

ULTIMATE MASS BATTLE GUIDE



Ultimate Guide Series

By: Aaron T. Huss

Editing: Sarah Lyon, Jeremy Stromberg

Layout: Aaron T. Huss

Cover Art: shutterstock/Fotokostic

Interior Art: Joe Calkins, Collin Lenzen, Otherworld Creations, Public Domain, shutterstock/Fotokostic, shutterstock/Slava Gerj

Some images gathered from APG Studio Companion: Dixon and Rhead
© Alea Publishing Group

This game references the *Savage Worlds* game system, available from Pinnacle Entertainment Group at www.peginc.com. *Savage Worlds* and all associated logos and trademarks are copyrights of Pinnacle Entertainment Group. Used with permission. Pinnacle makes no representation or warranty as to the quality, viability, or suitability for purpose of this product.

Ultimate Mass Battle Guide is an extract from *Savage Insider Premium Issues #2 and 3* and presented here as a standalone product. The original content has not been altered other than for layout purposes and a new Character Options section has been added. *Savage Insider Premium* is a quarterly magazine dedicated to providing quality content for *Savage Worlds* and the many *Savage Worlds* settings published by Mystical Throne Entertainment.

© 2012 Mystical Throne Entertainment. All rights reserved.
Ultimate Mass Battle Guide 1st Edition November 2012

MTEUG0001

Permission is granted to print this eBook. No site license is given.

CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Composition	6
Composition Rating	6
CHARACTER/CREATURE TYPE	7
Flash Mob	7
Trained Soldiers	7
Elite Soldiers	8
CHARACTERISTICS	9
Size	9
Fear	10
Flight	10
Parry	11
Strength	11
ARMOR	11
WEAPONS	11
Improvised Weapons	12
Template Weapons	13
Armor Piercing	13
ABILITIES	13
Ethereal	14
Invulnerability	14
Resistance	14

Edges	14
Move to Battle	15
Examples	15
The Dragon Hunters	15
The Dragons' Den	16
Burning Crow	18
Range	19
Weapons	19
RANGE CATEGORIES	19
Battlemap	19
Melee Range	20
Close Range	20
Short Range	21
Long Range	21
APPLICATION	22
Fortifications	23
VERTICAL RANGE	23
Siege Tower	24
Breaking the Fortification	24
APPLICATION	25
Siege Engines	25
Terrain	26
Moving On	27

Heroic Intervention	28
FOCUSED ATTACKS	28
ATTACK THE GENERALS	29
MAKING CONNECTIONS	29
Putting it to Use	29
INQUISITOR STEEL	30
Character Options	33
New Hindrances	33
New Edges	34
New Arcane Background	36
BATTLE MAGIC	36
Power Points	36
NEW POWERS	37
PROFESSIONAL EDGES	38

Introduction

Lord Inquisitor Steel has finished his investigation into the Burning Crow cult and is assembling a force to strike them all down in one swift blow. He assembles the ultimate retinue, consisting of two of his finest inquisitors and some of the strongest recruits the Inquisition has to offer.

The Inquisitional Force of ten travels to the heart of Wisconsin's northern highland and takes their positions. The Burning Crow currently numbers 50 cultists, but Lord Steel's force is ready to overcome the odds and break the cult apart. But they must move quickly as the Burning Crow's shamans are nearby, ready to unleash a swathe of spirits upon the hiding strike team.

With the team in-place and the cult fully accounted for, the Game Master moves to Mass Battle. According to the rules, the Burning Crow cult gets ten tokens while the Inquisitional Force only gets two. Seemingly outnumbered and forced to overcome perilous odds, what are the players to do? While the rules for Mass Battles may be fast, fun, and furious, they don't take the quality of those involved into consideration when one of the striking forces is composed of characters with equivalent abilities to the PCs.

While it's possible to throw a few positive modifiers toward our PCs, they still have to overcome odds that will most likely see them fail. But when considering the situation, why wouldn't an Inquisitional Force be able to overcome a simple group of cultists?

To offer the Game Master mechanics for providing adjustments during the setup of Mass Battle, this discussion introduces a composition-based setup of each force and how they compare, allowing the more proficient force to be properly weighted against one of a simpler composition.

Composition

How does one properly weigh the composition of a force against that of another? There are several factors to take into consideration and include, but not limited to, the following:

- Character/Creature Type
- Characteristics
- Armor
- Weapons
- Abilities

Composition Rating

We use a Composition Rating instead of the basic rating that only considers quantity and slight advantages. Herein, the Composition Rating is used as the basis for determining the overall effectiveness of each side of the battle considering many characteristics.

When calculating the composition for each side of a battle, always consider what the majority of that force is comprised of instead of its best or worst members. Thus if a force of 10,000 is comprised of 7,500 trained soldiers and 2,500 conscripts, the majority rules as they push their conscript allies forward, bolstering their ranks. If the distribution was reversed, the conscripts would hinder the movement and tactics of the trained soldiers, forcing them into a lower Composition Rating.



CHARACTER/CREATURE TYPE

When constructing a Mass Battle, the core rules assume a 1:1 equivalency between the attacker and the defender. While in many (if not most) warfare situations this may be true, there are occasions where this does not apply, thus requiring new mechanics to overcome this difference. The core rules then simply add up the quantity on each side of the battle line, pinning quantity versus quantity and allowing characteristics to play as modifiers. This method of creating a Mass Battle starts by defining the character or creature type on each side of the battle line.

All mechanics are in opposition to counting a single participant in a Mass Battle as 1, which is standard in the core rulebook.

EXAMPLE: *10,000 soldiers versus 8,000 soldiers are counted literally giving one side 10 tokens and the other 8 with modifiers considering each side's position and advantages.*

Flash Mob

A flash mob is the assembly of combatants at its very basics. They are untrained and unprepared, but determined to fight against some force that is threatening their way of life. These are the “grab your pitch forks and storm the vampire’s castle” type of characters that really don’t belong in warfare, but are inevitably there. This style of combatant can also include fresh conscripts for a larger war who have yet to receive formal training.

At this very basic level, these types of combatants start with a Composition Rating of 1. Thus, 10,000 of these types of soldiers would be given a Composition Rating of 10,000.

Trained Soldiers

Trained soldiers are those prepared for battle, forming the rank and file of most armies. They do not stand-out from their peers but are much more capable of handling themselves in a battle compared to the flash mob-style combatant. Considering warfare, armies are composed of thousands and thousands of trained soldiers who die regularly or attempt to make a heroic stand. In individual game terms, trained soldiers are still considered Extras.

At this trained level, these types of combatants start with a Composition Rating of 2. Thus, 10,000 trained soldiers would be given a Composition Rating of 20,000 due to their training.

Elite Soldiers

Elite soldiers are the veteran warriors, heroes, special operations, and leaders of the militant force. All Wild Cards fall under the elite soldiers ranking, although not all elite soldiers need to be Wild Cards. In an army comprising goblins and trolls, the trolls would be considered elite soldiers even though they may still be Extras. In our introduction example, all members of the Inquisitional Force are considered Elite Soldiers.

At this level of expertise, these types of combatants start with a Composition Rating of 4. Thus, 10,000 elite soldiers would be given a Composition Rating of 40,000 due to their expertise.

IMPLEMENTATION

Using the Character/Creature Type of defining those involved in the Mass Battle, our Inquisitional force of 10 is now given a Composition Rating of 40. The cultists are considered trained soldiers and thus given a Composition Rating of 100. Instead of a 5:1 token ratio, the Inquisitional Force now has a 5:2 token ratio. While this is better, it still may not fully reflect the training of the Inquisition.



CHARACTERISTICS

When considering non-human creatures, it is pertinent to note their base characteristics that set them apart from the human soldier. If 100 human soldiers were fighting 10 dragons, would you really give the humans 10 tokens and the dragons only 1? More than likely, you would have to reflect upon the strength of the dragon against the strength of the humans. While 100 humans could easily take on a pair of dragons, 10 of them may easily wipe out this small army.

Characteristics mechanics are in addition to those deciphered for establishing the character/creature type.

Size

Due to its mechanic, size is an important factor when determining a creature's ability to defend itself against the odds. Since each increase in size increases a creature's Toughness, it should be a consideration when determining their Composition Rating. An easy mechanic is to add 1 to the Composition Rating for each increase in size the creature exhibits. This reflects their ability to soak the damage received from whomever they are facing.



IMPLEMENTATION

Our Inquisitional Force of 10 has come upon a dragon den on their way to defeat the Burning Crow cult. While our protagonists outnumber the dragons 5:1 (there are only two dragons), they are most likely not matched properly against the mated pair. The dragons start with a base Composition Rating of 4 each as they are considered elite. By adding their size, each dragon now has a Composition Rating of 12. Our Inquisitional Force with a Composition Rating of 40 may have some difficulty against the mated pair of Dragons with a Composition Rating of 24 and a token distribution of 10:6.

However, the dragon still has characteristics to consider as this battle should not be easily won.

Fear

Creatures with a Fear rating force Fear checks for all those involved, unless they are Fearless or have some type of immunity against that creature type. When considering a Mass Battle, this fear may cause soldiers to hesitate during their attacks or possibly drop their weapon and flee. To compensate for this characteristic, add 1 to the creature's Composition Rating to add the element of fear into the battle.

If the Fear-causing creature's opponents have characteristics to overcome Fear, this characteristic is ignored. Thus, if a character is Fearless or ignores Fear tests from that creature, do not add the +1 to that creature's Composition Rating.

IMPLEMENTATION

Because our Inquisitional Force is comprised of witch and ghost hunters, they do not have any defenses against dragons and thus suffer for it. The dragons add an additional 1 to their Composition Rating due to fear giving each a Rating of 13. Our Inquisitional Force with a Composition Rating of 40 is now being measured against two dragons with a Composition Rating of 26. There is still more to consider.

Flight

Creatures with Flight facing off against beings without flight gain an advantage. They can move away from melee combat or find an elevation their opponent cannot reach. To consider the strategic advantage of having flight over an individual who does not, add 1 to the creature's Composition Rating.

If the opponent also has Flight, this characteristic is ignored.

IMPLEMENTATION

The two dragons being faced by the Inquisitional Force both have the ability to fly, increasing their Composition Rating to 14 each.

Parry

Mass Battles are a swirling mass of attacks from all directions. As such, Parry shouldn't affect the Composition Rating as there are too many combatants and those involved have too many targets to monitor at one time.

Strength

While Strength could be a consideration for Composition Rating, it's often reflected within one's size rating (especially considering creatures). In addition, while many elite soldiers may have higher strength ratings, they already receive a higher rating simply for being elite. Thus, Strength doesn't affect the Composition Rating as other characteristics tied indirectly to it are already added in.

ARMOR

In warfare, armor can be very important, regardless if it's natural or just worn. As with size, Armor directly increases one's Toughness, increasing their ability to soak the wounds from their opponents. As a simple mechanic, add 1 to the Composition Rating for each point of armor the character or creature possesses. These armor points should be the base rating only and not those that fall under certain circumstances.

IMPLEMENTATION

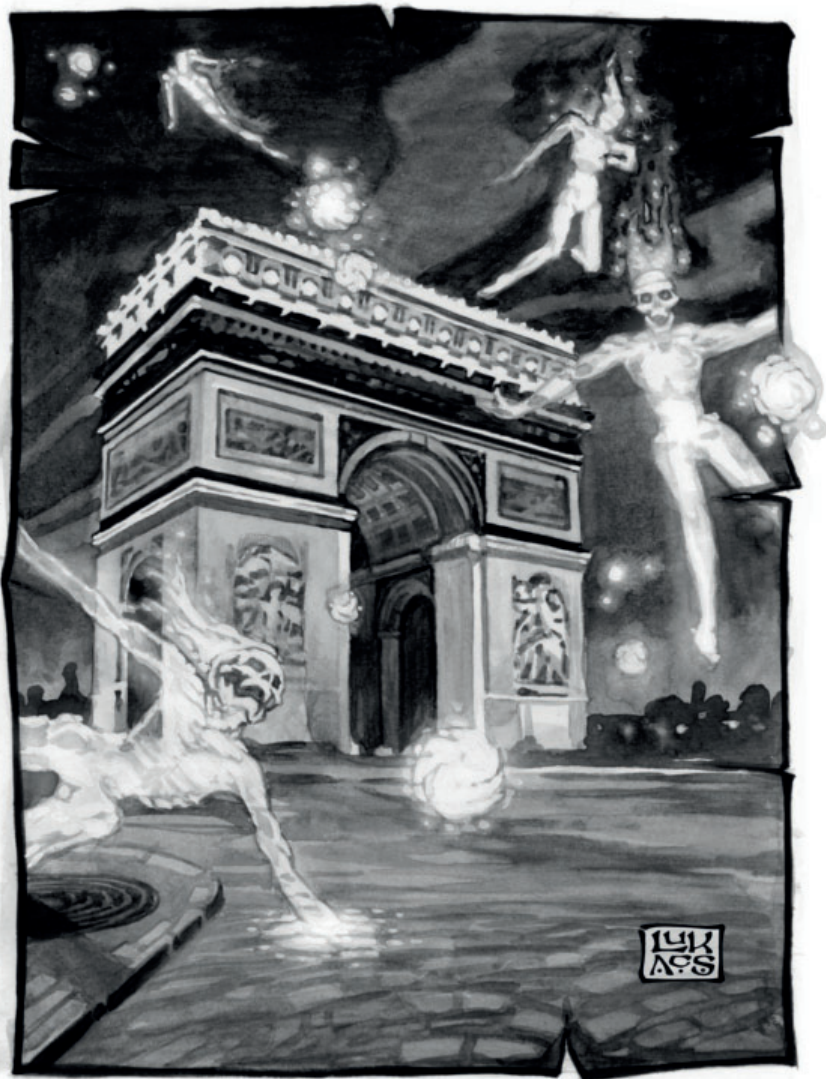
Our two dragons have scaly hides which provide them with 4 points of armor, bringing their Composition Rating to 18 each. However, our Inquisitional Force is all equipped with reinforced leather armor which provides each of them with 2 points of armor, bringing their Composition Rating to 6 each. As the two sides square-off, we now find a Composition Rating of 60 for the Inquisitional Force and 36 for the dragons.

WEAPONS

In warfare, weapons are relatively important in consideration of their effectiveness, not their damage. Daggers can kill someone just as easily as long swords, to a point.

Improvised Weapons

Improvised weapons hamper one's ability to properly combat their opposition. In game-terms, they have reduced damage, reduce one's Parry, and are generally not as reliable as regular weapons. Any soldier that picks up an improvised weapon to use during warfare should be penalized for their decision.



Any force utilizing improvised weapons subtracts 1 from their Composition Rating to a minimum of 1. Thus if a force of trained soldiers loses all their weapons and picks up a bunch of sticks and rocks, they are equivalent to a flash mob as their weapons are simply ineffective.

Template Weapons

Weapons that can attack and damage multiple targets at one time provide an advantage to the one wielding the weapon. To simulate this ability to affect multiple targets, add 1 to the Composition Rating for wielding a usable template weapon. The actual template used doesn't matter as all template weapons have the potential to affect more than one target.

Armor Piercing

Armor piercing is in opposition to a targets armor rating. Instead of increasing one's Composition Rating for having an armor piercing weapon, it lowers the targets Composition Rating when considering their armor. For characters with armor piercing weapons, each point of AP negates 1 point of Armor added to the targets Composition Rating. Thus a creature with Armor 4 against an enemy with AP 2 only adds 2 to their Composition Rating due to the armor piercing weapon wielding by their opponent.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Inquisitional Force looks as though they stand a good chance against the two dragons. With a current Composition Rating of 18, the dragons are able to add another 1 each due to their template weapons. However, because the Inquisitional Force wields weapons with a majority of AP 2, the dragons subtract 2 each to negate 2 points of Armor from the previous modification. The dragons now have a Composition Rating of 17 each against our Inquisitional Force with a Rating of 60.

ABILITIES

A creature's inherent abilities can drastically swing the advantage in either direction. As opposed to simple characteristics, abilities are much more drastic in measure, producing Composition Ratings that can potentially threaten to overwhelm the opposition.

Ethereal

Ethereal creatures are immaterial and can typically only be harmed by magical attacks. If your force of trained elite soldiers comes upon an army of ghosts, they better have magical weapons or powers that can damage the Ethereal beings. If they do not, their Composition Rating essentially becomes 0 as they are completely unable to damage the army of ghosts. This is fairly extreme and used in very specific cases. Some settings adjust this mechanic whereas it becomes a resistance instead of a complete immunity. A good example of this is when Aragorn recruited the horde of ghosts in *Lord of the Rings*.

Invulnerability

Invulnerability means the creature only takes damage from a specific attack type. When the opposition only contains weapons of the type the creature is immune to, their Composition Rating essentially becomes 0, as they cannot damage the creature. If the opposition better understands their target and are properly equipped, no additional modifications apply due to this invulnerability.

Resistance

Some creatures are resistant to certain types of attack, cutting the damage received in half. Demons, for instance, are resistant to non-magical attacks and receive half-damage from any weapon that is not forged from cold iron. (Again, some setting may adjust this mechanic.) If your force is ill-prepared for the enemy being faced, that enemy becomes a lot more difficult to defeat.

Creatures that are resistant to the attacks being made by their opposition double their Composition Rating after all other modifications have been made. This is only applicable when the enemy force does not have the type of weapons that cause normal damage.

Edges

If your small force comprises only PCs and PC-equivalent NPCs constructed using the typical method of character creation using Edges and Hindrances, they may have one or two Edges that give them an advantage within the Mass Battle against that particular opposition. Examples of this include Arcane Resistance, Giant Killer, and Beast Master (each with a very specific application). If you can directly tie an Edge to an advantage gained over the opposition, add 1 to the character's Composition Rating

Move to Battle

Composition Rating is used to determine the setup of both forces involved in a Mass Battle, providing defined mechanics for adjusting each side to better consider training, gear, and characteristics. Once you have a Composition Rating established, move to the Knowledge (Battle) roll as normal.

Examples

Now that the basics of using Composition Rating have been explained, a few examples of how it is implemented will allow the new mechanics to be *Fast, Fun, and Furious*.

The Demon Hunters

An Inquisitional Force of 10 demon hunters has tracked down the location of a demon summoning within the wetlands of Florida. Their training, investigation, and continued surveillance of the Burning Crow cult have led them to the night of their alleged summoning. Upon reaching a clearing in the wetlands, the demon hunters spot the summoning ritual, but they are too late. The cult's hierophant has already performed the ritual and demons are flying into the bodies of the willing participants, turning them into hideous beasts.

Our Inquisitional Force comprises five player characters and five non-player characters. The Game Master decides the battle would be easiest as a Mass Battle and begins to calculate each side's Composition Rating. The Inquisitional Force is divided between Demon Inquisitors and Demon Hunters, all of whom have the Demon Inquisitor Edge which gives them immunity to Fear and Intimidation against demons. Their Composition Rating is calculated as follows:

- **Elite Soldiers:** 4
- **Armor:** +2
- **Armor Piercing:** Enemy Armor -2
- **Demon Inquisitor:** Immune to Fear against demons.
- **Palladium Weapons:** Demons suffer regular damage from palladium weapons.

The Inquisitional Force is given a Composition Rating of 60.

There are twenty cultists who have now sprouted horns and wings to become hideous demons. The demon's Composition Rating is calculated as follows:

- **Elite Soldiers:** 4
- **Flight:** +1
- **Armor:** 0; negated by armor piercing weapons.
- **Fear:** 0; negated by the Demon Inquisitor Edge.
- **Resistance:** 0; negated by palladium weapons.

The demons are given a Composition Rating of 100; the Inquisitional Force stands a chance of survival, but they must use other tactics to gain any additional advantage over the demons. In addition, the demon force gains a +2 modifier to Morale Rolls due to being Fearless.

As the two forces are ready for battle, the demons are given 10 tokens while the Inquisitional Force is given 6.

The Dragons' Den

Dragons are large, vicious creatures and the Game Master does not want to be hampered in a Mass Battle by simply counting quantities of combatants.

The local populace around Budapest has no knowledge of the Inquisition and thus decides to take matters into their own hands. They send a force of 100 soldiers to flush out and kill the ten dragons living in the hills north of the city. The PCs are captains of the various squads and leading the march to the dragons' den. Not wanting to be simply outdone by a measly force of soldiers, the Game Master decides to use Composition Ratings to properly weight the two sides.

The Hungarian force consists of 100 trained soldiers and their Composition Rating is calculated as follows:

- **Trained Soldiers:** 2
- **Flak Jackets:** +2
- **Armor Piercing:** Enemy Armor -2

The Hungarian Force is given a composition rating of 400.

The dragons' den consists of 10 adult dragons and their Composition Rating is calculated as follows:

- **Elite Soldiers:** 4
- **Size:** +8
- **Fear:** +1

- **Flight:**+1
- **Armor:** +2; 2 additional points negated by enemy armor piercing
- **Template Weapon:** +1

The dragons are given a composition rating of 170.

As the two forces are ready for battle, the Hungarian Force is given 10 tokens while the dragons are given 4.



Burning Crow

Lord Steel's Inquisitional Force is confident in their ability to take down a force of cultists given their greater training and skill in combat. Before the cult's shamans are able to call forth a force of spirits, the Inquisitional Force moves in to attack.

At this point, the Game Master moves to Mass Battle using the Composition Rating to better rate the Inquisitional Force's superior training against the cultists.

There are ten witch and ghost hunters in the Inquisitional Force. Their Composition Rating is calculated as follows:

- **Elite Soldiers:** 4
- **Armor:** +2
- **Armor Piercing:** Enemy Armor -2

The Inquisitional Force is given a Composition Rating of 60.

There are 50 cultists in the Burning Crow cult ready to attack all those in opposition. Their Composition Rating is calculated as follows:

- **Trained Soldiers:** 2
- **Armor:** None
- **Armor Piercing:** None

The cultists are given a Composition Rating of 100.

As the two forces are ready to battle, the cultists are given 10 tokens while Lord Steel's Inquisitional Force is given 6.

Range

The Mass Battle mechanics for Savage Worlds are great when considering a swirling maelstrom of melee action between two sides bent on destroying each other. However, in many warfare situations, this is not the set up you want to portray. For example, how would something like this work when both sides have a combination of foot-soldiers, archers, cavalry, and siege engines? Without taking range into consideration, the time you spent planning the composition of your army could be for naught as you are unable to compensate for the positioning of your different forces and how they engage with the different forces of the enemy.

To add an additional layer of customization to your mass battle, we present here mechanics for incorporating range into your mass battles.

Weapons

The largest defining factor in regards to range during mass battles is the capability of the weapons. This capability is in regards to its distance and not its damage (except for siege engines which will be handled separately). When establishing the battleground using range mechanics, it is important to divide up the army into range categories.

RANGE CATEGORIES

Range categories help to establish what divisions of your army are capable of considering how long the reach of their weapons are. Instead of worrying about exact ranges, it's faster to use categories defined as melee, close (such as thrown weapons), short range, and long range. As weapon capability scales with the change from one genre to another, knowing the actual distance is not as important as understanding the relative distance.

Battlemap

When fighting a mass battle using range, it's easiest to use a battlemap of some type to define the different range categories. Draw on the battlemap different "blocks" regarding each range category following both directions of the mass battle.

In the middle of the battlemap would be the Melee Range. Next to that on both sides of melee is Close Range. Next to Close Range on both sides of the battlemap is Short Range. Next to Short Range on both sides is Long Range.

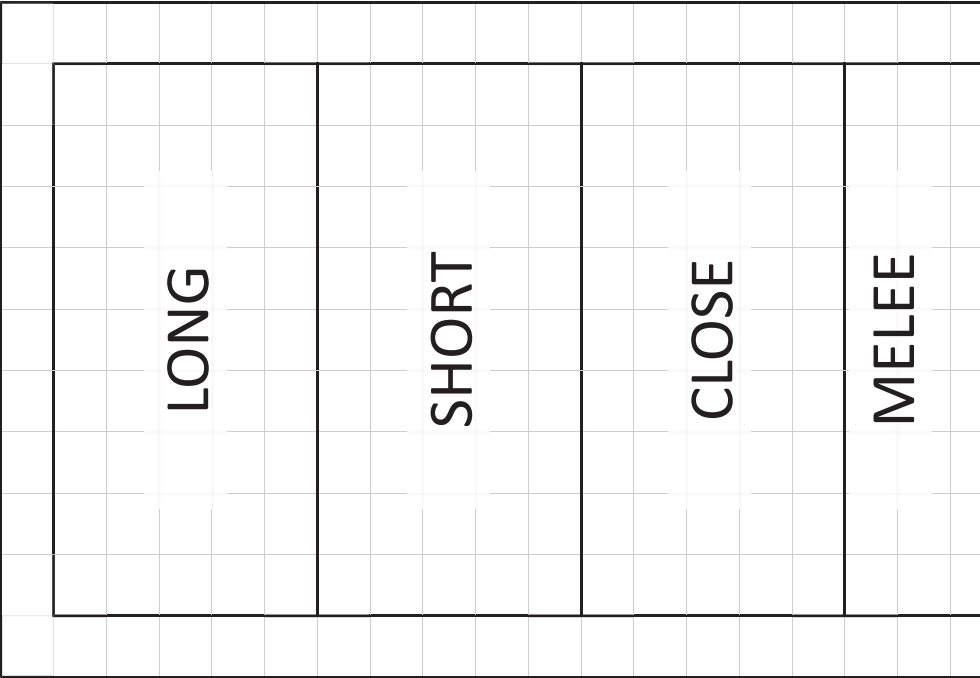
To keep things simple, the example battlemap is drawn using a 10 x 5 block for each range. Keep in mind this is an abstract way of representing range and not a method of defining actual distance.

Melee Range

Melee weapons are those that cannot be thrown or used at range, regardless of their reach. When establishing your army’s capabilities, these are the warriors that must move before they engage in mass battle. Melee weapons can only be used when both sides reside within the same range block as shown on the battlemap. Using the Melee Range block on the battlemap, both armies would have to move their troops into this block before they can be counted in the Knowledge (Battle) roll.

Close Range

Close Range consists of thrown weapons and ranged weapons with a very limited range (such as a sling). These weapons can be used to attack opponents in the same range block or one adjacent to it. Using the Close



Range block as shown on the battlemap, both armies could attack opponents within the same Close Range block as they are or in the adjacent Melee Range block.

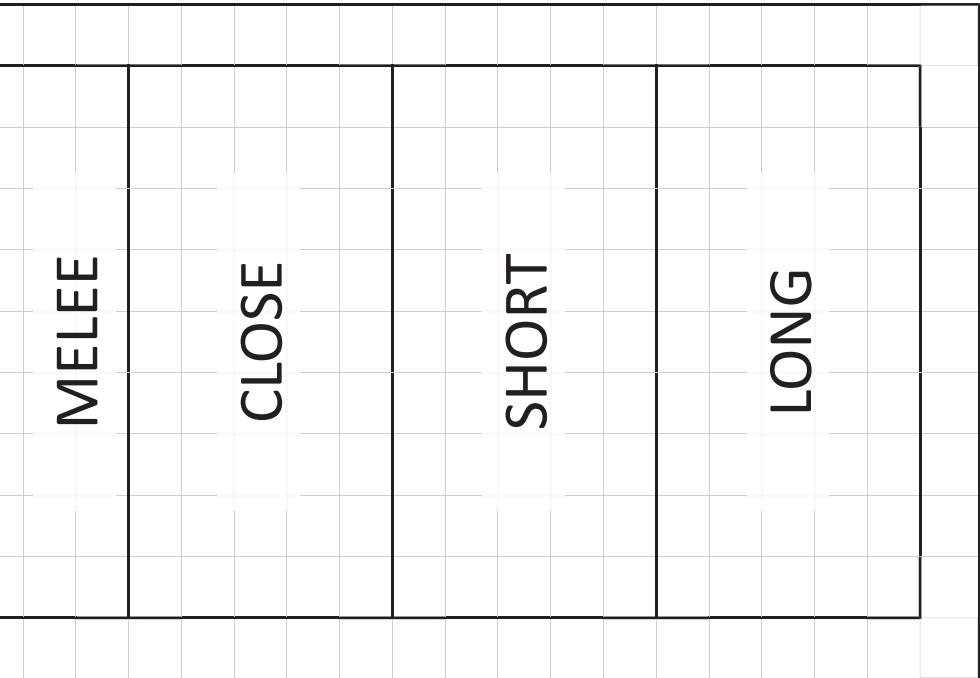
Short Range

Short Range consists of many standard ranged weapons including bows, pistols, and submachine guns. In a fantasy game, this may be the longest range utilized in the army. Short Range weapons can be used to attack opponents within four blocks away from their position.

Using the Short Range block as shown on the battlemap, both armies could attack opponents within the adjacent Close Range, Melee Range, opposite Close Range, or opposite Short Range. Outside of this range the weapons may become ineffective or at least not as reliable.

Long Range

Long Range consists of heavy weapons that are more common to modern games and those involving warfare (not including siege engines). These weapons include rifles, assault rifles, and machine guns. Using the battlemap, Long Range weapons can reach all the way across to the opposite Long Range block and everything in-between starting with the adjacent Short Range block.



APPLICATION

So, now that you have your armies divided into ranges, what good does it do? By dividing your armies into range categories, you can determine which army has an advantage over the other due to composition. If one army has lots of archers while the other consists of only foot-soldiers, there is a definite advantage to distance. When making your Knowledge (Battle) rolls, the foot-soldiers cannot even reach the archers until they've moved close enough to engage in melee combat.

So how do you resolve this? By forcing movement during the mass battle, you can declare that during the first round or two of combat, the foot-soldiers do not get to make any Knowledge (Battle) rolls and instead suffer from attrition. This is representative of the archers being able to attack their opponents before their opponents reach their position.

A second application of these mechanics is when both sides have ranged support, but only one side has long range support. In a battle of attrition, those that cannot be reached with ranged weapons cannot die. The side without long range support has a definite disadvantage as they cannot reach a portion of their opponent's army. The army with long range support can sit and fire upon their opponent with ease as they sit in a fortified position unreachable by the opponent's weapons. Thus when you calculate casualties, you ignore the long range support. This can also be considered as a minor or major advantage imposing a -2 or -3 penalty to the army without long range support.

When applying these mechanics and involving movement (as in one side's need to force movement to engage with the enemy), the number of tokens each army has during each round should be commensurate to how many divisions are actively engaged in combat.

For example, Army A has 10,000 soldiers while Army B has 7,000 soldiers. However, Army A solely consists of Melee and Close ranged warriors while Army B has Close and Short ranged warriors. During round 1 of the Mass Battle, Army A moves into the Melee Ranged block on the battlemap.

During the first round of Knowledge (Battle) rolls, Army B can use its entire army to full force while Army A can only use half (because only half of the army has Close range while the other half is Melee range). Thus, during the first round of warfare, Army B actually outnumbered its opponent 7:5 because only half of Army A's 10,000 soldiers can attack the enemy. Casualties are taken against the entire army of 10,000 (all 10 tokens), which may even the odds significantly for round 2 of the battle,

because Army B was able to effectively reach all of Army A due to ranged support.

If Army A loses 5,000 soldiers during the first round of fighting, then when round 2 starts and they move to fully engage the enemy, their army only totals 5,000, as they are all who survived the first onslaught from the enemy. Even though Army A outnumbered their opponent, due to their lack of ranged support, their opponent was able to reduce their numbers quickly.

Given these examples, determining ranged abilities can change the tide of the mass battle significantly to favor the army that plans appropriately.

Fortifications

In the above situation, mass battle is looked at from an open field. For warfare that occurs against an opponent inside a fortification, the mechanics for range are slightly altered.

Instead of providing simple bonuses to those inside fortifications, it can be much more exciting to impede the intruding army given the vertical distance they now have to overcome. Instead of drawing the battlemap in a strictly horizontal fashion, you have to think in a second dimension picturing those atop the fortification shooting down on their enemy.

VERTICAL RANGE

Most fortifications provide enough vertical distance equivalent to attack from the Melee Ranged block to the Short Ranged block. Using the above battlemap, the fortification is “drawn” adjacent to the Melee Ranged block. Those on the ground have to overcome the vertical distance in addition to the horizontal distance while those in the fortification only deal with the horizontal distance.

To overcome the vertical distance, only Short or Long Ranged weapons can be used against those atop the fortification. This position can still be reached via the opposite Close and Short Ranged blocks in addition to the Melee Ranged block.

Those atop the fortification gain a bonus as they no longer have to overcome the adjacent Close Ranged block in regards to their own ranged support. Thus those atop the fortification using Short Ranged weapons can effectively reach the opponent’s Long Ranged block. If the opponent has any Melee or Close Ranged warriors, they now become mostly ineffective during the chaos of warfare. To use these warriors

would require a siege tower to gain access to the upper portions of the fortification.

Siege Tower

To overcome a fortification's vertical distance, the army on the ground will need a siege tower to reach the top. Those within the fortification should be allowed to specifically attack the siege tower in the hopes of destroying it before enemy warriors can disembark.

Another option is to use ladders. While this allows the rest of their army to become useful, it should take 2 – 3 rounds of combat before the first warriors make it to the top of the ladder. This allows those atop the fortification 2 – 3 rounds of combat to hopefully cause enough casualties that those warriors again become mostly ineffective.

Breaking the Fortification

It is conceivable that with enough warriors, the army on the ground can concentrate attacks on the fortification itself in the hopes of breaking a wall and launching an assault within. This type of attack used the Obstacles mechanics from the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook. This should only be possible using siege engines.



APPLICATION

Using the above Army example, Army B is now protected within a fortification with a total of 7,000 troops. Because Army A only has Melee and Close Ranged soldiers, they must first overcome the vertical distance of the fortification before being able to attack the troops of Army B. However, they have come prepared with hundreds of ladders and a dozen siege towers (that hold 20 warriors each).

The warriors on the ladders will not overcome the vertical distance until the start of the third round of combat. The warriors in the siege towers will overcome the vertical distance at the start of the second round of combat. Thus, during the first round of combat, Army A is shelled by Army B because they have no one that can reach the troops atop the fortification.

Army A does not get a Knowledge (Battle) roll, giving Army B a minimum of one success before finally being able to react. While it is conceivable that Army B would focus on the siege towers, they would have to somehow overcome the toughness of those siege towers before breaking them down. This is difficult to abstract during mass battle and can instead be shown as a part of the casualties, given the percentage of warriors within the siege towers. A quick abstraction would be for every one token lost by Army A, they lose one siege tower.

Upon calculating casualties, round 2 of the mass battle will have to consider how many warriors from Army A made it to the top of the fortification. While this may be as low as 1 token, it still gives them a chance against Army B. Round 3 will see the remaining force of Army A in action as warriors are regularly disembarking from the siege towers and ladders. From this point on, mass battle resumes as normal without worrying about range.

Siege Engines

Siege engines provide long range support when attempting to overcome the enemy's defenses. They can be used to break apart shield walls, barriers, or fortifications, but aren't much more effective than regular weapons in killing soldiers. As such, the core rulebook allows for bonuses to Knowledge (Battle) rolls considering their use as artillery and heavy support.

When considering a more dynamic mass battle where the battlefield is littered with barriers, defensive positions, walls, and fortifications, siege

engines can be used for specific tasks to break the defenses of the enemy. This can be done by providing additional firepower for breaking through a fortification, allowing the foot-soldiers to enter, or by breaking apart a planned defensive emplacement, eliminating any bonuses being provided on the Knowledge (Battle) roll.

Mechanics for siege warfare can be found in *the Savage Worlds Fantasy Companion*. However, if you do not wish to perform siege warfare and prefer to simply use siege engines on a round-by-round basis for battering defenses, treat them as a type of character performing a specific task. If the operator of the siege engine can strike its target and overcome its Toughness, then the structure is either weakened or destroyed removing that bonus from any Knowledge (Battle) rolls or as a modification to range considerations (as the walls are knocked down and foot-soldiers are able to invade the fortification).

Terrain

Terrain can add another level of customization to your battlefield depending on its configuration. Rolling hills and groves of trees most likely will not sway a battle one way or another, but cliffs, rivers, and thick forests may. Most of these terrain features can be dealt with on abstract



levels including: only those within the thick forest have line of site for ranged attacks or the river requires two rounds to cross before the foot-soldiers arrive on the other bank.

If you are using terrain as part of your mass battle, either use the simple mechanics of allowing bonuses for ideal positions, or translate the terrain into mechanics regarding horizontal and vertical range and maybe even movement. However, warfare is typically fought on a relatively open battlefield; otherwise it's more like guerrilla warfare.

Moving On

All of the above mechanics and examples are for use during mass battle exchanges where one army has a ranged advantage over the other. As combat ensues, the armies may very likely move toward each other to engage in melee, making these mechanics ineffective. If movement is involved during the mass battle, then once both armies are fully engaged (as in 100% of their force is now able to attack the enemy), move to using the standard Mass Battles mechanics. The purpose of the ranged mechanics is to allow for a more dynamic mass battle when range is a consideration.



Heroic Intervention

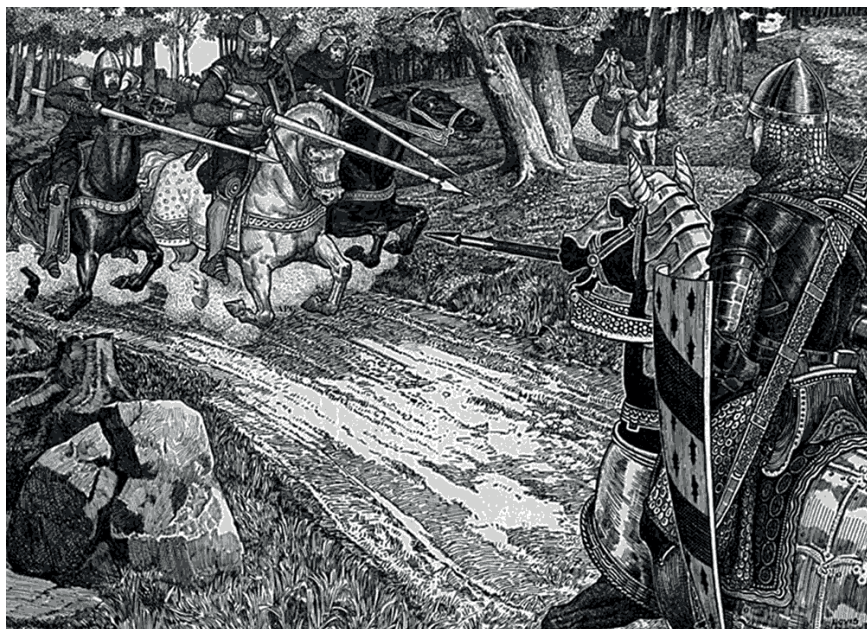
Now that you've created a more dynamic battlefield for your mass battle, what are your characters going to do? With the defining of different aspects of the enemy's army, it is conceivable that the PCs can have a greater impact on the mass battle by pinpointing their efforts on specific tasks that hinder the enemy's advancements.

FOCUSED ATTACKS

When a group of PCs gets involved in a mass battle for the purpose of changing its set up prior to the Knowledge (Battle) roll, they may want to choose where to focus their attacks to gain the best results.

Examples include: If the enemy is advancing with a battering ram to knock down the fortification's wall, then the PCs can focus their attacks on that battering ram and its crew to remove it from the battlefield. If successful, the enemy now has to find a new way to overcome the fortification's walls.

On the north side of the allies' formation is a hill that allows the enemy to gain a vantage point. The PCs decide to guard the hill and lay out a set



of barriers, such as a ring of fire from burning pitch, to prevent the enemy from taking the hill.

The allied forces comprise mainly close and short range attacks. The PCs see a group of foot-soldiers on the enemy's lines and set up traps within the river ford the enemy's must cross to reach the allied forces.

These are just a few examples of focused attacks as each mass battle will be different. The main goal is for the PCs to do something miraculous to alter the set up or outcome of the Knowledge (Battle) roll.

ATTACK THE GENERALS

Another option for PC involvement during mass battles is to allow them to attack the captains or generals on the battlefield. The goal here is to eliminate the NPC with the highest Knowledge (Battle) skill, forcing the second-in-command to take over. This would be at the discretion of the GM, but is another option for heroic intervention.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

In a mass battle, there are a number of reasons why the enemy could have special bonuses to Knowledge (Battle) rolls or morale checks. The key is for the GM to connect a particular part of the army to those bonuses, thus justifying their value and giving the PCs something to focus their efforts on. If an army cannot retreat, maybe it's a mind-controlling mage forcing them to abandon all thoughts of morale. If the enemy has a dragon in their midst, maybe it counts as artillery support providing a bonus to Knowledge (Battle). Or maybe the environment has many different features that can be exploited to give the allied forces a strategic battle plan or gain a vantage point.

Regardless of how connections are made, heroic intervention requires the army's defined structure to have direct influence on the mass battle so that the PCs can alter that effect.

Putting it to Use

The easiest way to incorporate these mechanics and avoid additional book-keeping is to divide the tokens as normal upon engaging in the mass battle. These tokens define how many troops (or is representative of a forces' composition rating) are able to participate in the battle. Each token is an appropriate percentage of the entire force given the overall



number of tokens. (The force with ten tokens = each token representing 10% of the overall army.)

Each round of the mass battle, only add the number of tokens that are within attack range of their opponent. If they cannot reach their opponent given their position or weapon, the token does not get added to the Knowledge (Battle) roll modifier, but is still considered as part of the army in regards to casualties and morale. With each round, move the army forward and add the number of tokens that are now in attack range to the next Knowledge (Battle) roll.

Here is an example of how dynamic composition and range can be during mass battle; changing the tides of battle from grim to victory due to proper planning and better training.

INQUISITOR STEEL

Inquisitor Steel has assembled an army of 1,000 men and women to raid a large ensemble of cultists. Although the cultists outnumber the Inquisition ten to one, Inquisitor Steel's army consists only of highly trained individuals. Using the Composition mechanics for setting up mass battle, the cultists have a score of 20,000 while the Inquisition has a score

of 8,000. Thus the tokens are divided up with ten to the cultists and four to the Inquisition. **(Cultists: 10 tokens – Inquisition: 4 tokens)**

The cultists are poorly organized and poorly equipped for warfare, so Inquisitor Steel has high hopes. His team has been outfitted with good armor and plenty of ranged weapons. Inquisitor Steel has Knowledge (Battle) d10 while the cultists' Hierophant only has Knowledge (Battle) at d6. Right there the Inquisition has an advantage mechanically, but they are still outnumbered.

Inquisitor Steel's team has set up a series of explosives outside the cultists' location to draw them into the open battlefield. His team has hunkered down in positions that just meet their weapons' capabilities with heavy weaponry consuming the rear lines.

Inquisitor Steel gives the signal to set off the explosives and the cultists are quickly drawn toward the battlefield. Eager to lure the entire cultist force, the Inquisition launches a barrage of gunfire onto the cultists' position, attempting to lure the entire force out. Bit by bit, the cultists launch into battle, hoping to protect their heretical ways.

The cultists are ill-equipped and only carry knives and pistols, along with a small grouping of short ranged weapons. However, backing their position is a group of demons they summoned for the ritual being performed. The demons can fly and have magical attacks with significant range. However, at their current position, they are still too far away from the Inquisition. During the first round of mass battle combat, the only ones able to attack are the heavy weapon support soldiers of the Inquisition. While the tokens are divided ten to four in favor of the cultists, they do not get to add their ten tokens during this round of battle as they are out of range for attacking the Inquisition. **(Knowledge (Battle) roll = Cultists: 0 tokens – Inquisition: 4 tokens)**

The Inquisition's vantage point provides a +1 bonus to Knowledge (Battle) and they easily overcome the cultists and their demons with one raise. By the time round 2 begins, the cultists' overall composition score is reduced by 6,000 due to losses sustained during round 1. **(Cultists: 8 tokens – Inquisition: 4 tokens)**

Round 2 begins and half of the remaining cultist and demon army is within range to attack. With their current overall composition at 14,000 reduced to 7,000, the two forces are more evenly matched. Because they are in range but only with 7,000 troops, the cultists are able to add four tokens to the mass battle. **(Knowledge (Battle) roll = Cultists: 4 tokens – Inquisition: 4 tokens)**

Both sides incur injuries with the cultists gaining one success and the Inquisition gaining two raises. (Cultists: 5 tokens – Inquisition: 3 tokens) Round 3 begins and 80% of the remaining cultist and demon army is within range to attack as there are still a number of cultists only equipped with knives. The cultists' current overall composition is reduced to 10,000 but their movement of troops adds another three tokens to the mass battle. **(Knowledge (Battle) roll = Cultists: 4 tokens – Inquisition: 4 tokens)**

Both sides again incur injuries with the cultists gaining one success and the Inquisition again gaining two raises. Due to the cultists' nature, they cannot retreat and pass their morale checks. **(Cultists: 2 tokens – Inquisition: 2 tokens)**

As Round 4 begins, both sides are now in full force for engagement. However, due to the proper planning of the Inquisition, the two forces are now evenly matched. What started as a battle being outnumbered ten to one has changed considerably due to composition and consideration of range.

From the example above, casualties are always based on the original composition of the army. Thus whenever the cultists lost a token, they were always losing 2,000 from their composition. Additionally, instead of dividing tokens each round, they are divided initially and then the cultists get to add tokens each round according to the percentage of their army moving to engage with the Inquisition. From the example, the proper planning of the Inquisition has allowed them to overcome unfavorable odds.

Character Options

When facing a campaign or setting steeped in Mass Battle, the characters may decide that training for the impending war is wise to ensure success. Another situation may arise when a player wants to build their character in the guise of a battle-hardened general. As with many settings, new character options create a bond between the characters and the setting or situation they are involved in. To create that bond, here are a number of character options centered on Mass Battle.

New Hindrances

Although these may not be the best suited for PCs, they can add additional flavor for NPC allies or enemies.

CHEAP CONSTRUCTION (MINOR)

The army's leader is a bit on the stingy side. While some say he spends more money on booze and women than fortifying their stronghold, the truth is probably much worse than that. As such, the stronghold is suffering and in need of repair.

When defending against an attack from inside a stronghold, the Toughness and armor rating of that stronghold is reduced by half due to the lack of proper upkeep.

EASILY FRIGHTENED (MINOR)

The army and their captains are deathly afraid of the horror that plagues their land. Although they realize the only chance for survival is to make a final stand against the haunting supernatural, they do so almost unwillingly with most soldiers prepared to abandon their post should they succumb to fear.

Some armies have a difficult time fighting horrific creatures. Anytime a leader must check morale due to losing any number of tokens against an army with creatures that carry the Fear special ability, they incur an additional (-1) penalty to the Spirit roll.

ILL-PREPARED (MAJOR)

The character is one that often procrastinates or simply has a difficult time making the right decisions when the need arises. Although the character is the least ideal general, they are the only one available and thus the army is mustered beneath their leadership.

Due to the lack of proper preparation, all Knowledge (Battle) rolls incur a (-1) penalty.

New Edges

New Edges can be taken by the PCs or by Wild Card NPCs serving as leaders for the Mass Battle. They are not suitable as special abilities for Extras and are considered Leadership Edges.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Requirements: Heroic, Command, Smarts d8+, Spirit d8+, Knowledge (Battle) d10+

The Commander-in-Chief is the ultimate leader on the battlefield. Although they may no longer pick-up a weapon, they have proven for years their ability to survive throughout all the wars. Their proven track record provides numerous bonuses on the battlefield and opponents fear the wrathful hand of this true hero.

Receive a +1 bonus to all Knowledge (Battle) rolls.

IRON WILL

Requirements: Veteran, Command, Spirit d8+

Leadership can be as much about pressing on as it is about pressing the advantage. The greatest leaders urge their soldiers to fight on in the name of honor, glory, or survival. In the face of the death, they stand tall and encourage their soldiers to never back down.



When calculating the penalty modifier for tokens lost in a battle, reduce the final penalty by one, before making the Spirit roll, as the army's leader drives his soldiers on to victory.

MASTER TRAINING

Requirements: Seasoned, Command, Smarts d6+, Fighting d8+, Knowledge (Battle Tactics) d6+

Some leaders are naturally talented at training their soldiers (or the sergeants that train the actual soldiers). They expect nothing but perfection and teach the art of proper combat.

Due to the improved training, each allied soldier gains a +1 bonus to their Composition Rating. This bonus only applies to those deemed as Trained Soldiers.

MEDICAL TRAINING

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d8+, Healing d8+

Leaders are sometimes only as good as the support they have. Even in the wake of battle, an army must pick themselves up and continue their lives. If this was just one battle of an ongoing campaign, numbers are crucial and a trained medical staff may be necessary.

When making recovery rolls during the aftermath of a battle, this Edge only affects the army the character is allied to. The victor recovers a lost token on a roll of 3-6. The loser recovers a lost token on a roll of 4-6. A routed army is not affected by this Edge.

SHIELD WALL

Requirements: Veteran, Command, Smarts d8+, Knowledge (Battle Tactics) d8+, Soldiers equipped with shields

From ancient times, small armies have been able to survive unfavorable odds by employing shield wall tactics. The tactic is rather simple, but requires a disciplined army to form a solid shield wall when the enemy's arrows rain down.

Due to this disciplined formation, receive a +1 bonus to all Knowledge (Battle) rolls made against Close Range, Short Range, and Long Range attacks.

SIEGE ENGINEER

Requirements: Veteran, Command, Smarts d8+, Knowledge (Battle) d8+, Knowledge (Battle Tactics) d8+

Success on the battlefield is more than just having the right soldiers and vehicle support. When siege engines and artillery support are a factor, a

leader with in-depth knowledge of siege warfare can make the best of the tools at their disposal, thus creating an edge over their opponent.

All siege engines and artillery support provide an additional +1 bonus to all Knowledge (Battle) rolls.

New Arcane Background

If you want a truly epic battle, then you may need some truly epic spellcasters. To go along with the idea of having a setting or campaign centered on Mass Battle, a new Arcane Background is presented here for flavor as much as fun. While they may not be much use during Knowledge (Battle) rolls, they can make excellent heroes during Heroic Intervention and carry mechanics to support their life on the battlefield.

BATTLE MAGIC

Battle Magic is different from other magic abilities in that the spellcaster must harness the power of battle and war to cast their spells. Instead of learning their trade in an arcane school and pouring over books, they wade into the depths of a battlefield and call upon the dead and wounded to be their power source. If they revere a god or goddess, it is a god of war.

Power Points

Those who harness the power of Battle Magic do not regain Power Points through the traditional means. Instead, they must stand shoulder to shoulder with their brethren, breathing in the smell of blood and death, becoming invigorated by its power.

Anyone using Battle Magic does not recover Power Points through rest. Instead, they regain 1 Power Point for every 1 Wound or Shaken result caused to an enemy by either the spellcaster or one of his allies. Shaken results or Wounds to allies do not increase the spellcasters Power Points.

Optionally, the spellcaster can choose to inflict a Wound upon themselves (ignoring Shaken results and going straight to inflicting a Wound) to regain 10 Power Points.

ARCANE BACKGROUND (BATTLE MAGIC)

Arcane Skill: Bloodletting (Spirit)

Starting Power Points: 10

Starting Powers: 2

Battle magicians are the bane of most spellcasters' existence. They are often the most despised version of the arts and are treated as such. However, their prowess on the battlefield is often unmatched by other spellcasters and there's little doubting a battle magicians ability to continue their bloodshed while blasting foe time and again. Typically found in the strongest armies, battle magicians are also favored by cultists, as it seems to match their cruel desires.

Backlash: When a battle magician rolls a 1 on his Bloodletting die (regardless of his Wild Die), he must make an immediate Vigor roll. Success results in the battle magician being knocked prone due to the overwhelming bloodshed. Failure results in the battle magicians being knocked prone and Shaken - this can cause a Wound.

Additionally, even if the battle magician succeeds at casting his spell, he does not regain any Power Points if he inflicts a Wound with the spell and the Power Points required to cast the spell are doubled that turn, due to the volatile nature of Battle Magic.

NEW POWERS

ERUPTION

Rank: Novice

Power Points: 1-3

Range: 24/48/96

Duration: Instant

Trappings: Whispered words, hand gestures, thrown items

Eruption is an explosion of the ground to interrupt the enemy's advances. The caster first picks where he wants to center the *eruption* and then makes the appropriate skill roll. Normal ranged attack modifiers apply.

The area of effect is a Medium Blast Template. If the roll is failed, the *eruption* deviates as a launched projectile. If the roll is successful, everyone within the blast is knocked prone and the area becomes impassible terrain, forcing everyone to move around it. If this is placed underneath a vehicle, the vehicle falls into the hole and becomes immobile and unusable.

Increased Size: For one extra Power Point, the area of effect increases to a Large Blast Template.

Add Damage: For one extra Power Point, targets suffer 2d4 damage. This damage targets the legs only.

EXSANGUINATE

Rank: Novice

Power Points: 1

Range: Spirit

Duration: Instant

Trappings: Essence removal, palm on forehead, drawn rune

This power provides the spellcaster with a direct link to the victim for the purpose of draining their blood (forcing a Wound).

The caster chooses a single target within range and makes an opposed arcane skill roll versus the target's Vigor.

With a success, he drains part of the victim's essence forcing him to become Shaken, this can cause a Wound, and recovering 2 Power Points. On a raise, the victim is Shaken and Wounded and the caster recovers 4 Power points.

PROFESSIONAL EDGES

To coincide with the new Arcane Background, here are a couple Professional Edges to flavor your battle magician.

BATTLE MAGE

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Battle Magic), Spirit d8+, Bloodletting d6+, Knowledge (Battle) d8+

Battle mages take the typical powers of the wizard and make them much larger and more explosive. They are strong and resilient and able to walk unwavering onto a battlefield with nothing but violence on their mind.

Battle mages may double the number of Power Points spent on any power to increase one aspect of that power (such as Range, Duration, quantity, damage, bonus, or penalty) by 1d4. A Range of Touch or Cone cannot be increased nor can a blast template.

BLOOD MAGE

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Battle Magic), Spirit d8+, Vigor d8+, Bloodletting d6+

Blood mages are despicable battle magicians that find it easy to tap into the bloodshed of the battlefield for power.

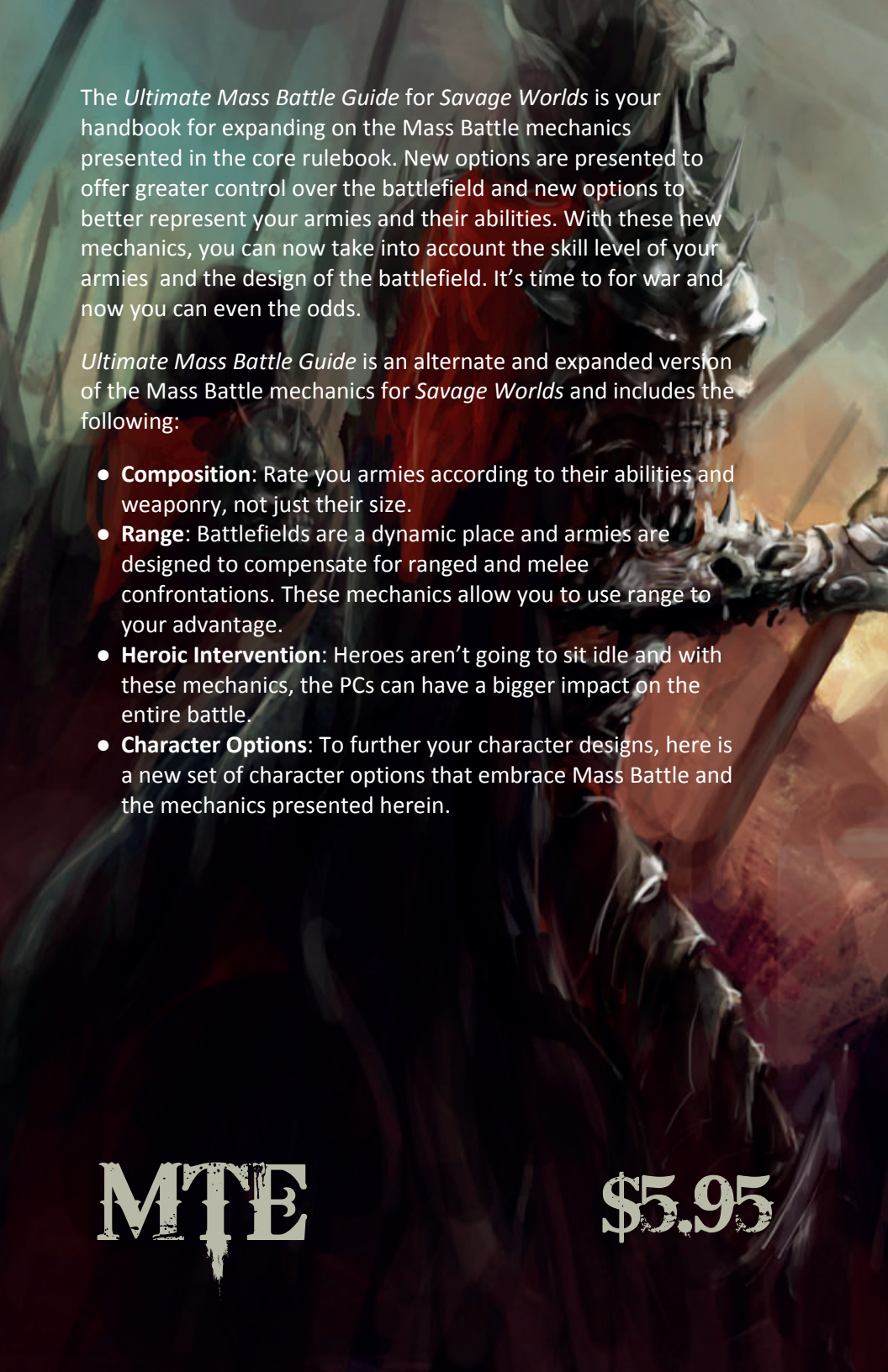
Blood mages may cast the *exsanguinate* spell as a free action and without spending any Power Points. In addition, the Range of the power becomes the higher of Spirit or Bloodletting.

SAVAGE INSIDER

WATCH FOR SAVAGE INSIDER STANDARD.
FREE ISSUES ARE AVAILABLE QUARTERLY!
AVAILABLE AT RPGNOW AND PAIZO.COM!

MTE





The *Ultimate Mass Battle Guide* for *Savage Worlds* is your handbook for expanding on the Mass Battle mechanics presented in the core rulebook. New options are presented to offer greater control over the battlefield and new options to better represent your armies and their abilities. With these new mechanics, you can now take into account the skill level of your armies and the design of the battlefield. It's time to for war and now you can even the odds.

Ultimate Mass Battle Guide is an alternate and expanded version of the Mass Battle mechanics for *Savage Worlds* and includes the following:

- **Composition:** Rate your armies according to their abilities and weaponry, not just their size.
- **Range:** Battlefields are a dynamic place and armies are designed to compensate for ranged and melee confrontations. These mechanics allow you to use range to your advantage.
- **Heroic Intervention:** Heroes aren't going to sit idle and with these mechanics, the PCs can have a bigger impact on the entire battle.
- **Character Options:** To further your character designs, here is a new set of character options that embrace Mass Battle and the mechanics presented herein.

MTE

\$5.95