Mass Combat Made Easy

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Most combat is carried out one-on-one, with each set of stats (HP, AC, combat bonuses, etc) applying to a single character or creature.

It can be extended by adding in Combat Scale. This takes the basic combat mechanics and uses them to apply to anything from Tactical Units to Destroyer-Class starships.

Combat Scale is a multiplier that shows the size of the unit relative to the norm. It is only applied to damage in combat between units of different size. Hit Points, AC and all other stats remain the same.

For example, a unit of 20 Goblin warriors will have CSx5 as per the table below. The combat stats are still HD1d8+1 (5hp), AC15, Morningstar +2 (1d6) or Javelin +3 (1d4). Against anything with the same Combat Scale (for example, a unit of 15 Elves), combat is resolved normally as if it was one goblin against one elf.

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Number  Combat
in Unit Scale
2-5     x3
6-10    x4
11-20   x5
21-40   x6
41-80   x7
81-160  x8
161-320 x9
321-640 x10
etc
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Combat Scale comes into play when battling against forces of a different size. It acts as a multiplier for damage taken, and also divides any damage given.

If the battle started between units of different CS, reduce the size of the Combat Scale as Hit Points as lost. For example, if the twenty Goblins above are reduced to 2hp, they have lost over half their unit, so are now CSx4. When down to just 1hp, they are CSx3 with just 5 goblins remaining.

If the Combat Scale becomes the same for all opponents, resolve combat normally; the playing field is now level.

Sci-Fi combat and more

The same system can be used to implement large scale science fiction battles where Combat Scale is used to reflect the widely different scale between starships.

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Ship             Combat      Example
Type             Scale
One-man Fighter x5          Tie Fighter, X-Wing
Starship x10        Moya, Serenity
Cruiser          x20         Enterprise, Mecha Dropship
Destroyer        x40         Imperial Star Destroyer
etc
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For multiple ships, add the Combat Scale for the size of the ship to the CS from the number of Units. For example, 100 Fighters will be CSx13 (x5 + x8).

It?s possible to use existing monster stats to create Fighters, Starships and even Destroyer-class behemoths with little difficulty. Simply select an appropriate creature from the Monster List and give it a type. Replace it?s ranged weapon with a suitably sci-fi sounding name (or use the RandomSciFiWeaponGenerator), and you?re done.

Ship Examples

- Goblin-class Fighter: HD1d8+1 (5hp), AC15, +1 Pulse Canon (1d6), CSx5
- Troll-class Cruiser: HD6d8+36 (63hp), AC16, +9 Distruptor Beam Torpedo (1d6+6), CSx20 (includes Fast Auto-Repair system)
- Goblin-class Starship: HD1d8+1 (5hp), AC15, +1 Meson Canon (1d6), CSx10

Calculating EL

Experience is gained from taking part in a battle equal to the HD of the opponent, +1 for each CS higher than your own. For example, a member of the 20-strong Grey Company (CSx5) will earn 3EL in a battle against 35 Gnolls (a 2HD creature, CSx6).

Combat Examples

Orcs vs Elves

Twenty orcs enter a forest glade where they are beset upon by 15 elven archers. As their CS is the same, it?s treated as a straight single combat. The elven archers fire their longbows (+3, 1d8), hitting for 3 points of damage. The Orcish unit is down to 2hp. As the combat started with both opponents having the same Combat Scale, there?s no change to CS and combat continues. The Orcs rally and snarl, preparing to flush out the Elves with their barbed falchions. They charge into the bushes.

The elves calmly fire another volley, hitting for more 4 more hp - more than the Orcish unit can take. Silence falls in the clearing as orcish blood soaks into the grass????

Goblins vs lone warrior

Twenty goblins ambush a lone 5th level Fighter. Their CS is x5, so any damage dealt is multiplied by five before it?s applied against his Hit Points. Similarly, any damage he does is divided by five. In the first round he hits well for 10 damage. That?s divided by 5, to 2hp lost by the Goblin unit; They?re down to 3hp - if they lose another hp they will drop down to CSx4 as they?ve lost more than half their hit points.

In reply, the Goblins hit, attacking with their Morningstars en masse. The Fighter is hit for 4hp, x5 due to their numbers. He takes 20hp of damage. Good luck to him!

Knights vs Red Dragon

The 500-strong Order of the Purple Flame stand ready against the Red Dragon. They are CSx10, while the Dragon - a single critter - is just CSx1, though formidable.

- 500 Knights: HD2d8+4 (14hp), AC18, Lance +7 (1d10+4) or Longsword +6 (1d8+2), CSx10
- Red Dragon: HD13x12+39 (123hp), AC21, Bite +20 (2d6+7) or Breath 10d10 DC24

The Dragon flies high above and breathes flame across their phalanx for 46hp damage. The knights dive for cover beneath their shields (phys+DEX to dodge DC24. They roll 25, barely making it). They take 1/2 damage - 23hp, divided by CSx10 for 2hp. The Knights are down to 12hp.

They ready their horses to charge as the Dragon lands, the thunder of 2,000 hooves causing the young Red to pause. They hit (rolled 18+7 = 25 vs. AC21), scoring 11 damage, CSx10 for a massive 110hp damage. The Red is down to 13hp against the small army, bleeding from the impact of many lances. It roars and lunges in anger, biting savagely. It hits easily (rolled 6+20 = 26 vs. AC18) for 17 damage, divided by 10 = 2hp. The Knights are down to 10hp. If they fall below 7hp they will be at half their numbers and down to CSx9.

They draw their Longswords and surround the downed Dragon, though their weapons to little more than scratch the drake?s hide (6 + 8 = 14, a miss). The Dragon turns to bite again, and rolls a Natural 20. It?s a critical, so the Knights take 19hp damage, CSx10 so 2hp lost. They?re down to 8hp after watching a few more of their number be gobbled up.

Their longswords bit true (18 +6 = 24 vs. AC21), for 6hp damage, CSx10 for a total of 60hp against the drake. It?s down, finally, though the Knights have lost 143 (500x4/14) of their number in the battle. The commend their souls in valour.

Knights vs Gnolls

The Knights of the Purple Flame, bolstered by their successes and reinforcements decide to tackle the Gnoll threat to the South. They ride out at full strength against the 300 Gnolls of Ghakak Khan.

- 500 Knights: HD2d8+4 (14hp), AC18, Lance +7 (1d10+4) or Longsword +6 (1d8+2), CSx10
- 300 Gnolls: HD2d8+2 (11hp), AC15, Battleaxe +3 (1d8+2) or shortbow +1 (1d6), CSx9

The Knights charge the Gnolls as the Gnolls fire shortbows into their midst. The Gnolls roll well (18+1 = 19) for 5 damage. 9/10th of it applies, which still rounds up to 5hp. The Knights are at 9hp as riders fall from their mounts.

The next round, the Knights hit hard (roll 14+7+2 (from the charge) = 23, easily beating AC15) for 9hp, multiplied by 10/9th for 10hp. This leaves the Gnolls with just 2hp. Just 54 Gnolls remain standing (300x11/2). The Gnolls route and the Knights are victorious!

Fighters vs Starship

A lone Griffon-class Starship, the ?Verdant Princess? is plying the spacelanes when it is attacked by pirates. They ambush from around an asteroid, 10 Stirge-class Fighters. The captain of the Starship, an Half-elven Merchant by the name of Kithillien Mahadrascapore has little choice but to turn and fight.

- Griffon-class Starship: HD7d10+21 (59hp), AC17, +11 Beam Laser (2d6+4), CSx10
- 10 Stirge-class Fighters, HD1d10 (5hp), AC16, +7 Breach and lock-on, CSx9

Kith instructs her 5 crewmembers to prepare for boarders. Stirge-class Fighters attack by attaching to the hull of their opponent, using cutting gear to inflict a point of damage each round. When 5hp of damage is done, there?s a hole large enough to allow the pirates to board.

The Striges strike first, rolling poorly (4+7=11 vs AC17) and Kith?s maneuvering has avoided them. She replies by cutting across them with her Beam Laser, easily catching them all in the blast (12+11=32 vs AC16) for 11hp x 10/9 = 12hp damage. All that remains of the tiny Fighters is space-dust and Kith breathes a sigh of relief?..

?..which stops midgasp as a Hellhound-class Starship comes around the asteroid, it?s markings clearly showing it belongs to Caleb Duo?nith, famed Drow Pirate - and her half-brother.

Combat