

Auror's Mass Combat Rules

Combat between units of troops is handled much like combat between characters, with a handful of particular exceptions. Each round that plays out represents a minute of combat, and the map size is likewise scaled out to fifty-foot squares.

Unlike character combat, units may take an extra standard action in addition to their normal full round of actions. Hence, a unit could deliver both a charge and a full round attack, or withdraw after attacking. A unit still may not make more than two move actions in a single round.

The Unit

Instead of individual characters, combat takes place between units, the most typical of which are made up of between ten and forty identical troops, led by one or more officers. Units have an attack bonus, a damage value, an armor class, a speed, and saving throws as normal characters do. For non-homogeneous units, use averages, rounded down. For example, a unit composed of five goblins and five bugbears would have an effective strength modifier of +1.

Units do not have initiative; initiative is rolled by the commander of all the units involved in the combat (each "team" involved has one, and only one, commander, typically either an individual or the officer of a powerful unit at the main camp). The commander uses his charisma modifier in place of dexterity for this initiative check, but otherwise rolls it normally (including bonuses from other sources, such as the Improved Initiative feat).

Damage and Extra Attacks

Units inflict damage on other units the same way characters do, with one exception; units have many more opportunities in a round to score hits. For every five creatures remaining in a unit, the unit may make an additional attack at its highest base attack bonus whenever it makes an attack or full attack. These extra attacks are in addition to additional attacks gained from a high base attack bonus or two-weapon fighting as normal.

Death, Dying, and the Wounded

Units have hit points equal to the total hit points of all the creatures forming the unit. When a unit is reduced to half its maximum hit

points, it has taken 20% casualties and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and morale checks (see below). When reduced to one quarter its maximum hit points, the unit has taken 50% casualties and takes an additional -2 penalty to attack rolls and morale checks.

A unit reduced to less hit points than any of its individual members is considered routed. Routed units have been reduced to a few soldiers or less, and must make an immediate DC 20 Will save or flee the battle as though frightened.

Finally, if a unit is brought to a negative number of hit points, the soldiers within have been destroyed completely, and are presumed universally dead unless medical attention is provided within one round.

Upon reaching these milestones, you should recalculate the number of creatures remaining (to determine extra attacks, see above), and also check for morale checks (see Morale Checks, below).

Units that have suffered casualties can carry their wounded with them. At half strength, doing so increases the load of the soldiers by one category (from light to medium, for example). At one quarter strength, doing so increases the load by two categories (hence the soldiers must shed gear to carry no more than a light load otherwise). Deceased are usually left on the field, though for units still at half strength they can be brought along also for an additional load category.

Morale Checks

A morale check is a Will save versus DC 20. A unit must make a morale check when reduced to half strength, as well as when subject to extraordinary effects (such as being on the receiving end of an artillery bombardment or cavalry charge). A unit never has to make more than one morale save in a single round: even if the dragon's fire breath wipes out more than half of a squad of men-at-arms, the survivors need only make one check.

A failed morale check means the subject's morale condition worsens by one step. Any bonuses to saving throws versus fear effects also apply to the morale check (morale and fear conditions are essentially interchangeable). A roll of natural instead 1 lowers the morale by two steps.

<i>Condition</i>	<i>Effect</i>
Normal	Typically, units start at this condition, offering no special bonuses or penalties.
Shaken	A shaken unit takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws (including any further morale checks), skill checks, and ability checks.
Frightened	A frightened unit is shaken, and in addition flees from the source of fear as quickly as they can within reason. In a battle situation, this usually means towards their allies main camp. Once out of sight (or hearing) of the source of their fear, they can act as they want, though units can be forced to flee once more if the source of their fear presents itself again. Characters unable to flee can fight, though they are still shaken.
Panicked	Panicked units are shaken, and they run away from the source of their fear as quickly as they can. Other than running away from the source, their path is more-or-less random. They flee from all other dangers that confront them rather than facing those dangers. Panicked characters cower if they are prevented from fleeing

These conditions last at least until the end of the battle, unless means of reassurance are taken.

For additional rules on morale checks, including heartened and crazed conditions, other modifiers to the morale check, and rules for rallying the troops, consult [Heroes of Battle](#).

Officers

Each unit must designate one of its members as the officer. The officer is usually slightly stronger than the composite units, and may be in addition to the main members. For example, a unit of archers may be made up of 10 first level warriors, led by a third level fighter. Usually, the statistics of the extra officer are not enough to meaningfully change the unit's statistics (they are averaged in), though the extra hit points may help bolster the troops fortitude.

In addition, in place of one of the unit's bonus attacks, the commander may make one attack using his attack bonus and damage value. He may use anything that would take an attack action (such as attacking with two weapons), but not a full round action (no extra attacks for a high base attack bonus). A unit reduced the point where it may no longer make bonus attacks probably has other things on its mind, but it loses this option as well (the officer can, however, become an independent creature on the battlefield, see below).

Because the members of a unit tend to protect and shield the officer, combined with the officers presumed extra toughness, he is usually one of

the last to go down, though this is not always the case.

Individuals on the Battlefield

As if often the case with heroes, not every creature in a battle is involved with a unit. Because the rules for unit combat are similar to the rules for character combat, special rules for a "unit" consisting of one character are almost unnecessary, though a couple things could stand to be noted.

An individual (or a routed unit, for that matter) does not fill his square; to attack or be attacked he must be in the same square as an opposing unit, provoking attacks of opportunity as normal. For that matter, he will be considered flanked. Also, heroic characters needn't make morale checks. Finally, an individual character is subject to more attacks by virtue of being seriously outnumbered; double the number of bonus attacks a unit gets against him. For example, a hero facing off against a squad of ten orcs and their corporal could take as many as five hits, two of which come from the corporal. Likewise, the hero gets twice as many attacks as normal.

In the case of a hero versus a unit, consider that it may be worthwhile to play out as a normal encounter on the character scale.

The Shiny

Unit combat is almost identical to character combat, with the following exceptions:

- ❖ Extra attacks by large units
 - ✓ One extra attack per 5 creatures in unit
- ❖ Modified rules for unit health, death, and dying
 - ✓ Progressively worse attack and save penalties
- ❖ Morale Checks
 - ✓ DC 20 Will save under specified conditions or suffer from fear effects
- ❖ Unit officers
 - ✓ Extra health, may make attack in place of unit bonus attack
- ❖ Slightly modified rules for independent creatures on the battlefield
 - ✓ No space, flanked, no morale, extra attacks both ways

Final Notes

Feel free to multiply damage by a set amount if you feel this is too little damage to represent a minute of conflict (10 rounds of typical character combat). Similarly, in the case of hero vs unit, you could triple the bonus attacks awarded to one or both sides.

Heroes of Battle is by no means a book about mass combat, but some of the information presented there is applicable. The “definitive” d20 mass combat rules are given in Monte Cook’s Cry Havoc, but I have an unfounded personal balance against third party sources, even though I know Monte Cook’s a better material writer than I (or most of Wizard’s team, for that matter), and also find my rules simpler and somewhat more intuitive. The system outlined above was inspired by elements of both books, and then some of my own creation.