SPARTACVS: Crisis in the Roman Republic, 80-71BC

23.2 BATTLE CARDS AND COMBAT RESOLUTION (Optional Rule – v2)

Designer's Note: This optional rule is designed for those who enjoy (as I do!) the use of Battle Cards to resolve combat, as developed in We the People and Hannibal: Rome vs. Carthage. The battle card system provides many interesting situations for the player but it is not everyone's favorite. In addition, it does have a tendency to slow play, especially when gaming by mail. For these reasons, I decided not to use the battle card method as my basic combat resolution system. The system has been changed somewhat to meet the demands of the Sertorian era.

SPARTACVS contains 30 Battle Cards, distributed as follows:
- *General Assault* – 8 cards
- *Probing Action* – 4 cards
- *Penetrate Center* – 6 cards
- *Commit Reserve* – 4 cards
- *Double Envelopment* – 2 cards
- *Right Envelopment* – 3 cards
- *Left Envelopment* – 3 cards

23.21 Battle Sequence. Battles are resolved using the following sequence:
1. Determine battle size (23.21.1).
2. Play Surprise Cards (23.21.2).
3. Determine hand size and deal Battle Cards (23.2.3).
4. Resolve battle (23.2.4).
5. Determine battle losses (23.2.5).
6. Determine retreat losses (23.2.6).
7. Check for leader loss (23.2.7).

23.21.1 Determine the size of the battle. The size of the battle is determined by combining the strength points of both the attacking and defending force and matching the total against the following standard:
- Small battle: $\leq$ 12SPs
- Medium battle: 13 – 32SPs
- Large battle: >32SPs

23.21.2 The attacker and the defender, in that order, play any relevant Surprise Cards. *However, the Surprise Cards add or subtract battle cards instead of DRMs.*

23.21.3 Determine the number of Battle Cards (hand size) for the attacker and the defender and deal out the required number of cards from the battle deck. The maximum number of battle cards per hand is 14 battle cards. Hand size is determined as follows:
- Size of the battle: 4 cards each for a small battle; 6 cards each for a medium battle; 8 cards each for a large battle
- 1 card per factor of the leader's tactical rating
- 1 card for a successful interception attempt
- 1 card for at least 150% of the opponent's combat strength but less than 200% (player with larger force)
- 2 cards for at least 200% of the opponent's combat strength, but less than 300% (player with larger force)
- 3 cards for at least 300% of the opponent's combat strength (player with larger force
- 4 cards for at least 400% of the opponent's combat strength (player with larger force)
- Minus 1 card for a failed avoid battle attempt
- Minus 1 card if the combat occurs in an enemy space (major or minor city)
- Minus 2 cards if the combat occurs in an enemy tribal space
- Minus 1 card for exclusively Spanish light units vs. Roman legions (Sertorian player)
- +/- card for Surprise card events

Note: The hand sizes go into effect after all BC modifiers are applied.

23.21.4 Resolving the Battle. Battles are resolved through the play of battle cards, with one player (the Attacker) playing a battle card out of his hand and his opponent (the Defender) attempting to match that player's card with one of a like type out of his hand. At the beginning of any battle, the active player is the attacker and thus starts with the initiative and the defender is the inactive player. The role attacker and defender can change based upon who currently has the initiative. Any player currently having the initiative is considered the attacker and his opponent is considered the defender, regardless of their relative strategic positions prior to the battle itself.

> **23.21.41** The attacker plays one of his battle cards and then the defender may try to match the card played. *(**Note**: The attacker is never required to play a battle card (even on the first card play of a battle); he may elect to attempt a withdrawal instead – see below.)* If the card is successfully matched, the defender tries to gain the initiative by rolling a modified die roll equal to or less than his tactical rating. If successful, he has two choices, 1) he can continue the battle by playing a battle card out of his hand, or 2) he can attempt to withdraw from the battle. In the latter case, he must roll a modified die roll equal to or less than his tactical rating to succeed. If successful the battle ends, battle losses only are determined, and the withdrawing army moves its army to a space adjacent to the battle per Rule 14. *(**Note**: This is NOT considered a battle loss or win for either side.)* If

unsuccessful, the battle continues with the attacker retaining the initiative. If the attacker elects to attempt to withdraw rather than play a battle card and fails, the initiative is automatically gained by the defender. The above method continues until one player is unable (or unwilling) to match his opponent's battle card, an army successfully withdraws from the battle, or all battle cards have been played. In the rare instance where the attacker has played his last card and the defender has matched that card with his last card, the defender is considered to have won the battle with the type of card he has just matched.

Note: There is no "Rout" mechanism in the Battle Card system, unlike the game's standard combat resolution system. The withdrawal feature and the possibility of gaining or losing the initiative are a substitute for Rout.

23.21.42 The play of certain cards by the attacker when matched by the defender affects the initiative and withdrawal die rolls of the defender:

- If a Double Envelopment card is matched by a Double Envelopment card, the defender subtracts 3 from his initiative die roll and any resulting withdrawal die roll.
- If a Right or Left Envelopment card is matched by its respective card, the defender subtracts 2 from his initiative die roll and any resulting withdrawal die roll.
- If a Double Envelopment card is matched by either a Right or Left Envelopment card, the defender subtracts 1 from his initiative die roll and any resulting withdrawal die roll.

23.21.43 A Reserve card may be used to match any card, and takes on the characteristics of the card it matches. A Right Envelopment or a Left Envelopment may be used to match a Double Envelopment card but do not fully take on the characteristics of a Double Envelopment card as discussed in 23.21.42 (third bullet), above.

23.21.5 Determining Battle Losses. The loser of the battle rolls a varied number of dice, and both the winner and the loser take their battle loses based upon this die roll. For each 6 rolled, two step losses are taken and for each 5 rolled, 1 step loss is taken. Losses are taken simultaneously. The number of battle dice thrown varies based upon how many battle rounds were played before the battle was concluded; a battle round is the play of a card by the player with the initiative (attacker), whether or not that card was matched by the defender. One die is thrown for 1 – 3 battle rounds, two dice are thrown for 4 – 7 battle rounds and three battle dice are thrown for greater than 8 battle rounds.

23.21.6 Determining Retreat Losses. The loser of the battle now rolls another die to determine additional losses due to his retreat. If the retreating force (the force left after battle losses are taken) consists of 4 or fewer units, halve the die roll (round up), and that number of additional step losses must be taken by the defender. If the retreating force

consists of 5 or more units, do not halve the roll; instead, the number on the retreat die is the number of additional steps lost by the defender. The remaining force then conducts a retreat per Rule 14.

Note: If the combat was won by the play of a Probing Action or any Envelopment battle card, apply the DRM specified to the retreat die roll before determining retreat losses.

23.21.7 The victor now applies the fortunes of war. Determine the total step losses inflicted on the defeated force (battle losses + retreat losses combined) and halve that figure (rounded down). The victor replaces that number of enemy PC markers in minor cities with friendly PC markers. Enemy PC markers selected for replacement must be in the battle space or adjacent to the battle space.

Note: In the case of a successful withdrawal, 23.2.6 and 23.2.7 are not applied.

23.21.8 Checking for Leader Loss. If a player's force is completely eliminated due to the combat and/or retreat results, then a leader loss check must be conducted for each general in the army.   The player must then throw one die for each general present. If a 1 is thrown, that general is eliminated from the game. On a die roll of 2 – 3, that general is wounded and is returned to play in any friendly space during the owning faction's next Reinforcement Phase. On a die roll of 4 – 6, the general is unharmed and remains in play.

23.22 Republican Defensive Capability (Optional Rule). For those players who find the Republicans hampered by the large number of generals who have 0 or 1 battle ratings, add a -1DRM to all Republican initiative and withdrawal die roles if the Republican player began the battle as the inactive player, i.e. he was attacked by the Sertorian player. *Designer's Note: The Republican player's potential leaders were predominantly politicians and not well-trained, professional military officers. This is reflected in their generally low battle ratings when compared to Sertorian leaders.   This was done deliberately to encourage the Republican player to keep his low rated consuls in Italy and away from the active theaters of operations and to trust the conduct of the war to his better consuls and proconsuls, as was done historically. Poor consular generals can subsequently be removed entirely from the game by the Republican player to better improve his proconsular pool over time. This optional rule to be used with the battle card system reflects the fact that although not professional military officers, Roman Republican politicians did have some rudimentary military training and experience by the time they became consuls and while not necessarily up to sophisticated offensive operations, they were able somewhat to conduct credible defensive operations.*