICATION	BONUS
Mere palisade, trenches	
Walled Ark or settlement, strong entrenchments (such as those from WWI), fortified urban area (ruined or not)	
Fortress or castle, underground bunker complex	

**Allowed Battle Strategies:** In siege situations, the defending leader can choose only the following strategies: Defense, Total Defense, Fighting Retreat, Parley or Raid.


**Retreating from a Stronghold:** When the stronghold's defenders escape the battle, it ends the siege and starts a new ordinary battle outside the walls. It causes the defenders to lose the Fortification Bonus.

**Rout:** If the defenders are forced to rout and have no way out, they surrender instead.

## MUTATIONS IN MASS COMBAT

Relevant mutations and animal powers can substitute for skill rolls attempted during the Action Phase and the Support Phase. It costs two MP or FP to get a single .






## EXAMPLE: GHOUL STRIKE

A large force of Zone-Ghouls attacks the Ark in the dead of the night. They beat the Ark for the Reconnaissance roll with a comfortable margin of two . Since the area's dominant environment are urban ruins with a rating of 3, it's large enough to settle an ambush by night. The Zone-Ghouls bypass the mere palisade and swarm into the Ark without warning. The Boss Marlotte is awoken by many outside screams and quickly understand that the Ark is under attack. She gets his gang members out of their beds and hastily organizes a defense.

The Ark has a Warfare DEV of 14, giving it Battle Level 2. The attackers are many and have Battle Level 3. The Ark possesses a scrap cannon built by the Gearhead Angus, earning the defenders a Support Die for this special class unit and a Strategy Die for Artillery Superiority. The GM doesn't allow any Defensive Advantage for the Ark since the Zone Ghouls are already inside. The Zone-Ghouls gain two Strategy Dice for their surprise attack and an additional Support Die for their planned ambush.

Marlotte's first strategy is to Rally the Ark's fighters since the sudden Zone-Ghouls intrusion caused total confusion among their ranks. The Zone-Ghouls are here to strike the Ark hard and use a Total Attack strategy, granting them two Strategy Dice.

The Stalker Dora wants to accomplish a Remarkable Action to help Marlotte in her strategy. She wants to raise the alarm by ringing the old bell from above the decrepit church tower. She chooses a Risk Modifier of +1. With the GM's consent she makes a SNEAK roll. She gets two successes and therefore grants two extra Strategy Dice to Marlotte.

Both leaders roll initiative. Marlotte begins and rolls her Battle Pool of . She gets one  and one . She decides to push her roll, removing a Strategy Die before rerolling the dice, and gets a second . The Zone-Ghouls roll their Battle Pool of . They push twice



## MASS COMBAT MEMO

- ✘ Battle Die (Base)
- ◎ Strategy Die (Skill)
- ⚙ Support Die (Gear)

### BATTLE SEQUENCE

1. Risk
2. Choose battle strategy
3. Remarkable Actions
4. Battle roll
5. Support
6. Retaliation & Casualties

### SPECIAL CLASS

- Gain ⚙ per class.  
Gain ◎ per Superiority.
- ☐ Aerial
  - ☐ Armored
  - ☐ Artillery
  - ☐ Cavalry
  - ☐ Engineering
  - ☐ Naval

### DEFENSIVE ADVANTAGE

TERRAIN & FORTIFICATIONS	BONUS
Hills, dry moat or unforded/unbridged river	◎
Mountainous or urbanized (ruined or not)	◎◎
Mere palisade, trenches	⚙
Walled Ark or settlement, strong entrenchments (such as those from WWI), fortified urban area	⚙⚙
Fortress or castle, underground bunker	⚙⚙⚙

### RETALIATION

- 6 + Risk Modifier
  - + Commando operation\*
  - + Losing side\*
  - + Rout\*
  - + Artillery\*
- \*If true = +1

### CASUALTIES

- ☠ = +2D6
- ☠☠ = +1D6

### NEXT WAVE

- ☐ Discard all ☠ and ☠☠.
- ☐ Adjust Battle Level and ✘.
- ☐ Reevaluate ◎.
- ☐ Gain ◎ if you won with an offensive strategy.

### BATTLE STRATEGIES

STRATEGY	CATEGORY	◎	SPECIAL RULES
Attack	Offensive	±0	—
Defense	Defensive ♥	+1	—
Feinted Attack	Offensive	-2*	Double margin on win.
Fighting Retreat	Retreat	+2	Escape on win/tie. Skip Support Phase. Halve enemy casualties.
Full Retreat	Retreat	+4*	Escape. Suffer -2D6 casualties. Skip Support Phase. Inflict no casualties.
Parley	Defensive ♥	±0	Defense at -1 if rejected.
Planned Attack	Offensive	+1*	Halve defender's Defense Bonus. Slow.
Planned Defense	Defensive ♥	+1*	Inflict +1D6 casualties on win/tie.
Raid	Harass	±0*	Cause Support Phase skipping on win.
Rally	Defensive ♥	±0	Allow a skill roll to end CONFUSION.
Skirmish	Harass	+2*	Halve margin on win. Suffer -1D6 casualties.
Total Attack	Offensive	+2	Inflict +1D6 casualties on win. Suffer double casualties.
Total Defense	Defensive ♥	+2	Suffer double casualties.

♥ Defensive strategies allow the Defensive Advantage.  
\* Modified by Special Units Superiority or other factors, see description.

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