

Star Wars Mass Combat Rules

by Christian Conkle

Introduction

These rules represent an attempt to provide structure to large-scale combats that may occur within a Star Wars RPG scenario.

The rules presented allow for the determination of the outcome of battles between large numbers of soldiers and vehicles. They were designed to be as simple and universal as possible and should only be used when the outcome of a battle is not pre-determined by the Referee.

The rules used are expansions of the standard man-to-man interaction and combat rules presented in the Star Wars RPG, scaled up for large forces. Battles can usually be determined with a few commands and a few throws of the dice.

Caveat

Normally, battles are used as backdrops to role-playing scenarios and their outcomes are predetermined by the Referee to fit the story. These rules provide a Referee and players a way to leave the outcome of battles uncertain.

Be warned, however, that these rules may alter the outcome of scenarios. The PC's may find themselves the losers at the end of a battle. Conversely, the PC's, by winning, may upset the flow of the rest of the scenario.

Also, the player controlling a unit or army in these rules represents the commander of that force. Referees are encouraged to make the player characters the commanders of the respective forces they control. This adds an extra role-playing element to an otherwise faceless battle.

These rules would be best used as the finale of a campaign or scenario; the last final battle between good and evil. The Referee builds the scenario up to a large-scale climax, and leaves the outcome to the tactics and leadership of the players and their characters.

Units

The basic scale of combat for these rules is the Unit. A unit is a loosely defined group of soldiers all working under a common commander. It is

assumed that every soldier under that person's command is working toward the common goal of carrying out their orders.

Units are measured by their *move*, *dexterity*, their *blaster* skill, their *dodge* skill, their *strength*, their *stamina* skill, their commander's *command* skill, and their overall *training*. *Move* is used to determine how far a unit can move in a turn relative to each other. *Dexterity* is used to determine movement and action resolution order. *Blaster* skill is used to determine the accuracy of their shooting. The *dodge* skill is used to determine the unit's ability to avoid incoming fire. *Strength* is used to determine the unit's ability to withstand incoming fire. *Stamina* is used to determine the unit's morale and health. The unit commander's *command* skill can provide bonuses in battle and helps to ensure good morale. The unit's level of experience helps determine the average statistics of a unit. Their *unit size* is also kept track of. Along with Unit Size, the weapons available to the members of that unit are recorded by weapon type. Unit statistics are aggregates of the key statistics of the soldiers that comprise the unit.

MOVE:

DEXTERITY:

Blaster:

Dodge:

Heavy Weapons:

Melee Weapons:

Brawling Parry:

Melee Parry:

STRENGTH:

Brawling:

Stamina:

COMMAND:

UNIT SIZE:

WEAPONS:

ARMOR:

Rather than roll to-hit and damage for every man in a unit, use the Combined Attack/Defense Chart to determine your *to-hit dice* for each group of weapon. All the Blaster rifles attack together, all the Blaster Artilleries attack together, all the Grenades attack together, and so on. Add the combined actions modifier for the number of men

in the unit to the average weapon skill of the unit for the weapon being used plus any fire codes due to vehicle-mounted weapons. The result is the number of dice you roll to hit for each weapon type.

Each round, the members of the unit must be allocated to using a certain type of weapon. *For instance, in a squadron of 60 stormtroopers, each equipped with a Blaster Rifle (3D in armor) and a grenade (1D in armor), 40 might be allocated to use their Blaster Rifle for a combined action of 6D+2, while 20 would be allocated to use their grenade for a combined action of 4D+2. The next round, the unit would have 20 less grenades to allocate.*

Conversely, the appropriate combined actions modifier is added to average *dodge* skill of the unit plus any maneuver codes due to vehicles to determine the number of dice rolled by the unit receiving fire to avoid incoming fire. *For example, a Rebel unit of 40 dodging the incoming fire mentioned above with an average dodge of 2D would have a combined dodge of 5D+2.*

Damage dice are determined by adding the combined actions modifier to the average damage code of the weapons fired based on how many of a certain weapon type actually hit their targets. *For example, the aforementioned Stormtroopers rolled 23 for their attack with 40 Blaster Rifles, the aforementioned Rebel unit dodged with a roll of 19. The Stormtroopers beat the Rebel roll by 4, indicating 20% of their blasters hit their targets. Since 40 blasters were allocated, 8 blasters hit their targets. The Blaster rifles, normally doing 5D damage, do 7D combined damage to the Rebel unit.*

Similarly, the combined actions modifier is also added to the combined average *Strength dice* of the target unit and compared to the *Damage dice* to determine the damage done to the unit. *The aforementioned Rebel Unit, with an average strength of 2D, would have a combined Strength of 5D+2. They roll 19 for their Strength roll. The Stormtroopers roll 24 for their damage roll, beating the Rebel roll by 5. The Rebels take light casualties resulting in a loss of 25% of their forces, reducing their unit size by 10 to 30 the next round.*

For the grenades, the Imperials rolled 16 to attack, the Rebels rolled 19 to dodge. All of the grenades

miss and deviate based on the range at which they were thrown, we'll say long for 3D or 10m, which is 3D damage. 20 grenades would have a combined damage of 6D for a roll of 21. The Rebels Strength roll is 19 again for a difference of 2. The Rebels are under heavy fire but lose no men to the grenades. However, they are at -1D to all actions next round as a result.

Vehicles unit statistics are based on the statistics of the vehicles that comprise the unit. The vehicle's Maneuver Code plus the average pilots' Dexterity code is used instead of Dexterity. The average pilots' Heavy Weapon plus the vehicle weapons' Fire Control is used instead of weapon skill. The vehicles' Hull Code is used instead of Strength dice. The number of vehicles in the unit is used to determine Unit Size.

Quick statistics can be manufactured for units by basing them on the unit's overall experience level. Use the following experience level chart to generate average statistics for the unit.

Experience level		
Quality	Imperial	Rebel
Recruit	3D	2D to 3D+2
Average	3D+1 to 4D	4D to 5D
Veteran	4D+1 to 5D+2	5D+1 to 6D
Elite	6D to 6D+2	6D+1 to 7D
Hand-Picked		
Elite	7D to 8D	7D+1 to PC's

The loyalty of a unit comes into play when they are asked to make a morale check. Disloyal troops are more apt to surrender or flee in the face of battle.

Loyalty of troops
Questionable : Morale -1D
Reliable: Morale +0D
Fanatical : Morale +1D

The Combat System

Combined Action Chart

People in Unit:	Combined actions modifier:
1	+0
2	+2
3	+1D
4	+1D+1
6	+1D+2
8	+2D
12	+2D+1
16	+2D+2
24	+3D
32	+3D+1
48	+3D+2
60	4D
90	4D+1
120	4D+2
180	5D
250	5D+2
300	6D
+100	+1

Deployment

Troop and vehicle movement is referred to as deployment. The army commander orders a unit to deploy to certain location by a certain deadline and it's up to that unit to be there on time.

Generally, non-combat deployment is automatic. Troops simply go where they're told to go. If, for some reason, the question of whether the unit arrives at its destination on time is ever in question, simply make a combined DEX or SPEED roll versus a difficulty based on terrain, environmental conditions, unit and deadline. Failure indicates the force has failed to reach the desired position on schedule and is at some point in between their origin and their destination. A new roll is made at the beginning of the next round at a reduced difficulty.

As a general rule of thumb, most soldiers on foot, carrying approximately 31kg (70lbs) of gear, can traverse 3-6km per hour (1.8-3.6mph). Walking three hours requires a Very Easy *stamina* roll. Each additional three hours of continuous walking increases the difficulty by one level. A failed roll reduces the units' *stamina* by 1D. One hour of sleep lowers the difficulty by 1 level.

Therefore, if troops are forced to march for 12 hours, they will have traveled approximately

54 km (32.4 miles). They would have to make a Stamina Roll vs. Very Easy, Easy, Moderate, Difficult. Four hours of sleep puts them back to Very Easy and returns up to 4D of lost Stamina.

Units may be split into smaller units, usually designated by convention: divisions into battalions, squadrons into fire teams, etc. Dividing a unit takes one action and new commanders must be assigned to each unit. Units may also be combined or augmented by reinforcements. It takes one action to combine several units. All the units are then under one commander's authority.

Mass Combat Sequence

The mass combat sequence is much the same as the man-to-man combat sequence. Only the scale has changed. Instead of one man attacking another man, one unit is attacking another unit.

1. Declare Actions, Orders and Full Reactions.

First, any *anticipate enemy* or *deceive enemy* rolls are made (see "Mass Combat Tactics" below). Characters in command of an army declare all actions for this combat round (deployment, haste, skill or attribute use, or full retreat). The character with the lowest *command* skill code declares actions first. Other characters declare their actions in ascending order of *command* codes, leaving the character with the highest *command* skill the advantage of declaring last. If a PC has the same *command* as an NPC, the NPC must declare first.

2. Declare Combat Reaction Skills.

Characters declare combat redeployments during this segment. Haste for reaction skills, including full reactions, may be increased. (A full retreat may have its haste increased in this way.) The character with the highest *command* code declares reaction skills first, followed by other characters in descending order of *command* codes. If a PC has the same *command* as an NPC, the NPC must declare first. Deceptions which were at least 2x their opponent's roll are declared, lowest deception roll to highest.

3. Roll for Outcomes in Order of Haste.

Actions, orders and reactions are resolved in descending order of haste actions taken. A character who takes three haste actions would act before a character who took none, one, or two haste actions. Non-deployment actions with the same degree of haste are resolved, followed by all deployment actions with that same degree of haste. Take all environmental factors into account when

determining the outcome (weather conditions, terrain, fatigue, morale, etc.)

4. Determine Damage.

Both sides roll for damage against the other by weapon type. The combined action modifier is added to the damage of the weapon type based on the number of weapons that hit their target. When attacking out-of-scale targets such as walkers, speeders, and starfighters, don't forget to remove the dice results appropriate to that scale on the scale charts.

5. Determine Morale of Forces.

Make a Morale check on all forces based on the outcomes of this round's battles. Morale checks are made by comparing the *Stamina skill dice* rolls of each side.

Morale can be modified for or against certain sides based on situational modifiers. Such modifiers include how many casualties the unit took last round, how well equipped the unit is for the environment, whether the unit has high-ground or superior technology or defenses, etc. These modifiers must be judged by the Referee. Generally, each advantage is worth +1-3D modification.

Should a unit fail its morale check, all orders given to it the following round are ignored. Determine their actions for the following round using the table below:

Morale Failure Chart	
Failed Morale by:	Action:
0-3	-1D next round's Morale Check
4-8	Full Retreat, no other action until the unit passes its morale check.
Winner > 3x Loser	Surrender

Resolving Attacks

Roll the attacking unit's average Weapon skill dice for each Weapon type, adding the combined action modifier from the Combined Actions Chart. This roll reflects the actions of the forces using a specific weapon, and how effective that action was. The difficulty is the opponents' Dodge skill dice plus the difficulty of the range based on the weapon being used.

Range difficulty Chart

Weapon Ranges	Difficulty Numbers
Point-blank	1-5
Short	6-10
Medium	11-15
Long	16-20

Attack Resolution Chart

Attack beats dodge by:	People who hit:
1-2	1 in 10 (10%)
3-5	1 in 5 (20%)
6-8	1 in 4 (25%)
7-10	1 in 3 (30%)
11-15	1 in 2 (50%)
16-20	3 in 4 (75%)
21-30	All (100%)

Unit Damage

Roll *Strength dice* vs. *Damage dice*, adding the combined action modifier from the Combined Actions Chart to both the *Strength dice* and the *Damage dice*. The damage done to units is a spin-off of the damage tables:

Unit Damage Chart

Roll	Unit	Vehicles
0-3	Under Heavy Fire (0%)	Shields blown/ Controls Ionized
4-8	Light Casualties (5%)	Lightly damaged
9-12	Moderate Casualties (10%)	Heavily damaged
13-15	Heavy Casualties (25%)	Severely damaged
16+	Rout (50%)	Destroyed

Damage Results

Under Heavy Fire: Unit is coming under heavy fire but is not taking substantial casualties. -1D to all actions taken by the unit that round only. -1D to Morale Checks that round only.

Light Casualties: The unit has suffered some minor losses. The unit suffers a loss of 5% of its soldiers and any accompanying combined action modifiers. -1D to Morale Checks until reinforcements arrive.

Moderate Casualties: The unit has suffered some moderate losses. The unit suffers a loss of 10% of its soldiers and any accompanying combined action modifiers. -2D to Morale Checks until reinforcements arrive.

Heavy Casualties: The unit has suffered some heavy losses. The unit suffers a loss of 25% of its soldiers and any accompanying combined action modifiers. -3D to Morale Checks until reinforcements arrive.

Rout: The unit has suffered horrible losses. The unit suffers a loss of 50% of its soldiers and any accompanying combined action modifiers. -4D to Morale Checks until reinforcements arrive.

Command Skill

The commander of a large fighting force needs a good *command* skill code. In accordance with this, the commander gives orders to his subordinates in battle who, in turn, order their troops to execute the directives.

Each subordinate is considered to be successfully “commanded” as long as the commander has 1D of *command* dice to allocate toward him. Failure to *command* a character results in a minus 1D penalty to all the actions taken by that officer as he is no longer in coordination with the rest of the force. In addition to coordinating his subordinates, the commander uses his *command* skill to do the following:

- *Command* determines the order of declaration in the Mass Combat Sequence. High *command* skills *declare orders last* and *reactions first* during the combat sequence.
- To assign differing levels of haste to different subordinates. Each haste order (beyond the basic haste of the force) costs 1D from the

commander’s *command* skill. By “haste order” we mean each haste action *ordered* by the force’s commander, *not* each *level* of haste.

Each haste order can be given at any level of haste, but the penalty is still only 1D. (for this purpose a “one haste” order and a “six haste” order have the same effect; minus 1D from the commander’s *command* code. The penalties for choosing multiple levels of haste are taken into account elsewhere.)

For example, a battalion could be charging a hill at one haste, but a superior commander could select a certain squad to attack at two haste, another squad to attack at three haste. The single haste is the basic haste of the battalion and therefore costs the commander nothing. But the additional two *haste orders* given by the commander reduce his *command* by 2D. The squads which are double and triple hastened still suffer the normal die code reduction due to haste. The *command* code reduction merely allows different levels of haste within a single force.

Mass Combat Tactics

Tactics is a specialized *Knowledge* skill. The following actions can be performed during Mass Combat using the *Tactics* skill.

Anticipate Enemy: A Moderate *tactics* roll is needed to “anticipate the enemy.” If the roll is successful, a commander’s army receives a “free” haste action - his army receives *no penalty* for using the haste.

Deceive Enemy: A Difficult *tactics* roll is needed to “deceive the enemy.” Success on this roll allows a commander to *redeclare* his orders after hearing what his opponent has declared their orders, even if he has already declared his own orders.

Coordinating Attacks

Attacks from several different units can be coordinated by a single commanding officer. A commander may choose to use a *command* action to coordinate his attacks with the attacks of other units. When attacks are coordinated, the weapons of more than one unit are added into a single attack for purposes of finding the “combined actions modifier” on the Combined Actions Chart. Each attack is still rolled separately for each weapon type in each unit, only the larger combined action modifier obtained from coordinating attacks is used to determine total dice rolled to hit.

The damage modifier is *not* affected by coordinating attacks.

Each coordination action counts as one skill use, and only one additional unit can be added to the coordination per action. Therefore, it is possible to coordinate more than two units, but only as many as the coordinating commander has *command* actions remaining.

Subordinate Bonus

All actions in a unit are performed by the soldiers, but a superior officer can have an effect on the performance of his subordinates. The commander's subordinates are those in command of unit sub-divisions - platoons in a company, companies in a regiment, etc. A commander may give these subordinates "bonuses." For every *bonus action* used by the commander, the chosen subordinate receives one additional pip to his roll.

A commander may choose to use bonus actions on more than one subordinate combat officer. Each bonus action counts as one skill use. A commander may not reduce his *command* skill below zero through multiple skill use though. When a character's *command* skill reaches zero, no further skill use of *any type* is possible. If a commander is using all of his abilities to *command* his unit, he has nothing left to devote to other activities.

The commanding officer's subordinate to the chief commanding officer can also give bonuses to *their* subordinates. In this case, the pips are added to one of the unit's average statistics. A platoon leader, therefore, would provide pip bonuses to the 4 squad leaders under his command, and each of the squad leaders could, in turn, provide pip bonuses to their troops.

Inter-Scale Combat

All the normal scale rules apply for inter-scale combat. Vehicle units receive their appropriate die code modifiers.

Tips on Running Mass Combats

Using counters or miniatures can help keep track of position. Numbering the counters and having a unit template with the same number also helps. Sketching shapes on paper to determine movement and position is another good way to visualize combat.

Pay strict attention to the combat sequence. If eager players start to act out of sequence, the combat becomes hopelessly mired in confusion. If you are running the mass combat

system in the style of a wargame, deciding actions for each unit and then resolving the combats, you should expect it to take about as much time as a wargame. If you and your players want to spend an evening resolving large troop actions, go right ahead. Just make sure that everyone involved wants to spend the evening that way.

One way to speed up mass combat is to ignore commanders and simply resolve actions between units.

Don't plunge in and design a huge land battle encounter the first time you run the mass combat system; it takes some time before you can adjust encounters so they are balanced enough to be enjoyable.

If you are running the combat for its effect on a story rather than for its own sake, play it a little fast and loose with the portions of the combat which do not directly involve the players' units.

Of course, you can time events dramatically rather than through the vagaries of dice. If the event you are planning seems an extreme long shot, it's best to foreshadow the event to help your players believe that the event actually does happen.

Army Statistics

Typical Imperial Army Trooper Infantry Squad

MOVE: 2 (6 KPH)

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D+1

dodge 4D+1

STRENGTH 3D+1

Brawling 4D+1

WEAPONS:

Blaster rifle(5D, range: 30m/100m/200m)

ARMOR:

field armor and helmet(+1D physical, +2 energy)

UNIT SIZE: 9

Veteran Imperial Army Trooper Infantry Squad

MOVE: 2 (6 KPH)

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster: 5D+1,

blaster artillery 3D+2,

brawling parry 3D+1,

dodge 4D+1

melee combat 4D,

melee parry 3D+2,

STRENGTH 3D+1

Brawling 4D+1

Stamina 4D+1

COMMAND 3D

WEAPONS:

Blaster rifle(5D, range: 30m/100m/200m),

ARMOR:

field armor and helmet(+1D physical, +2 energy),

UNIT SIZE: 9

Stormtrooper Squad

MOVE: 2 (6 KPH)

DEXTERITY 2D

Blaster 4D

Brawling Parry 4D

Dodge 4D

STRENGTH 2D

Brawling 3D

COMMAND 2D

WEAPONS:

Blaster Rifle (5D),

ARMOR:

Stormtrooper Armor (+2D Physical, +1D Energy, -1D Dexterity and related skills)

UNIT SIZE: 6

All Terrain Armored Transport Platoon

MOVE: 21; 60 kph

MANEUVERABILITY: none

BODY STRENGTH: 6D

WEAPONS:

2 Heavy Laser Cannons (fire-linked)

Fire Control: 7D

Range: 50-500/1.5/3 KM

Damage: 6D

2 Medium Blasters (fire-linked)

Fire Control: 7D

Range: 50-200/500/1KM

Damage: 3D

UNIT SIZE: 4

NOTES: carries 40 (troops) or 2 AT-ST's

Scout Stormtrooper Squad

MOVE: 175; 500 kph

MANEUVERABILITY: 3D+2

BODY STRENGTH: 2D

WEAPONS:

Laser Cannon

Fire Control: 6D

Range: 3-50/100/200

Damage: 3D

UNIT SIZE: 6

Rebel Soldier Squad

MOVE: 2 (6 KPH)

DEXTERITY 3D+2

Blaster 5D+2

Grenade 4D+2

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 4D

Stamina 3D

COMMAND 2D

WEAPONS:

Blaster pistol (4D, range: 10m/30m/120m)

Grenade (5D, range: 7m/20m/40m)

UNIT SIZE: 10

SpecForce Marine Squad

MOVE: 2 (6 KPH)

DEXTERITY 2D+2

Blaster 3D+1

Brawling Parry 3D

Dodge 3D

Grenade 3d+1

STRENGTH 2D+2

Brawling 3D+2

Stamina 3D+1

COMMAND 3D+1

WEAPONS:

Blaster pistol (4D, range: 10m/30m/120m)

Grenade (5D, range: 7m/20m/40m)

UNIT SIZE: 10

Specforce Urban Specialist Squad

MOVE: 2 (6 KPH)

DEXTERITY 2D+1

Blaster 3D+1

Dodge 3D

Grenade 3D

Melee 3D

Melee Parry 3D

STRENGTH 2D

Brawling 3D

Stamina 3D

COMMAND 3D+1

WEAPONS:

Blaster pistol (4D, range: 10m/30m/120m)

Grenade (5D, range: 7m/20m/40m)

UNIT SIZE: 10

Specforce Wilderness Squad

MOVE: 2 (6 KPH)

DEXTERITY 2D+1

Blaster 3D+1

Dodge 3D

Grenade 3D

Heavy Weapons 3D

Melee 3D+2

STRENGTH 2D

Brawling 3D

COMMAND 3D+1

WEAPONS:

Blaster pistol (4D, range: 10m/30m/120m)

Grenade (5D, range: 7m/20m/40m)

UNIT SIZE: 10

Rebel Snowspeeder Squadron

MOVE: 350; 1,000 kmh

MANEUVERABILITY: 3D

BODY STRENGTH: 3D

WEAPONS:

Double Laser Cannons (fire-linked)

Fire Control: 5D

Range: 50-300/800/1.5 KM

Damage: 4D+2

Power Harpoon

Fire Control: 5D

Range: 25-50/100/200

Damage: 3D (none if tow cable and fusion disk are used)

UNIT SIZE: 10

NOTES: Altitude Range of Ground level-250 meters