

COMPATIBLE WITH THE FIFTH EDITION OF DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

BOOK of BLADES

WARFARE



JB Little

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INTRODUCTION

Where there is civilization, there is reason for war. In our own history, humanity has turned to war to settle its earliest disputes, defend the livelihood of its empires, and profit from the plunder and engineering of the great military machine.

In a fantasy setting—where titans roam the land, blood gods walk among their worshipers, and undead rulers command legions of undying warriors—there are endless causes to rally banners and charge to battle.

A STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

While most campaigns focus on small-scale encounters and decisive victories against single foes, adventurers, particularly martial combatants, are invaluable on a crowded battlefield. Their training makes them self-sufficient. Their skills enable them to oppose an entire battalion of untested combatants. They can weather assaults that could crush regiments of enlisted soldiers. Though an entire band of adventurers might not turn the tide of battle, a true warrior can secure military victory.

Even in high-magic settings, spellcasters require years of specialized training to replace. When a few units of archers wielding shortbows or a single siege weapon can counteract a powerful spellcaster, placing such specialists on the front lines is a mistake.

Such spellcasters are better used to protect commanders, hold valuable positions, or counter other magic practitioners. These spellcasters would only make their way onto the battlefield for extremely specific purposes or desperate ploys. As such, sturdy soldiers with well-kept weapons are universal in war.

INSPIRATION

Academics and theorists have studied all facets of human warfare: battle tactics of ancient Sparta, the composition of Gaius Marius's Roman cohorts, to the specialized equipment and training of medieval knights under the command of the Black Prince, Edward of Woodstock.

However, you're not beholden to historical accounts. In fantasy worlds where monsters and magic are factual influences, warfare may evolve beyond what our ancestors sought to perfect. Here are suggestions on where you may find further inspiration while navigating the chaos of war.



FICTIONAL INSPIRATION

Few fantasy novels, video games, and films shy away from open war. Dark and grimdark fantasy works, such as *The First Law* series by Joe Abercrombie or *Promise of Blood* by Brian McClellan, offer a plethora of circumstances, situations, and tales of realistic bloody warfare. High fantasy series such as *The Stormlight Archives* by Brandon Sanderson or *The Traitor Son Cycle* by Christian Cameron offer more explosive and fantastical battles.

Likewise, numerous action or hack and slash video games pit a single hero against hundreds if not thousands of enemies in a brutal melee—the *Musō* series by Koei (including *Dynasty Warriors*, *Samurai Warriors*, and *Orochi Warriors*) and *Shadow of War* by Monolith Productions exemplify such heroic champions. These games often come with RPG elements, equipment, tactics, missions, threats, and battlefield positioning you can replicate within your TTRPG.

Martial characters that are tailored to weapon-based combat can wreak bloody havoc in a TTRPG just as well as in the most action-packed film or video game. Characters can live to tell the tale or die with such glorious purpose as to be worthy of remembrance.

HISTORICAL INSPIRATION

Accounts of ancient warfare are manifold. Books and academic essays on battle history and tactics can provide incredible inspiration for any game, and no matter your ancient setting's time period, real-world counterparts can be found.

To inspire your warring kingdoms and noble warmongers, *The Black Prince* by Michael Jones regales an entire lifetime of military engagements and planning in the 14th century wars between England, Scotland, and France.

A better understanding of individual soldiers and leaders can be found in *A Book of Five Rings (Go Rin No Sho)* by Miyamoto Musashi, a treatise on martial arts and personal warfare in 17th-century Japan.

Academics supply an endless supply of ancient warfare writings. Consider *The Ancient Military Writers* by Oliver L. Spaulding Jr., which gives sources from Carthage, Greece, Egypt, Rome, and more.

These writings of real-world warfare are rife with considerations that fundamentally alter our perceptions of war: availability of food and water, use of unit types in pitched battles, the prevalence and art of sieges, innovation in combat equipment and tactics, and even tales of inhuman might and heroism that one might balk at had they read it in even the most pulpy fantasy novel.

BATTLEFIELD UNITS

In war, no one fights alone. Thousands of trained soldiers lock their shields and hold the line while archers rain arrows on the enemy. Knights in gleaming armor trample unprepared levies beneath the hooves of their barded steeds. All the while, commanders signal horn blowers to wheel great formations of soldiers into position. It is the deafening music of war.

Amid the calamity, it may prove difficult for adventurers to find individual glory, but don't just relegate each PC to a minor part of the squall. Instead, empower martial PCs to face hundreds of enemies in combat or lead their own contingents using **Battlefield Unit Templates**.

USING BATTLEFIELD UNITS

A Battlefield Unit (or just "Unit") allows a single PC to face a hoard of screaming bandits or a squad of tactically astute hobgoblins without a GM having to manage the imitative orders, attack rolls, saving throws, and hit points for dozens of individual participants. GMs should employ Battlefield Units during large-scale assaults, not in back-alley brawls or to protect cramped dungeon tunnels.

To truly capture the feeling of massive pitched battles, have two or more opposing sides collect their forces into Units, with the PCs trapped in the middle, trying their hardest to turn the tide of battle in their favor amid all the chaos.

Familiar Gameplay. Battlefield Units work seamlessly with 5th Edition combat rules. Each Unit rolls initiative, has a pool of hit points, can take any action a standard monster can, and dies when it is reduced to 0 hit points. On the battlefield, these groups move, act, and react as one creature of a similar size would.

A Unit of ogres may attempt to grapple a fleeing spellcaster; a Unit of goblins might disengage from the howling barbarian; a Unit of assassins may hold their breath beneath the water's surface, lying in ambush for the enemy commander to pass them by.

Anything a single creature can do, the Unit can do, sometimes more effectively. The size, coordination, and decentralized nature of the Unit allows it to pull off feats and shrug off attacks that would not be possible for individual creatures acting independently.

CREATING A BATTLEFIELD UNIT

A Battlefield Unit is a collection of individual creatures that move, act, and react together toward a single point and purpose, like a well-organized swarm. A Unit has its own stat block. Create this Unit stat block by basing it on the stats of the individual creature or creatures that makes up the Unit.

For its Legendary Actions, the Unit can make a single melee attack from any creature within.

ELEMENTS OF A STAT BLOCK

Size. Battlefield Units are generally comprised of Small or Medium individual creatures who combine to become Large (5–9 individuals), Huge (10–23 individuals), or Gargantuan (24+ individuals) in size.

There is no upper limit to the number of creatures in a Unit, though massive numbers diminish a Unit's effectiveness. Units with more than 60 individual creatures have difficulty maneuvering, relaying orders, and positioning themselves effectively. Such overfilled Units have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability

checks, and their speed is reduced by 10 feet (to a minimum of 5 feet).

Hit Points. The Unit uses the maximum number of hit points the templated creature can have. Then multiply those hit points by a number based on the Unit's size. (See the Unit Statistics table.) Units cannot regain hit points or gain temporary hit points. For example, a Large Unit of hobgoblins begins with a single hobgoblin's maximum hit points (18), multiplied by 3 for a total of 54 hit points.

Condition Immunities. Battlefield Units are immune to being charmed, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, or stunned.

Mass Resistance. A spell or ability that targets a single creature (such as *banishment*, *charm monster*, or a monk's Stunning Strike) deals damage normally but otherwise has no effect on the Unit.

Challenge Rating. To find a Battlefield Unit's CR, multiply the individual creature's CR by the number indicated on the Unit Statistics table for its size, rounded up to the nearest whole number. If the individual creature has a challenge rating or 1/4 or





MIXED UNITS

Battlefield Units made of more than one kind of creature are more versatile than a Unit composed of only one kind, but are only as strong as their weakest members.

To populate a Unit with a mix of creatures, calculate HP and AC from the lowest CR creature in the template. Then calculate CR from the highest CR creature you're applying the Unit template to.

On each of the Unit's turns, it can use an action from any creature that comprises the Unit. A Unit of hobgoblins and bugbears may use either the hobgoblin's longsword attack or the bugbear's javelin attack, for example.

For its Legendary Actions, the Unit can make a single melee attack from any creature within.

less, calculate its Unit CR as though that creature were CR 1/2. If the creature has a challenge rating of 1/2, calculate its Unit CR as though that creature were CR 1.

For example, a Huge Unit of Hobgoblins (CR 1/2) would have an adjusted CR of 3, but a Huge Unit of Guards (CR 1/8) would have an adjusted CR of 2.

Attack and Damage. A Battlefield Unit does not make an attack roll on its turn. Due to the size and number of combatants, a hit is guaranteed. Instead, skip straight to damage.

To calculate damage, use the maximum weapon damage an individual creature can deal. If the individual creature has multiattack, it deals damage for each attack separately, and each attack can target a different creature or object in range.

Ranged attacks function the same, but deal only half damage at long range.

Legendary Actions. Due to the volume of combatants, each Battlefield Unit gains Legendary Actions it can use each round, based on its size (see the Unit Statistics table). A Legendary Actions can be used to make a single melee attack against a target within range.

When a lone Battlefield Unit faces off against a single target, these Legendary Actions may not amount

to much. However, when multiple Units converge, the combination of Legendary Actions can quickly overwhelm a target.

Reactions. To represent the effort of the numerous individuals within, each Battlefield Unit can take one reaction on every turn in combat.

Movement. For Large and Huge Battlefield Units, speed is the same as an individual creature's speed within the Unit. Gargantuan Units, hampered by the sheer number of creatures within it, move at half the templated creature's speed (to a minimum of 5 feet). A Unit can move through any opening large enough for its largest individual creature to move through, but moving through such a constrained space is considered difficult terrain for the Unit.

Commanders. Some Battlefield Units, particularly those tasked with important jobs or key locations, are headed by a commander. Commanders add additional action economy, bolster morale, and warn their Unit of danger. In exchange, the Unit safeguards their commander, making such leaders difficult to defeat in combat unless they are separated from their Unit, or the Unit is destroyed.

- A commander maintains its stats independently from its Unit, but acts on the Unit's turn in initiative order.
- While a commander lives, the Battlefield Unit it commands does not make Morale checks (see below) and has advantage on saving throws against effects that the commander can see, such as the attacks of siege weapons and spells. To gain this benefit, the commander cannot be blinded or incapacitated.
- While a commander remains inside its Unit's space, it has resistance to damage and advantage on Dexterity and Strength saving throws.

Morale. A primary ways to defeat a Unit is to shatter its morale in combat. When a Unit that does not have a conscious commander starts its turn with half its hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 1–2, the Unit is defeated and taken from the initiative order. The members of the Unit retreat to a secure place on the battlefield, disband and flee from the battlefield entirely, or surrender.

UNIT STATISTICS TABLE

Size	HP Multiplier	CR Multiplier	Legendary Actions
Large (5–9 medium humanoids)	3	2	1
Huge (10–23 medium humanoids)	4	3	1
Gargantuan (24+ medium or large humanoids)	5	4	2

SAMPLE UNIT

The following is a sample Battlefield Unit using a CR 1/2 hobgoblin stat block.

HUGE UNIT OF HOBGOBLINS

Huge Humanoid Unit (Goblinoid), Lawful Evil

Armor Class 18 (chain mail, shield)

Hit Points 72 (18 x 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Condition Immunities Charmed, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the hobgoblin Unit can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin Unit that isn't incapacitated.

Mass Resistance. A spell or ability that targets a single creature (such as banishment, charm monster, or Stunning Strike) deals damage normally but otherwise has no effect on the Unit.

Morale. When the hobgoblin Unit starts its turn with 36 or fewer hit points, roll a d6. On a 1 or 2, the hobgoblin Unit retreats, disbands, or surrenders.

Reactive. The Unit can take one reaction on every turn in combat.

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* automatic hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 11 slashing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* automatic hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. **Hit:** 9 piercing damage at normal range or 4 piercing damage at long range.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The hobgoblin Unit can take 1 legendary action. A legendary action can only be used at the end of another creature's turn. The hobgoblin Unit regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Attack. The hobgoblin Unit makes one attack with either its longsword or longbow.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

When two Huge hobgoblin Units approach the wall of Stonefall Keep, under ineffective arrow fire from the few guards within, the hobgoblins set sturdy ladders at the base of the defenses. A moment later, Mulkar the raging 4th level berserker barbarian leaps down between the two Units and hacks into one confused Unit with a reckless swing of his greataxe, dealing 14 points of slashing damage. Two of the huddled hobgoblins are ripped from their feet, sent sprawling in a bloody heap at the feet of the rest of the Unit, who quickly step forward to take their fallen comrades' place.

At the end of Mulkar's turn, the wounded Unit uses its Legendary Action to hack into him with their longswords and Martial Advantage, dealing a modest 8 points of slashing damage through the barbarian's rage. The wounded Unit surrounds the barbarian on three sides and press their advantage, dealing another 8 slashing damage. At the end of that Unit's turn, the overwhelming number of hobgoblins truly threatens the powerful barbarian when the second Unit takes its Legendary Action to deal 8 more slashing damage!

The second Unit, knowing the barbarian is only a distraction, uses its action to Disengage and safely climb the ladders onto the stronghold's sturdy stone walls. Only when the hobgoblins ascend the ladders do they see the rest of the party lying in wait amid the parapets of the Northern wall, trapping them on the narrow wall walk. The battle has only just begun.

PCS AS COMMANDERS

Should a PC gain command their own Battlefield Unit, the same commander rules apply:

- While adjacent to your Battlefield Unit, you have resistance to all damage, and advantage on Dexterity and Strength saving throws.
- While you are conscious, your Battlefield Unit does not make Morale checks and is immune to the frightened condition.
- While you are not incapacitated, your Unit has advantage on saving throws against effects you can see, such as the attacks from siege weapons and spells.

HEROIC BOONS

Legends tell of the few who stood against many, of warriors blessed with strength beyond all others. Perhaps, in a time of strife and war, your PCs rise to become these legends, facing a thousand foes in combat. If so, consider the following optional rule: heroic boons.

A heroic boon is a power granted to characters by gods, powerful beings, fate, or their own martial prowess. A character of 3rd level or higher can claim a boon, so long as they meet the prerequisite to do so. Heroic boons are selected only when a character enters a battlefield to wage a righteous or terrible war. Heroic boons are extremely powerful, last only as long as the battle, and vanish the moment combat ends.

The GM determines which heroic boons are available and the number of boons a character can have at one time. As a guideline, a PC may hold a maximum number of boons based on character level:

NUMBER OF BOONS BASED ON CHARACTER LEVEL

Level	Number of boons
3rd level	1 boon
5th level	2 boons
10th level	3 boons
15th level	4 boons

GENERAL HEROIC BOONS

The following boons are available to any class so long as they meet any listed prerequisite.

DEFT MOVEMENT

While wearing light or no armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC. Once per turn, you can reduce the damage of a single attack that hits you by an amount equal to your proficiency bonus.

FEARSOME NAME

Prerequisite: 10th Level

Your reputation precedes you, driving fear into the heart of lesser enemies. Creatures and Units with a challenge rating of 5 or lower that target you with an attack or harmful spell must first succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or lose the attack or spell. A creature that fails its saving throw by 5 or more is frightened of you for 1 minute.

FELL RIDER

Prerequisite: Mounted Combatant Feat

Atop your mount, you are unstoppable. While you are mounted and aren't incapacitated, you gain the following benefits:

- You can ride your mount through the space of any creature smaller than your mount. That



creature must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

- When you hit a creature with a weapon attack, each creature within 5 feet of the target takes damage equal to your Strength modifier (minimum 1).
- As a bonus action, your mount can move up to half its speed.

HAMMER OF FALLING STARS

Once per turn, when you attack a creature with a melee weapon attack that deals bludgeoning damage, the target's AC becomes 10 for that attack. On a hit, the attack deals additional bludgeoning damage equal to your Strength modifier.

PORCUPINE ARMOR

While wearing armor, you have resistance to piercing damage. Each time you take piercing damage from a ranged or thrown weapon, you gain a +1 bonus to AC. This bonus ends the next time you take damage from a melee weapon attack.

RELENTLESS ADVANCE

If you move 10 or more feet toward an enemy, your movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity and each creature within 5 feet of you during this movement must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

SANGUINE TITHE

Prerequisite: 5th Level

Blood begets blood. When you hit one or more creatures with a melee weapon attack and deal 5 or more damage with the attack, you gain a number of temporary hit points equal to your character level.

STORM OF BLADES

Prerequisite: 15th Level

Once per turn, when you reduce a creature to 0 hit points, you can move up to 5 feet without provoking an attack of opportunity and make one additional melee weapon attack.

SWEEPING BLOWS

Your weapons carve through nearby foes. Each melee weapon attack that you make targets a number of creatures in range equal to your proficiency bonus.

UNBREAKABLE

Attacks break upon you like water on stone. While wearing heavy armor, you gain a +2 bonus to Armor

Class and reduce bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage that you take by an amount equal to your proficiency bonus.

UNCEASING VIGOR

You gain a number of temporary hit points equal to twice your hit point maximum. These temporary hit points last for 1 hour.

WALKING BULWARK

Prerequisite: 15th Level

While wearing medium or heavy armor and wielding a shield, you have a damage threshold of 10. Attacks that would deal 9 or less damage to you instead deal no damage.

CLASS-SPECIFIC HEROIC BOONS

The following boons are available to specific classes.

UNYIELDING RAGE

Prerequisite: Barbarian

While raging, you gain the following benefits:

- As a bonus action, you can expend 1 Hit Die to regain a number of hit points equal to the number rolled plus your Constitution bonus plus your Barbarian level.
- Once per turn, when you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack, you can expend 1 Hit Die to deal an additional 1d12 damage on the attack.

CRIMSON ADVANTAGE

Prerequisite: Fighter

When you use your Second Wind, you gain the following benefits:


- Each creature of your choice within 20 feet of you gains a number of temporary hit points equal to the amount healed by your Second Wind.
- You have advantage on attack rolls against any creature that is missing any of its hit points until the end of your turn.

PEACEFUL BODY, HOSTILE MIND

Prerequisite: Monk

At the start of each of your turns, you can expend 1 ki point to do one of the following:

- You gain resistance to damage until the start of your next turn.
- You have advantage on attack rolls with unarmed strikes until the end of your turn.



DIVINE WRATH

Prerequisite: **Paladin**

When you score a critical hit with a weapon attack, maximize the damage of all weapon and divine smite damage dice you roll for that attack.

FAVORED TARGET

Prerequisite: **Ranger**

This heroic boon offers you the following benefits when engaging your Favored Enemy:

- You cannot critically miss your favored enemy, and you score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.
- When you hit your favored enemy with a weapon attack, the attack deals additional damage equal to your proficiency bonus.
- When you hit your favored enemy with an attack while it has fewer than half its total hit points, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC or die. Creatures with Legendary Actions automatically succeed on this saving throw.

SIEGE ENGINES

High, thick walls of well-hewn stone and timber protect castles and towns. And so, siege warfare arose to turn those walls into a coffin.

In the event that a prolonged siege is impossible, huge machines of destruction, called siege engines, were devised to harry defenders, fracture battlements, and reduce once-magnificent walls to rubble.

Cumbersome. Siege engines cannot move through difficult terrain, making ditches a particular deterrent. Impasses must be filled or debris removed before a siege engine can pass.

Shock and Awe. Though price and size for a given siege engine is suggested, the construction of these marvels has no upper limit. A decorative catapult of dwarven steel adorned with precious stones or a trebuchet large enough to hurl 4,000 pound earth elementals may demand a king's ransom to construct.

CATAPULT/BALLISTA

The catapult is considered the greatest achievement of ancient warfare engineering. Intricate and versatile, these crank-operated engines function like crossbows, flinging stones, 12-foot-long bolts or iron beams over 1,000 feet in distance. Profoundly deadly anti-ship weapons, bolts loosed from a catapult puncture wood, armor, and enemies with ease.

Construction. A catapult requires considerable time and skill to construct, but it can be built for as little as 300 gp (600 gp if metal). About 120 hours of labor is required to build a single catapult, and only craftspeople proficient in carpenter's or smith's tools can take part in its construction.

Size and Weight. Wooden catapults measure 10–15 feet long and weigh 500–4,400 pounds. Catapults built into a wagon weigh twice as much and can be affixed to beasts of burden for movement across a battlefield.

Operation. 2–5 skilled artilleryists. A single skilled artilleryist or a team not proficient with martial weapons can operate a catapult in twice as much time and have disadvantage on attack rolls.

Loading. Five rounds to load a catapult, 1 round to aim it, and an action to fire it.

CANNON

Constructed of iron, packed with explosive powders, loaded with cast iron balls or bundles of stone spheres, these deafening siege engines bellow smoke and fury, laying waste to anything it hits. Though most cannons rely on gunpowder, some variations are powered alchemically or with arcane spellcraft. Medieval cannons were nightmarishly expensive, brittle, and heavy, but if built into a fortification, such weapons can lay waste to even the most steadfast targets.

Construction. Cannons cost a minimum of 2,800 gp to create, 600 gp of which is raw iron. Even with access to one or more furnaces, laborers proficient with smith's tools must provide 1,100 hours of work to craft a single cannon. A single firing can cost up to 100 gp in powder and shot.

THE SCORPION

Identical in form and general function to the catapult, the scorpion is Medium-sized, weighs 150–300 pounds, can be operated by a single artilleryist, and is compact enough to fit atop battlements and inside watchtowers. It flings smaller projectiles (no more than 2 pounds) and

is primarily used to kill infantry and mounted Units at a distance of 200 feet or lob bolts down atop enemies within 1,200 feet.

A scorpion has +3 to hit, range 300/1,200 ft., deals 27 (6d8) piercing damage, and takes one round to load, one action to aim, and one action to fire.

Size and Weight. Cannons come in a variety of sizes and fire a variety of projectiles. Most cannons weigh from 6,000 to 8,000 pounds. Lighter cannons can fire 6–14 pound projectiles, while the largest cannons can blast 70 pound balls of iron over 15,000 feet.

Operation. 1–2 cannoneers proficient in simple weapons. A single cannoneer or a team that is not proficient with simple weapons can operate a cannon in twice as much time and with disadvantage on the attack roll.

Loading. Five rounds to load the cannon's powder and shot, 1 round to ready and aim the cannon, and an action to fire it.

MANGONEL

Mangonels are trebuchets that use muscle power to operate instead of counterweights. Stones or pots of debris are common ammunition, but a mangonel is capable of hurling anything from sewage to severed heads for a fair distance. While trebuchets are more powerful and have better range, mangonels are cheaper, smaller, lighter, and easier to operate, making them a siege staple for societies with surplus muscle.

Construction. Good timber and sturdy rope are all that are required to craft a tension or traction mangonel. One can be constructed for as little as 150 gp in raw materials and as rapidly as 40 hours of unskilled labor, or half as much time for laborers proficient with carpenter's tools.

Size and Weight. A mangonel has a wide base and 20-to-30-foot-tall frame that allows its ropes to be pulled straight down. A 500–800 pound mangonel can easily hurl up to a 30–180 pound stone over two hundred feet.

Operation. 20–50 people of any skill. The engine requires no special training, but demands numerous Small or Medium creatures to pull tension ropes attached to the arm to launch its payload and as many as 70 more operators in reserve for sustained operation.

Loading. Three rounds to load, two rounds to aim, and an action to launch a projectile.

SIEGE TOWER

A tall, rectangular construction of wooden-walled staircases covered in fresh or wet animal skins, siege towers protect archers, soldiers, and smaller siege

SIEGE ENGINE TABLE

Name	Starting Cost	Weight	Size	Hit Points	AC	Actions
Catapult/ Ballista	300 gp	500–1,200 lbs.	Large	40	16	Bolt. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 600/1,800 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 54 (12d8) bludgeoning or piercing damage.
Cannon	2,800 gp	6,000–8,000 lbs.	Large	60	19	Skipping Shot. The cannon targets a point on the ground within 120 feet of it. Each creature in a line 100 feet long and 5 feet wide from that point must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) bludgeoning damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one. Bombard. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 900/5,000 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 77 (14d10) bludgeoning damage.
Mangonel	150 gp	500–800 lbs.	Huge	110*	15	Payload. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 120/400 ft. (can't hit targets within 50 feet), one target. <i>Hit:</i> 60 (9d12 + 2) bludgeoning damage.
Siege Tower	1,500 gp	10,000+ lbs.	Gargantuan	250*	15	—
Trebuchet	1,200 gp	11,000+ lbs.	Gargantuan	250*	15	Payload. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 600/900 ft. (can't hit targets within 100 feet), one target. <i>Hit:</i> 160 (20d12 + 30) bludgeoning damage.

* Vulnerability to fire damage

SIEGE ENGINE COMMANDERS

If using the Battlefield Units mechanic, siege engines can be used in place of a commander. They function identically and represent the Unit's bolstered morale for having a commander that can utterly destroy anything in front of them.

equipment while they overrun a fortification's curtain wall. Siege towers have wheels and axles to make moving it possible. A siege tower is filled with troops before it reaches enemy fortifications, who must trust the tower's walls to keep them safe.

Construction. Heavy planks, thick timbers, iron nails, iron braces, and a huge amount of hides, iron, or non-flammable covering are required to create a siege tower, but it is simple, if time consuming, to build. A siege tower requires 1500 gp of raw materials and an additional 150 gp of materials for every 10 feet of height beyond 40 feet. Such an engine can take over 580 labor hours to construct.

Size and Weight. A fully loaded siege tower can carry hundreds of archers, catapults, and soldiers ready to assault the fortification. Averaging 40 feet tall, such a siege tower could weigh 10,000 pounds while empty or over 50,000 pounds while loaded.

Operation. 50 or more soldiers might be required to wheel a siege tower into place.

TREBUCHET

A monolithic and devastating assault catapult, the counterweight trebuchet hurls massive payloads in a high arc that can bombard behind walls and protective barriers or collapse otherwise unreachable towers. Too large and complex to be transported pre-built, the trebuchet must be painstakingly built on-site by specialists using imported materials or by cannibalizing unneeded equipment, foliage, or structures.

Construction. Sturdy lumber, iron braces, and extreme sizes all built to exacting specifications make trebuchets quite expensive. A 30-foot trebuchet demands 5,000 gp in raw materials and labor. Expert engineers and workers proficient in carpenter's tools can build a trebuchet in 500 labor hours, but larger engines take exponentially more time.

Size and Weight. Demanding one hundred times the weight of its payload as a counterweight, these Gargantuan siege engines are truly titanic. A 30 to 60 foot high frame supports a 90-foot long arm, weighing over 10,000 pounds, it is capped by over 60,000 pounds of counterweight in order to hurl 300 to 600 pound stones nearly a thousand feet.

Operation. 5–10 artilleryists proficient with martial weapons. Unlike mangonels, the trebuchet requires only a few people to operate, but takes considerably longer to reload given its immense weight.

Loading. The trebuchet takes 4 minutes (40 rounds) of constant effort to load and an action to fire. Trebuchets built on frames cannot be aimed left or right, but their distance can be adjusted as an action. Trebuchets on wheels can be re-aimed by dozens of laborers with beasts of burden in 1 minute.

RAISING AN ARMY

Assembling an army of tens of thousands of soldiers requires the command of a local ruler. Assuming a PC is not quite there yet, they can still amass a smaller band with gravitas and cunning. The quality and quantity of fighters depends largely on the size and advancement of the commonwealth from which they are rallied.

Make a successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) or Charisma (Persuasion) check to get the word out. On a success, consult the Banners table to determine the number of enlistees raised based on the size of the commonwealth.

On a failure, only half as many soldiers make themselves available. If the check is failed by 5 or

BANNERS

Commonwealth Type	Population Range	Number of Enlistees	DC
Farmland or village	50–300	2d4 + 3	10
Tribal fiefdom	400–3,000	3d10 + 40	12
Rural merchant confederation	5,000–40,000	12d10 * 10	15
Guild-held commune	30,000–110,000	2d4 * 1,000	17
Metropolitan principality	250,000+	3d8 * 1,000	20

more, a third as many soldiers rally to your cause. This check is made with advantage if you have the local leader's support. The check succeeds automatically with a writ from a local ruler, such as a queen, bishop, or sultan, and supplies three times as many soldiers.

To add uncertainty to the act of rallying troops, consider raising the DC according to the Banners table, which adjusts how difficult the characters find amassing a sizable number of troops in large regions.

The larger a commonwealth, the more variety of soldiers and volunteers may answer the call, as well as their equipment, cost, and general strength in combat. Consult the Banners table to determine the number of soldiers (or Units) supplied by a commonwealth, and the Quality and Cost table to determine the cost and challenge rating of various types of troops that may be on offer.

STREAMLINED SOLDIERS

Though NPCs and maximum challenge ratings are suggested, you can easily improve the statistics of low challenge rating stat blocks by using the training bonus listed in the Quality and Cost table. If using the training bonus, an NPC adds the listed bonus to any attack roll, saving throw, or skill check they make in place of their proficiency bonus and ability modifier. In addition, you may use a soldier's **training bonus + 2** in place of its attack roll and its **training bonus + 3** for the damage roll of its attacks.

Equipment, Hit Points, Traits, Features, Actions, and Reactions are otherwise unchanged.

QUALITY AND COST

Quality	Maximum CR	Training Bonus	Loyalty	Daily Cost	Types
Banneret*	8	+4	100	6 gp	Commissioned officer, infiltrator
Masterful	5	+3	90	4 gp	Bodyguard, knight, lieutenant
Skilled	2	+2	80	2 gp	Foot soldier, squire
Lightly Trained	1/8	+1	50	4 sp	Militia
Untrained	0	+0	20	2 sp	Laborer
Special	0	+3	40	5 sp	Engineer, merchant
Mounted	—	—	—	+1 sp per day, plus a one-time cost equal to half the value of the mount if it is killed	—

*Bannerets are knights, mercenaries, or nobles that supply troops to fight beneath their personal banner. Each banneret demands a higher price, but gives a party advantage on rolls to determine the number of enlistees supplied by a commonwealth.

CONVERT TO UNITS

If using the Battlefield Units template to populate your battlefield for massive engagements and sieges, consult the Unit Statistics table to determine how many and what size Units are supplied by comparing the size column in the Unit Statistics table with the Number of Enlistees in the Banners table.

SOLDIER TYPES

An army is comprised of a hierarchy of commanders, leaders, troops, and support personnel. Royalty watch from high vantage points flanked by bodyguards and infiltrators. Knights in gleaming armor ride barded steeds alongside their enlisted banner carriers. Commanders shout orders to move soldiers into formation. Behind them, engineers command laborers to build massive engines of war, all while merchants lead a river of supplies to the nearest encampment, to fuel the machine of conquest.

The following types of enlisted troops comprise most armies. Each entry contains a general description of their duties, suggested NPC stat blocks from the SRD that could fill the role, and additional skills the soldier type is proficient in.



BODYGUARDS

Employed to protect high-value personnel like commanders, royalty, or costly engineers, bodyguards are professionals who follow the orders of those they protect as closely as those of their commander. They put themselves between their principal and danger, regardless of risk.

NPCs. Gladiator, Veteran, Priest

Skills. Athletics, Insight, Perception

COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

Career soldiers and natural leaders, commissioned officers use rank, title, and prestige to draw others to their cause. Commissioned officers demand structure, rigor, and discipline, lest the army descend into anarchy. Their loyalty is unmatched, but they crave fame, glory, and honor.

NPCs. Bandit Captain, Knight, Noble

Skills. Deception, History, Persuasion

ENGINEERS

Engineers sell their sweat and knowledge to nobles in exchange for exquisite pay and favor. An engineer skilled in siege warfare is regarded as highly as any soldier in the war effort, despite being helpless in combat. Engineers bark orders at laborers and foot soldiers as though they were drill instructors, commanding dozens, or even hundreds of workers to construct items that may change the war effort.

NPCs. Commoner

Skills. Two sets of artisan's tools, Intimidation

FOOT SOLDIERS

The blood, bone, and sinew of the army, the rank-and-file soldier has little concern beyond duty to their commanders, their ruler, and the soldiers at their side. Though foot soldiers are not highly trained or decorated, little stands between them and glory but courage and opportunity. If conditions are poor, they complain the loudest, and insubordination is often born from a foot soldier's meager meal.

NPCs. Berserker, Scout, Guard, Thug

Skills. Acrobatics

INDENTURED SOLDIERING

Some realms demand a certain number of enlisted service in exchange for their ruler's forbearance. In such places, soldiers may fight for a stately cause at no cost, but must be supplied with 1sp per day worth of supplies.

INFILTRATORS

Found leading the army through treacherous terrain, spying on enemy movements, turning valuable targets against their commanders, or cutting the throat of enemy generals, infiltrators take great risk to reap great rewards. Found far removed from the common soldiery, infiltrators are well informed as to the designs of generals and commanders. Infiltrators might seem snarky, exasperated, and terse to those they believe to be less skilled or informed.

NPC. Assassin, Cult Fanatic, Scout, Spy

Skills. Acrobatics, Survival, Stealth

KNIGHTS

Well trained and well equipped, knights are nobles or lauded soldiers who have been granted land, title, and responsibility by their liege. Often descended from a line of nobles or royal appointees, knights are generally versed in war tactics, economics, and history, and have been expertly trained with every style of weaponry, mount, and armor. Knights have been instructed for most of their lives on how to kill, and they take pride in their kills. Whether haughty or cold as winter, knights rightly consider themselves paragons of war.

NPCs. Knight

Skills. Animal Handling, History, Intimidation

LABORERS

Commoners flock to wartime employment for better wages, notoriety, and the potential for plunder. Untrained, undisciplined, and absolutely necessary, laborers generally take courage from the bite of a sword or the glimmer of silver. Pages, sworn servants of knights and nobles, are also laborers, but often come from trusted families and strive to prove themselves worthy of that trust.

NPCs. Commoner

Skills. Athletics

LIEUTENANTS

Captains, commanders, and stalwart leaders of small bands of soldiers, lieutenants filter orders from their superiors down to the rank-and-file, as well as the supply train that follows. Sometimes trusted or sometimes reviled by their soldiers, lieutenants either rise to the noble purpose of ensuring their troop's wellbeing, or become poisoned by the meager power their position offers.

NPCs. Bandit Captain, Berserker, Veteran

Skills. Athletics, History, Insight

MERCHANTS

In columns twice as long as the army itself, merchants carry a stream of supplies to fill bellies, oil equipment, and shoe horses. Though worthless in combat, merchants are devout supporters of the armies that they supply, because without those soldiers, they are fleeing loot bags. There may be thousands or tens of thousands of merchants traveling to and from an army on a given campaign, each with their own ideas about fair pricing.

NPCs. Commoner

Skills. Insight, Investigation, Persuasion

MILITIA MEMBERS

A few times each year, a militia member may don their chain shirt and test their spears in drills meant to teach discipline. Farmers, laborers, and other “unskilled” sorts fight for their families and their land, not for glory or fortune. Militia are miserable in bad weather, restless on clear days, and largely controlled by duty and fear.

NPCs. Bandit, Cultist, Guard

Skills. None

SQUIRES

Sworn to the service of a knight, noble, or commissioned officer, squires serve as apprentices to become knights themselves. Honor bound, dutiful, and attentive to the needs of their superiors, squires are trusted messengers, scribes, and stewards who are more dangerous in combat than they may seem.

NPCs. Bandit Captain, Berserker, Spy

Skills. Medicine, Survival

LOYALTY, DESERTION, AND MUTINY

Morale (see Battlefield Units) is always a factor on the battlefield. Even experienced soldiers flee from mortal peril, but on storm-shattered road, in plague-riddled camp, or after the tenth month of a hopeless siege, a soldier's loyalty, as seen on the Quality and Cost table, may be tested.

While subjected to abnormal circumstances, such as those listed above, a Unit's loyalty is reduced by 10 each week it is made to suffer those conditions. When a soldier's loyalty is reduced to 0, a character or the soldier's commander must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check to keep the soldiers from abandoning the army or rebelling against their superiors.

If the cause of the unrest is remedied, a soldier regains 8 loyalty each week, up to its loyalty maximum.

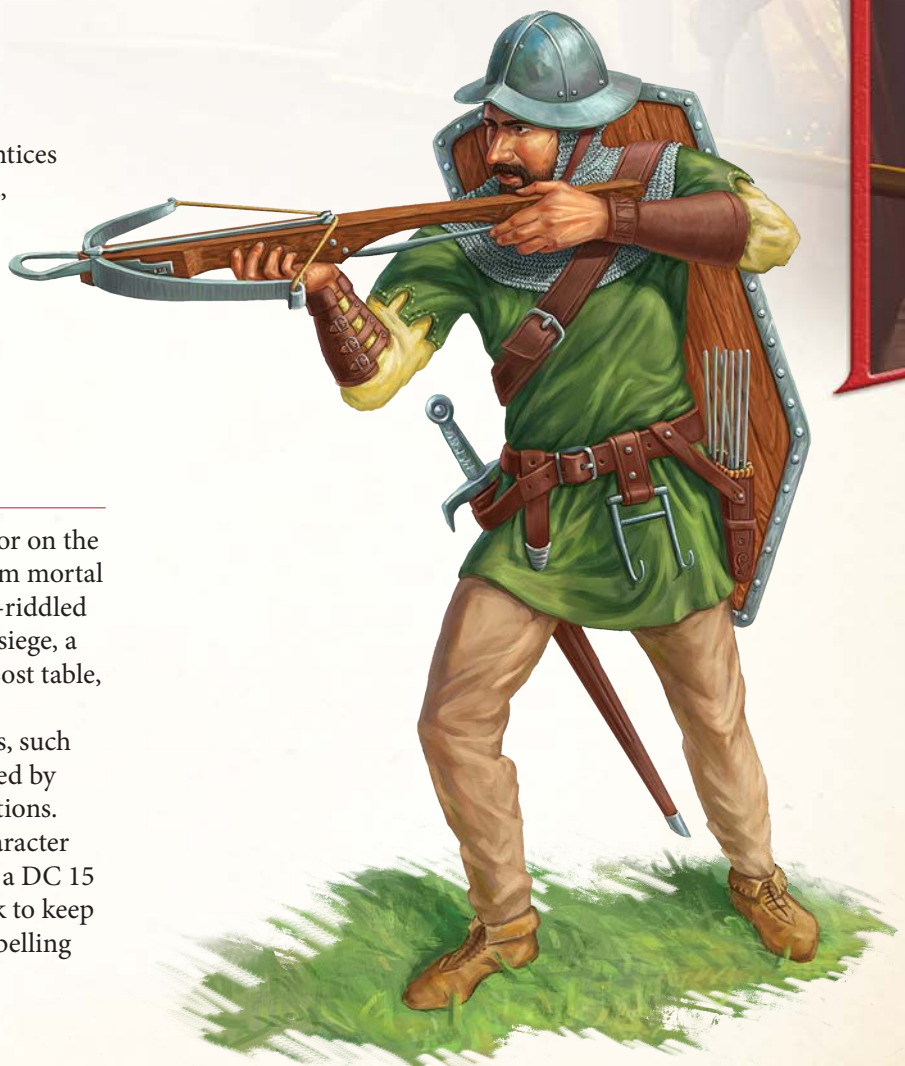
DEFEAT

A Unit's loyalty is reduced by half if the army suffers a defeat but is not destroyed outright. After a defeat, a soldier's loyalty is reduced by 5 each day until it reaches a fortification in which it feels safe.

MERCENARIES

Unlike enlistees brought into service for a cause, mercenaries are soldiers for hire who offer their loyalty for coin. Many mercenary bands are tight-knit, well-ordered groups of ex-soldiers who seek fortune more than glory.

Mercenaries function as enlisted soldiers but their loyalty is halved. When factoring if a mercenary band will desert or mutiny, a mercenary's wage doubles for the remainder of the army's campaign, even with a successful Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) made to placate it. If the sum is not met, mercenaries are quick to disappear.



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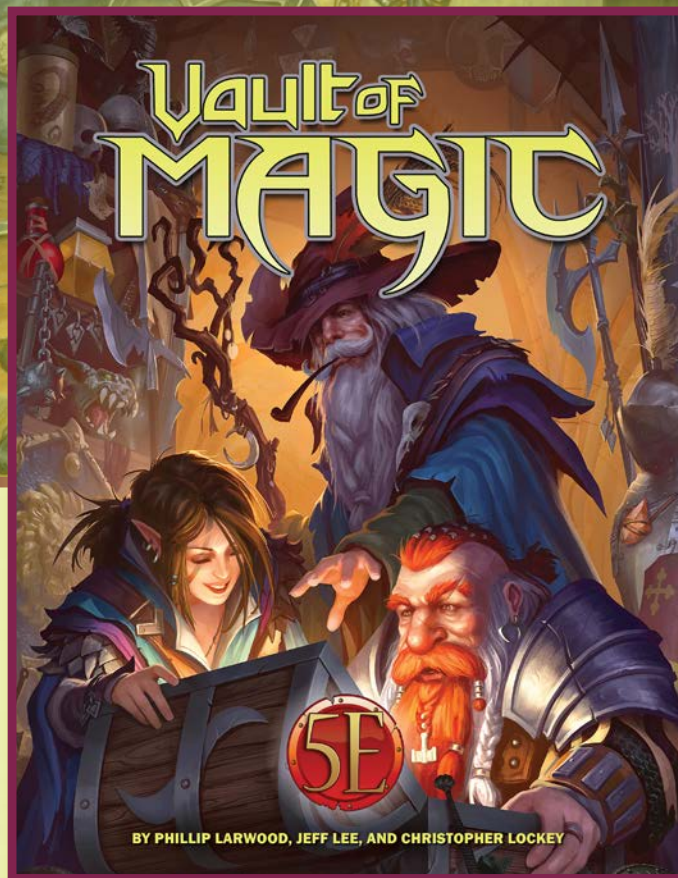
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