

DIE, MEN!



In *REIGN* there are two levels of combat: Face to face personal stabbing, and vast, abstract collisions of nations and cultures. The second are strongly influenced by the first, sometimes. But there has been demand for a middle grade in all this, a way to resolve the tactical level where maneuver and morale matter more than a single warrior's skill, but where it's still not an entire country at risk. *Die, Men!* is meant to fill that gap.

Die, Men! was described by one playtester as "a minis game for gamers who hate minis." It does have a lot in common with traditional wargames (you can even use a hex grid, if you like) but I've tried to make it as simple and quick as I could without sacrificing the essential nitty gritty of making the right decisions. That's what command is all about, right? That and looking good in armor.

Starting



The more of the finicky calculating you can do before the clash starts, the less of it you have to do on the fly, so I've tried to front-load as much of the organization as possible.

You Will Need...

Dice. Lots and lots of dice, actually. At least 15d10 just for rolling, plus more dice if you want to use them for groups of units. If you don't have tons of dice, you can use counters on the map, but I'd rather fumble around resetting a d6 from six to four than trying to pick two counters out of a hex, especially if your hexes are small.

Map Tools. You need a map on which to plan out the battle. You can buy hex paper, you can make your own easily enough, online resources are available with little searching. Me, I like to repurpose the sturdy cardboard hexes from my *Settlers of Catan* game, with a sheet of plexiglass on top to keep them from shifting around.

Alternately, you can do it on a square grid. That works just fine as well. It's a little clunky going diagonal, but some people prefer it, and it's easier.

If you're using *Die, Men* as a companion to a roleplaying game, the map probably comes from your GM's fervid brain. If you just want to wargame a little and bash your neighbor, there are instructions for collectively generating a map by laying tiles under "The Map," on page 4.

What is a 'Unit'?

The basic element of these rules is the 'unit,' representing a soldier or group of soldiers. You need to track units, you lose units to enemy action, the number of units you have in a given place indicates how effective you can be there. A unit could represent ten soldiers or a hundred, but units are always the same for all players in a battle. If your units are fifty troops, his units are fifty troops too.

You can track units on the map with counters, or track multiple units on a single die by adjusting the top face to show how many units are there.

Comprehension. Specifically, you need a basic understanding of the One Roll Engine. This document assumes you've read the rules (available free online at www.nemesis-system.com), know what Height and Width mean, what sets are and how things generally go.

Die, Men was conceived with *REIGN* in mind, so there are references to people using Strategy and Tactics. If you're adapting this to other ORE games, other command abilities can be substituted.

Defining the Scale

Just how big a battle is this? The rules scale, so that you can represent a brawl of twenty on twenty with the same map, supplies and rolls as an engagement of thousands. That twenty on twenty fight

Starting



Soldiers per Unit	Hex Size	Command Interference	Command Lag	Each Round Lasts
1	15 feet	Tactics, Difficulty 0	0	5 minutes
2	15 feet	Tactics, Difficulty 3	0	5 minutes
5	30 feet	Tactics, Difficulty 5	1	10 minutes
10	60 feet	Tactics, Difficulty 5 / Strategy, Difficulty 0	1	10 minutes
20	60 feet	Strategy, Difficulty 3	1	15 minutes
50	150 feet	Strategy, Difficulty 5	2	30 minutes
100	200 feet	Strategy, Difficulty 7	3	1 hour

could be *part* of a larger engagement, with the terrain that's meaningful on the small scale (this patch of trees, that narrow stream through the field) being subsumed into one huge 'open' hex at the army level. It doesn't change the rules. Just decide how many soldiers a 'unit' represents and the rest of the scale builds from there.

This means that if I want to run a battle of 120 men against 150 enemies, I can choose to have 6 units of 20 men each, or 60 units of 2 men each, or any combination on the scale. I just have to make sure that my opponent is on the same step! If my units are 20 and his are

5, the system is going to collapse dramatically.

As a general rule, larger scale means less time to resolve. With fewer dice, you have a lot less handling time sorting your sets. However, if you get too grainy, your pool doesn't yield many sets and you wind up needing lots more rounds. Then again, since each round is shorter, it may all come out in the wash. Most important of all, the smaller the pools, the bigger the influence of luck. If I go with 60 units of 2, I'm going to have the 15d maximum pool for a long time. If it's 6 units of 20, then I roll a pool of 6d and things are much more random.

Starting



Given how much of a difference scale makes, in a roleplaying framework it might make sense to let the winner of a Strategy roll off pick the scale, then let the other general adjust it up or down one step. In my 120 vs. 150 example, I might want to set it at ten men to a unit, so I start with a 12d pool vs. his 15d. That's not so random as a 6d pool, but still doesn't give him as crushing of an advantage. He might then adjust it down so that I have a 6d pool and he has 7d. Or he might switch it upwards, giving both of us 15d pools, but with mine less durable.

The Map

For the simplest form of the game, there are only three types of terrain: Open, Rough, and Impassible. If you want to spice things up, finer graduations (with rules) are available under the heading "Terrain" on page 10.

Open terrain doesn't change the rules at all. It's open, flat, easy to march and fight and die on. Impassible terrain is just

what it says: No one can move units into it. This is for cliffs, volcanoes, deep water and the like. (If you want to represent fortresses with the simple rules, Impassible hexes where some units start does nicely in a pinch.)

That leaves Rough terrain. You can't

enter Rough during the Free Movement phase at the end of combat (except for Cavalry units, if you're using them). This means you have to spend a set to move into or out of it.

If your players are just throwing a battle together, I recommend having individual hexes made up (or, like I said, borrowed from another game). Divide them up between

players and take turns putting them down. You can have one player put down all the mountains and another put down all the fields, or you can just grab random handfuls. This can set up a game-before-the-game where you build terrain with plans in mind. That's cool.



In Battle



Setting Up

If this is an RPG scenario, the GM sets up the enemy units, and possibly yours as well. Or, if your characters knew this fight was coming, you may get to decide where your units are, within reason. If it's a pickup war, just take turns picking a hex and putting as many units as you want in it.

In Battle

As with the standard ORE, you declare, roll and resolve. However, since you're dealing with great mobs of personnel, Declaring is necessarily vague.

Each general declares a general **strategy** for their whole army. These are written down and shown simultaneously. Then each player rolls, producing sets. During the resolve phase, they spend sets to have certain hexes take certain actions - but the actions they can choose are limited by the strategy picked during Declare. If you declared a Retreat, you can't have a hex Attack, even if your opponent reveals a weakness. At the very end of resolve phase, there's a Free Movement phase, where each group of units can move into one open, unthreatened hex.

Declare

There are four options: Deploy, Seize, Hold and Retreat. You pick one of these four for your whole army, and it restricts the choices you have when assigning sets to actual actions. Usually, the strategy you pick constrains where your units can move. During the Free Movement phase,

those restrictions no longer apply.

Deploy

When you declare a Deploy strategy, your units aren't actively seeking conflict with the enemy - they're trying to get into desired positions. When you Deploy, choose a general direction ("north," "to high ground," "towards the enemy troops"). When you spend sets for troop actions, you can pick Defend or Move. The Move order cannot go directly away from the goal. (If you're Deploying north, your troops won't go south.) You can't Attack while Deploying.

Seize

With Seize, you're the aggressor. You're trying to engage an enemy force or occupy a particular location. As with Deploy, you choose a general goal ("the main force of their cavalry," "the city gate" "the center of the battlefield" "south"). Your troops can Move, but as with Deploying, they can't move directly away from the goal. They can Attack any adjacent square. They cannot, however, move away from the goal in order to make an opportunistic assault. In Seize mode, you cannot Defend.

Hold

When you Declare a Hold, you're trying to keep what you have. Your troops can Defend, obviously. They can also Attack. Their Move options are severely curtailed, however: They can *only* move into a hex that already contains some of your troops.

In Battle



Encirclement

Encirclement occurs when your opponent has to defend more than one facet of his hex from your forces. If you're in two hexes that adjoin his, he's encircled. If your forces are in three hexes, he's considerably encircled. If you get all six hexes around his unit, they're completely surrounded and in bad, bad shape.

Encirclement is a powerful tactical advantage, and it functions like a weapon in hand-to-hand ORE combat: It adds points to your Width for the purposes of determining how many units snuff it. (**Not** for timing!) For each facet your forces occupy, you do an extra unit of damage. When you've only got one face to his hex, you do Width damage. Two faces is W+1. If you surround him on six sides, every attack set from each of those six hexes does W+5 damage. However, your forces' damage *still* cannot exceed the number of units in the hex.

Example: Fifteen reserve units of the Royal Army have gotten cut off while trying to back up a failing flank. The Duke's Insurgents occupy three adjacent hexes between them and the main force. One of the Duke's hexes has five units and the other two have three apiece. When the Duke spends a 2x9 set ordering the five unit hex to attack, it kills four Royal units: Width (two) plus the number of extra faces from encirclement (two). However, when the hexes with three units are assigned attack sets, there's no way for their damage to do exceed three units. If they had four or more units, they'd get the full benefit, but as it is the most damage that the total of eleven units can do is... eleven. Though to put that in perspective, it's not a bad yield from six points of Width.

Retreat

You know what a Retreat is. The army's withdrawing from enemy troops. When you Retreat, your troops cannot Attack. They can Move, but they *cannot move directly at an enemy unit*. If they're surrounded, they can Defend, but only then.

Roll

When all the generals have picked strategies, they roll the dice.

Rolling dice produces sets, and you spend sets to attack, defend, and move around in threatened hexes. The more dice you roll, the more sets you're likely to get, so the obvious question is, "How many dice do you roll?"

You roll 1d10 per unit, but only up to a maximum of 15d. (Trust me, you don't *really* want to roll and sort more than that.) You can get some pretty impressive sets this way - 4x and 5x sets are much more likely to turn up in a 15d pool than in a smaller one. If you get a very wide set like that, you can use it as-is, or you can break it into smaller sets. If I roll a 5x10, I can either keep it or turn it into a 2x10 and a 3x10.

The timing of the sets is just like in all the other ORE games.

In Battle



Command Interference

There's a column for "Command Interference" on the scale chart. That's primarily a matter for *Die, Men!* as a roleplaying adjunct. If your characters are in the battle, their characters are in a particular hex. They may want to give orders that are different from those issued by the general or commander. Command Interference indicates what a character has to roll in order to get the units in their hex to obey.

Here's the nifty bit: Successful orders from PCs ignore the Declared strategy. If your commander put your army in Hold but you see a vulnerability, make your Tactics or Strategy roll. If it succeeds, you can take one of the sets the general rolled and turn it into an Attack. You may get chewed out for it later. Then again, considering what an unexpected Attack might do during a Retreat, you could wind up with a medal.

It may seem a little odd that it's a Knowledge based roll, rather than Command, to order troops about in the field. But to get people to follow, orders have to be issued in the language they expect, employing logic they understand. Furthermore, knowing who to tell to get the message out is crucial. Simply yelling for people to do things doesn't work if you don't seem to know what you're doing.

If you want to factor in the force of personality, you can allow Command+Inspire (or Command +Threaten, if that's your method) to reduce the Difficulties of those Tactics or Strategy rolls. For each point of Width in the Command based roll, the Difficulty goes down by one. You can do this as a multiple action, or you can set it up one turn by commanding the attention of the troops before giving them their new strategy or tactic.

Resolve

Now we get to the meat of it. Your army has a single pool and gets a string of sets. You spend those sets on hexes full of your units, and those units then pursue your interests.

You can spend your sets on three different tactics: Attack, Defend and Move.

Attack

You tell your troops in one hex to attack an adjoining hex. (You can't Attack an empty hex, only Move into it.) If you get a set past any defense he's mounted, you knock a die out of one enemy set. (The enemy commander picks which.)

More critically, your troops also eliminate a number of enemy units equal to the Width of the set assigned. Several factors can increase the number of units removed.

In Battle



- Terrain can give bonuses. Hills and Mountains both give +1 damage when they're the origin of an attack.
- Position can give bonuses. See the boxed text on "Encirclement" for details. Short version: each extra facing your enemy has to defend gives you +1 damage.
- Some types of troops do extra damage. Archers give a +1 bonus to troops in their hex and adjoining spaces, the presence of Player Characters gives a +1 bonus, and Cavalry troops do Width+1 damage.

All these bonuses work the same way. They take out more troops than the Width, but don't actually change the Width.

Example: I'm Seizing, my opponent is Holding. I roll and get a 2x8, while he gets a 3x8. As it happens, I'm pretty buff: I'm attacking with Cavalry units on two faces, so my damage is at Width+2 with each squad (+1 for being Cavalry, +1 for encirclement). But because his 3x8 set is timed faster, he can use a Gobble Die to wreck my 2x8. I do no damage.

Next round, I'm still Seizing, he's still Holding, neither of us has moved. This time,



In Battle



I get a 4x10 and a 3x9 while he gets a 4x10 as well. His four tens become Gobble Dice and when I attack with my 4x10, he can cancel three of the dice in my set, wrecking it. When I assign my 3x9, he uses his last Gobble Die to reduce it to a 2x9. It still gets through, though. Doing Width+2 damage, I clear out four of his units.

Damage is limited, however! The number of units in a square or hex serves as a cap to the amount of damage it can do. If I have two units in a square, it doesn't matter if they're Cavalry attacking a completely encircled foe and I assigned a 4x10 result. They kill two enemy units, that's it.

When units are eliminated, the defender chooses which in a hex are gone. (For example, if a hex has both Cavalry and Infantry troops, he's probably going to have the Infantry take the damage.)

Once a hex is emptied of enemies, it's an open space like any other. Attackers don't automatically move into the hex. If they want to occupy it, they can do so with a Move action or possibly during Free Movement.

Defend

If you tell a group to defend, the set you assign it turns into Gobble Dice to apply against incoming attacks.

Move

With any set, you can move all the units in one hex into any adjacent hex that doesn't already have enemies in it. It's a nice use for sets with low Width and/or

Height, if they don't get ruined by attacks.

If their initial hex and the hex they're entering are unthreatened - that is, there are no enemy units in an adjacent hex - they can complete the move order even without an assigned set, during Free Movement. (But only then!)

Moving some units from a hex and leaving some behind is fine.

Free Movement

This is a little addendum to the Resolve phase, after all the sets have been spent. Each squad can move into an adjacent space, as long as that space meets two qualifications. First it has to be Open terrain. Second, it has to be unthreatened (that is, there are no enemies adjacent to it). Heck, for Cavalry troops it just has to be unthreatened. It's one space per group of units, however. If you want to split up a squad, sending some north and some south, that's fine as long as the spaces are available.

Free Movement really *is* free. Moves taken at this time aren't constrained by the strategy chosen during the Declare phase. So if you were in a full Retreat and could only move away from enemies, during Free Movement you could go back towards them, as long as you were going into an unthreatened, Open space.

Complications



As is, you've got a simple, functional midget wargame. Position yields advantage through encirclement, a dynamic balance exists between clumping units (which can carry bigger sets and last longer) and spreading them out (where they're vulnerable, but can encircle) and you've got a few kinds of terrain to spice things up. But if you keep using this, or are already an experienced wargamer, you may want things spicier still. Thus, I offer a list of complications. Use any of them, use all, use none, it's all fine. But if you decide to kick in these complications, understand that it must, inevitably, make the process more... well, complicated. It's going to take longer, it's going to demand more attention and effort. If your group likes that, grand. Just be aware that not everyone does and that it's OK to leave some tools on the shelf, and often a good idea.

Terrain

Three basic types of terrain are OK, but why stop there? There are no changes to Open, Rough and Impassible, but there are more to be had.

Hill

When you assign an Attack or Defense to a unit on a Hill, it gets an advantage against enemy units, as long as those units aren't (1) fliers, (2) also on a Hill or (3) on a Mountain.

The advantages against all other terrains are as follows: Attacks do +1 damage. Gobble Dice from Defense all get an extra

point of Height, up to 10. This does not change timing, since they don't get the extra Height until they're assigned to Defend, and they can't be assigned to Defend before their spot in the timing queue.

Mountain

Mountains get an advantage against enemies as long as they aren't (1) fliers or (2) on an adjoining Mountain. The advantage is the same as for a Hill, plus that hex gets a free Height 10 Gobble Die added to any Gobble Dice produced by Defense.

Example: Joe has units on a mountain and has Declared a Hold. Shannon has units in an adjacent hex and has Declared a Seize. When they roll, Shannon gets a 3x1, a 2x8 and a 2x3, while Joe gets a 2x8. Shannon goes first, and her 3x1 wipes out three units before Joe has a chance to respond. When Joe applies his 2x8 to Defense, he gets two Gobble 9 Dice (because each gets extra Height) and one Gobble 10 Die. This is easily enough to spoil her 2x8 and 2x3.

River

You can't move into or out of a River hex during Free Movement.

Castle

Sketch out the castle walls. They're Impassible. Towers are treated like Mountains.

Complications



Palisade, Drawbridge or Portcullis

These are Impassible until they (1) take a hit from a Siege Engine or (2) are opened by the castle's owner. (Palisades can't be opened, naturally.) Then they're Open. Once they've been hit by a Siege Engine, they're gone.

If you don't want to fuss with different unit types, just give a special counter to one group of units. That's your battering ram. If they can get that to the obstacle and apply an Attack set, it's down.

Forest

When a Defense is declared for a unit in a Forest, a free Height 10 Gobble Die is added to the Gobble Dice of the Defense set. This works just like the free Gobble Die for Mountains.



Command Lag

Without Command Lag, your troops know, immediately, what you want them to do and then they do it. This is not, strictly speaking, realistic. To better mimic the confusion of the battlefield, you can implement Command Lag.

Look at the scale chart way back at the beginning. The 'Command Lag' column lists how many turns in advance you

have to declare strategies. (Best to write them down.)

So, if you have Command Lag 1, on the first round of the battle, you have to declare *two* strategies for your army. The first is applied during the first round. Then on the second round, you choose to Seize, Hold, Deploy or Retreat for the *third* round while the second-round actions you announced in the *first* round get implemented. When you get up to Command Lag 3, you have to think three

moves ahead and are likely going to wind up giving orders to dead troops and launching attacks on units that aren't there.

Unit Type

In the basic rules, a group of mounted knights in heavy armor,

trained from the first blossom of manhood to kill without mercy, is treated the same as a group of naked savages using their ancestors' thigh bones as weapons. To many, that just ain't right. So there are some options for modeling troops with special training or equipment.

Cavalry

Cavalry attacks do +1 damage. If a set is spent to move Cavalry, they can go a number of hexes equal to the Width of

Complications



the set. During Free Movement, they treat Rough terrain as Open.

Defensive Bloc

A Defensive Bloc is a group of soldiers with really heavy armor, tower shields, or some other protective advantage. Hexes containing a Defensive Bloc get a free Gobble 10 Die every turn, which they can use at any time.

Fliers

Flying units ignore all the negative effects of terrain.

Archers

A hex that has archers in it gives a +1 Width bonus to all attacks made by normal troops from their hex, or from any adjoining hexes. However, the total Width bonuses can't exceed the number of Archer units.

By spending an Attack set, an Archer unit can remove one enemy unit anywhere within a two hex radius. They cannot make normal Attacks (the kind that do Width damage), however. This means that 'one enemy unit' damage is an absolute. Encirclement and terrain don't increase it.

Chariots

If a set is spent to move Chariots, they can go a number of hexes equal to the Width of the set. They can't enter Forest, Hill or Mountain hexes at all during a battle.

Chariots can Attack normally (doing Width in damage).

Player Characters

If you don't want to play through the blow-by-blow, give a +1 unit damage bonus to sets for hexes that have a PC in it. Multiple PCs means multiple bonuses.

Siege Engines

Siege Engines can launch Attacks on enemies two hexes distant. They cannot launch them against enemies who are only *one* hex away. However, any hex adjacent to them *or* two hexes away is considered threatened. Furthermore, the number of units doesn't act as a cap on damage. If you assign an unblocked 2x8 to a single Siege Engine on a hill, it wipes out three units.

Moving siege equipment isn't easy. It can't move at all unless it's accompanied by units of a different type. (Essentially, the siege engine unit represents a big hulking *thing* and some guys who know how to aim and load it. It doesn't have an entourage of the people or animals needed to move it around.) If it has an escort unit, they have to move together. Siege engines can't move during Free Movement.

Threat Rating

If you want to use the Threat ratings from *REIGN* for the troops, it's pretty easy to implement: Sets lower than the Threat rating of the target fail.