

Battlefield Encounters

Running a war campaign but don't want to get bogged down with tactical troop movements? Do you want to focus the action on the PCs? This little table provides a quick and dirty way of handling a group of special forces type PCs whose actions have great sway over the course of the battle. While the PCs may be a powerful unit in and of themselves, the assumption of this setup is that the PCs are not generals in charge of the army. Thus, they don't get to choose the type of encounter, but rather it is dictated by the tide of battle and their success on the battlefield.

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<p>Treat a battle as a skill challenge where each combat won is a success and each combat lost is a failure.</p> <p>Between each combat the PCs get one short rest. They may take additional rests at -2 to the next roll each.</p> <p>PCs who are dying are stabilized by healers on the battlefield (unless the result says otherwise).</p> <p>If all the PCs are unconscious/dying after a combat they enter the next combat bloodied.</p>		
d20	Encounter Type	Description
0 -	All is lost!	The PCs face an encounter 4 levels higher. If they lose, go straight to "Defeat"!
1	Last Stand	The PCs' side is decimated and the PCs cover the retreat of the remaining forces. They must hold off an encounter 3 levels higher for at least 8 rounds or else subtract -10 from the next roll. Even if they succeed, they take -3 from the next roll. Healers can't reach them during this battle.
2	Hopelessly Outnumbered	Separated from their unit, PCs face an encounter 4 levels higher composed entirely of minions. If they flee, -3 from next roll. Healers can't reach them.
3	Matter of Honor	An elite of equal level challenges one PC to single combat while the other PCs face an encounter 3 levels higher. Should the PC lose, -2 from next roll. Should the PC win, +1 to next roll and the survivors immediately surrender.
4	Hold the Line!	PCs face an encounter 2 levels higher composed entirely of minions. At round 3 and round 6 an equal level encounter worth of minions joins in. If more than half of the minions bull rush/overrun the PCs, -1 from next roll.
5	Rally to Me!	PCs face an encounter 2 levels higher to prevent their unit from being routed. A successful Diplomacy/Intimidate check gains the aid of a minion. If they fail, -1 1 from next roll.
6	Guard the Lord or Standard	PCs face an encounter 2 levels higher to protect a lord/standard. If they lose, the target is taken captive and -2 from next roll. If they win, +1 to next roll.
7	Risky Charge	PC are surrounded by an encounter 2 levels higher and their enemies gain flanking for the entire combat. If they win, +1 to next roll.
8	Chaotic Melee	Smoke, the clash of steel, and chaos fill the battlefield – everyone is deafened and it is hard to tell friend from foe. PCs face an equal level encounter, but their enemies have partial concealment. A PC may choose to gain partial concealment, but on a natural '1' a fellow PC's attack accidentally strikes them. Healers can't reach them.
9	Prisoner of War	PCs face an encounter 1 level higher to rescue an important captive before they're interrogated. If the captive isn't rescued within 5 rounds the battle ends and they suffer -2 to the next roll. If they win they learn important intelligence – they may forfeit their short rest to quickly act on it, gaining +2 to the next roll.
10	Intercept	PCs chase enemies riding to bring reinforcements, sabotage the heroes' supplies, flank an allied unit, etc. Each PC must make an Athletics check to reach the enemies – a failure means the PC can try again next turn. The PCs face an equal level encounter. If they succeed +1 next roll. If they fail -1.

11 Atrocities	The PCs face an equal level encounter. No quarter is asked and none is given. During the encounter the PCs witness atrocities. Roll 1d4: (1) Enemies kill the healers and PCs no longer are automatically stabilized when dying; (2) Enemies commit an unspeakable atrocity on a corpse; (3) An ally begins killing surrendered enemies and the PCs must stop him; (4) A bloodied enemy pleads for the PCs to protect him either because he is defecting (having witnessed an atrocity) or the PCs' allies have brutally interrogated him and he escaped.
12 The Order	The PCs receive a controversial order from a commanding officer such as binding the dead spirits of the enemy, capturing or killing an allied unit that has fled the battle, burning the enemy's supply line, reneging on a promise to take an enemy commander alive, using poison, relying on heartless mercenaries, etc. If the PCs obey the order they face an encounter 1 level higher (possibly with some advantage); if they win they gain +1 to the next roll. If they refuse the order, they must either talk sense into the officer or suffer -1 from the next roll. In this encounter, victory or defeat might not mean combat at all.
13 Face to Face	The PCs face an equal level encounter, beginning in a pressing melee. If they win, +1 to next roll. Win or lose, they are denied a short rest afterwards.
14 Strategic Ploy	The PCs look over the battlefield and pit their strategic skill against the enemy. One PC makes an appropriate hard Knowledge skill check aided by other PCs. If successful they gain an advantage against an equal level encounter. If unsuccessful, they face an encounter 1 level higher and the enemies have the advantage. Should they win they may set up the battlefield any way they like for the next combat and gain +1 on all further rolls on this table for the battle.
15 Stand Fast	Having seized a strategic position, the PCs face an encounter 1 level higher attempting to wrest control. During the combat they make use of their advantage and if they win may keep the advantage in the next combat.
16 Clash of Titans	Champions (elites of equal level to the PCs) come to face the PCs, entering single combat with each PC while the rank-and-file watch on. Each PC who loses suffers -1 from next roll as morale drops, while each PC who wins gains +1 to next roll as their side cheers. Add up the modifiers after the last fight.
17 Surprise Flank	Each PC makes an Athletics or Stealth check to sneak up on an enemy unit (encounter level 1 level higher). If they all succeed they gain flanking for the entire combat. Succeed or fail, they gain a surprise round.
18 Capture the Standard!	PCs face an encounter 1 level higher. If they succeed they've captured the enemy's standard (or recaptured their own) and gain +2 to the next roll.
19 Victorious Charge	The PCs face an encounter of equal level, automatically winning initiative. If they win, they gain +1 to the next roll. If they forgo their short rest afterwards, they instead gain +3 to the next roll as they charge onward.
20 Breakthrough	The PCs have broken through the rank-and-file to reach the enemy commander – this should be a hard encounter designed by the DM. If they win they gain +10 to next roll, unless, of course, the commander issues a call for surrender, in which case go to "Victory" ... though there may be stipulations to the surrender.
21+ Seize the Day!	The PCs face an equal encounter level. If they win, they've earned "Victory"!
Victory: The PCs' side wins, accomplishing their aim in the battle, taking spoils and captives. Defeat: The PCs' side loses the battle and the enemies accomplish their aim. Roll 1d4 for each PC; -1 if the last combat left the PC unconscious/dying; +1 if the PC wasn't even bloodied. (0) dead, (1) dying, (2) bloodied, wounded and taken captive, (3) left for dead bloodied behind enemy lines, (4) bloodied, wounded, retreated but separated from unit, (5) bloodied and retreated with unit.	