




THE SIEGE OF X

 = (A) = Offensive Army

 = [A] = Defensive Army

Example Army Stat Block:

 **Magni's Malice**

HP (Troops): 300

AC (Plate): 18

MM (Morale Meter) 100/100

DD (Axes): 3d8

Commanders: Bergell 'ScrollSniffer,' Drum the Unworthy

	Army Mod	Leader 1 (B)	Leader 2 (D)
Might (Str): 22	+6	+0	+4
Morale (Chr): 17	+3	+2	+2
B. Wis (Wis): 14	+2	+3	+1
S. Int (Int): 15	+2	+5	+0

How To Play:

Each army (1 unit) has four stats: **Might** (Str), **Morale** (Chr), **Battle Wisdom** (Wis), and **Strategic Intelligence** (Int). Each has a corresponding player-stat. These are used at various points during a long siege or fast-paced battle. Each army may have two commanders, who will assist in leading and achieving goals (or possibly die trying).

Armies function on a turn-based system similar to regular combat. **Initiative** is calculated through a flat d20, unless the DM has applied a situational advantage (e.g., Army (A) arrived stealthily under the cover of night, +5 to battle initiative). Initiative stays stagnant throughout an entire siege / battle.

Battles, sieges, etc., function on rounds of an arbitrary time. A battle at its quickest and bloodiest may have rounds spanning 10 to 30 to 60 minutes. A siege at its most

suffocating may have rounds spanning days to weeks, maybe even months. The time a turn takes will likely change throughout a siege/battle.

During a turn, an army may make an action. **An action** is decided by an army's commander (be it two NPCs, two players, or one of each). Each leader can make an individual action (with none or various amounts of troops), or they can pair their powers and make an action together. The task of an action must be reasonable within the timeframe of its turn, and obviously the action must be feasible.

The **success of an action** hinges on an ability check from the army. If army (A) wishes to strike army [A], they must make a Might check against [A]'s current AC. The rest is treated, for the most part, like a regular attack. If their action is not directly related to an opposing army, it may just be a standard ability check rolled against an arbitrary success number. (e.g., (A) wants to locate the weakest part of the wall to smash open, roll a Battle Wisdom check.) If their action is directly against the opposing army's position or strategic desires, both armies may have to roll against each other. (e.g., (A) tries to rout [A] from their defensive trenches. Both roll Might, with given modifiers applying.) DM gets final call on what must be rolled, if the action is daring and perilous, maybe they must roll a morale and a might check to succeed. It all depends.

Additionally, commanders can lead these actions, providing inspiration to the action and army at hand. **An inspiration roll** will be the majority of rolls within large scale combat. They are composed of: **1d20 + army's stat modifier + commander's stat modifier**. Add both commanders' stat modifier if they pair together for one action.

A somewhat average turn may look as such:

During The Siege of X, (A) has broken through the castle walls and battles [A] directly. Turns are set to 10 minutes of in-game time. (A) moves first. Commander 1 decides to take the beefiest troops and form a formidable line at the entrance they have just bore, Commander 1 makes an inspired Might check. Commander 2 decides to take the ranged units and find a perfect vantage point in the ramparts, Commander 2 makes an inspired Battle Wisdom check.

On the other hand, say The Siege of X has just begun and no blood has been drawn and the offensive armies have recently arrived. Turns are set to one week. (B) decides to construct trebuchets, (A) decides to construct siege towers. [A] prepares pots of boiling oil with one leader, the other sharpens and plants defensive spikes. All roll inspired Strategic Intelligence checks.

Health Points = Bodies. The example army (M) has 300 HP. It has 300 troops.

HP also = Firepower. For each 100 troops, an army is given an additional damage die. (e.g., (M) at 300 HP has 3 damage die, 250 HP has 3, 199 HP has 2)

A **damage die** corresponds to the gear that the army wields. An angry mob charging with their bare hands has a d4 damage die. An elite elvish battalion wielding magical blades may have a d12. An army may have different damage die within itself. (e.g., 2d8 for its 200 melee units + 1d6 for its 100 archers. While in one army, their health pools are separate: if 200 melee troops are being battered trying to climb a wall, they will lose troops faster than the 100 archers safely firing behind them. I only see this split-army really coming into play / consequence with larger more diverse armies.)

A d8 is for properly outfitted melee, d6 properly outfitted ranged.

A **base AC** corresponds to an army's average armor. All in plate? 18 AC. All naked? 10 AC. Yet environmental / situational modifiers can and will apply. Shooting arrows behind full cover, +5 AC. Fighting up a muddy hill, -3 AC.

The **morale meter** is to make sure armies will fight and listen to orders. Every army begins with a morale meter at 100/100. Depending on the margin of success or failure in an action, morale will be subtracted from the appropriate side (though it cannot exceed 100 or drop below 0). (e.g., (A) forms an offensive line against [A], the might check is a 26. [A]'s AC is 20. [A] loses 6 morale. Yet, if (A) rolls a 15, (A) would fail the attack and lose 5 morale.)

Morale checks occur at the DM's discretions. Maybe they happen only after heavy blows / strategic losses, or they occur on a set basis: every three rounds. Regardless, a morale check is $1d100 - 1 \text{ commander's charisma bonus}$ (rolls cannot go below 0). If the check is greater than the army's current morale, it fails and chaos ensues. If the check is or is below the army's current morale, order is kept. (e.g., (C) has a morale of 56, the check is a 72, morale fails. Check is 50, morale still at 56, order is maintained.)

A failed morale check's consequence is up to DM discretion. 50 troops may flee, or the whole line may dissolve. Though, the actual number of morale is some indicator of severity. If a morale check fails at 87 actual morale, some troops may leave or the next attack automatically fails. If morale fails at 13 actual morale, there likely won't be troops left to fight.

A leader can choose to spend a turn to **raise morale** ($1d20 + \text{army's morale mod} + \text{commander's Chr mod}$) On a success add 1d8 + commander Chr modifier to morale meter. On a failure, nothing happens.

Failed attacks are not total failures. They deal $\frac{1}{2}$ damage (assuming both armies share similar defensive advantages) and will never accomplish a physical / strategic goal. (e.g., (A) wants to form an offensive line against [A]. They roll a 23 Might against [A]'s 25 AC. (A) deals half damage, fails to form an offensive line, and loses 2 morale.)

If the defender is at a supreme defensive advantage, failed offensives do $\frac{1}{4}$ damage, and fail their objective. (e.g., (A) fails to storm [A]'s manned ramparts, dealing $\frac{1}{4}$ damage and losing appropriate morale.) This partial damage system applies to both ranged and melee attacks.

While on the receiving end of an assault, defensive troops are not just meat bags. Any army under attack automatically does $\frac{1}{2}$ their damage to the attacking army. (e.g., (A) has formed its offensive line and [A] is striking back. Regardless of [A]'s success in striking the offensive line, (A) deals $\frac{1}{2}$ damage to [A].)

The strike back feature only applies to melee combat, the prey of a ranged attacks is simply that.

Keeping **the Player** in the chaos is important. The player still wants to feel that they have meaningful individual agency, even within large scale combat. If a sorcerer is taking archers to a perfect perch, maybe they find that the way is blocked by rubble, prompting the sorcerer to expend a spell slot, blowing the rubble to bits with a fireball or moving it with telekinesis. Additionally, if a fighter leads melee troops into hand-to-hand combat against the opposing king's battalion. The fighter may find himself toe-to-toe with the king and his two royal guards, and a typical combat encounter follows, with battle-wide repercussions in tow.

Though, not every attack should or needs to have cinematic zoomed-in moments. Maybe the fighter never even sees the king on the battlefield. Therefore, damage should correspond to the success or failure of the attack. On a success, the commander only takes 1 damage die from the opposing army, directly to their HP. On a failure, they take 2 or 3 damage die, or just an arbitrary 15 damage.

Additionally, they could be given a choice: in the heat of slaughter, a wizard turns to see an axe towering over their frame. They may expend a 3rd level spell slot to quickly save their hide with an attack, or take a 3d8 blow.

The purpose of these mid-battle damages and choices is to: one, make sure the player feels that their character is there and faces the same stakes as their troops, and, two, when players finally capture the keep and kick down the doors to the king's hall, where he

stands in full armor with his most-trusted knights by his side, the players are weathered, ready to fight, yet not near full strength. They have, after all, just won a siege.

The **name of the game** when it comes to sieges / battles is properly allocating preparation / siege turns, so when the battle begins, an army is not just in the possession of its base stats, but a plethora of strategic modifiers. (e.g., (A)'s weeks building siege towers may give their final assault a +10 to their Might check when looking to storm the ramparts. Yet, [A]'s defense may have prepared spikes and oil, raising their AC +10.)

These modifiers may be from environmental hazards, or battle tactics, or unorthodox strike teams, or whatever the strange mind of a player can conjure, yet their role is to separate the more prepared and better led armies vs the less prepared (be it through cunning leadership, superior munitions, etc.). Hopefully, the modifiers make this system less about pure brawn and more about the methodical path that the party carves toward victory, or ruin.