


Mount & Blade

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1. Introduction

IN MOUNT & BLADE, you play as an adventurer in the medieval land of Calradia, a fictional land devoid of magic and high fantasy, instead bearing many similarities to our world in the Middle Ages. The game offers you a great deal of freedom in this world. You may roam around the map visiting towns and villages, trading, pursuing various quests, taking part in tournaments, or trying out a myriad of other activities. You will soon notice that the world itself is dynamic. Caravans travel between towns, sometimes being waylaid by bandits; villagers take their goods to markets; armies assemble to move across the land, besieging towns or castles and raiding settlements. Instead of giving you a fixed path to follow, Mount & Blade lets you freely adventure in this world. In time, you will be well known in many places as you make friends and enemies with other characters, which in turn will allow you to affect events in profound ways. You don't need to remain a penniless adventurer, either. You may obtain great wealth and power, become one of the trusted vassals of a king; conquer and own villages, castles and towns; command armies, and



if you like, even lead rebellions and replace kings with other claim holders. Mount & Blade does not give you objectives or a fixed storyline; however, it does offer you a rich and interesting setting in which to determine your own objectives while creating and living your own story.

This manual is primarily designed as a reference tool. New players should be able to get all of the information they need about the basics within the game itself. It is **highly** recommended that new players go through the tutorials accessible from the main menu, and read all pop-up help tips that the game provides. When you have a question about a certain statistic or the finer points of the game, then it is time to reach for the manual. Mount & Blade follows a “learn by doing” mindset as much as possible.



2. Installation and Configuration

IF YOU PURCHASED Mount & Blade on CD-ROM, insert the disc into your computer. If you do not see the installation start automatically after a few moments, you will need to launch it yourself. Open the CD-ROM folder, and double-click the file “setup.exe” on the disc.

The game will initially function in “Trial Mode”, which is a limited form of the game for demo purposes. In order to play the full game, you will need to provide a serial key. The first time you start the game, you will be prompted with a screen which asks for your serial key. (Boxed copies of Mount & Blade will include your serial key inside, and you only need to type it in.) If you choose not to enter your serial key at this time, you can start and play the game, but you will not be allowed to advance your character past level 6.

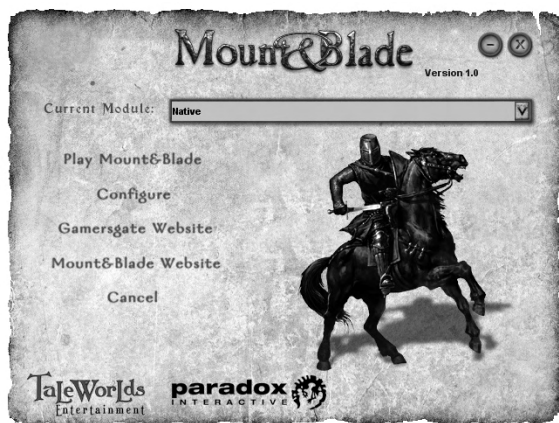
Once you enter your serial key, the game will try to connect to the Internet and activate the full mode. Please make sure that your computer is connected to the Internet at this stage and that the game isn't being blocked by a firewall. If this au-

automatic activation system doesn't succeed for any reason, you can still activate the game by using manual activation. Click on the manual activation button, and follow the instructions.

Please note that serial keys are for personal use on your own computer, and please do not share your serial key with others. The activation server may decline an activation attempt if the same serial key is used many times over a short period of time.

2.1. The Launcher.

When you double-click the Mount & Blade icon on your desktop or Start Menu, you will be shown the Launcher.



Current Module chooses which module the game will use for its content. Initially, your only choice is “Native”, the official module. You may be able to install alternative modules that are made by the community that add new maps, factions, equipment and campaigns.

Play Mount & Blade starts the game.

Configure will open a window where you can set a variety of performance-oriented options for the game.

“Video” tab:

- **USE PIXEL SHADERS:** This setting enables or disables certain effects with DirectX 7 graphics.
- **START WINDOWED:** Runs the game in a window instead of full screen.
- **SHOW FRAME RATE:** With this option on, the game displays the current frame rate in the top-left corner of the screen.
- **FORCE VERTICAL SYNC:** Forces the game to render only full frames and wait for that frame to be displayed before starting on the next. With this setting off, you may notice some slight tearing, but your frame rate will be higher. With the setting on, there will be no tearing, but you may get a lower frame rate.
- **TEXTURE DETAIL:** Controls the resolution of in-game textures. Higher numbers will result in sharper visuals, but can have an impact on loading times, as well as rendering speed on older video cards.
- **MAX FRAME RATE:** Sets a maximum number of frames per second that the game will render. This can help even out noticeable changes in game responsiveness between different scenes.
- **ANTI-ALIASING:** Choose the type of anti-aliasing used by the game, if any. Higher values will result in better looking visuals but can have a profound impact on the frame rate.
- **SHADOW QUALITY:** This setting will determine the resolution of the shadows rendered by the game. Higher values will result in smoother, more precise shadows. Set this in accordance with your graphics card's video memory. Use the ultra-high setting only if you have 256 MB or more.
- **RENDER METHOD:** Choose between DirectX 7 or DirectX 9 rendering engines. DirectX 7 may sometimes be faster and more compatible with older video hardware, while DirectX 9 offers better visual quality. Several of the other video settings will have no effect if the DirectX 7 renderer is used. We recommend that you try the DirectX 9 method first, and if you encounter problems, revert to DirectX 7.

“Audio” tab:

- **ENABLE SOUND VARIATION:** Some in-game sound effects will be changed in pitch slightly to make them seem more varied and immersive. Turn this off if

you find the effect distracting.

- **DISABLE SOUND:** Prevent any sound from playing.
- **DISABLE MUSIC:** Prevent any music from playing.

“Game” tab:

- **HIDE BLOOD:** This turns off all blood effects in combat. Useful for parents and young players.
- **ENABLE CHEATS:** There are several cheats available in the game, mainly aimed at making life easier for those who are developing mods. To use cheats, this option must be on.

“Advanced” tab:

- **ENABLE EDIT MODE:** This is primarily a tool for mod developers. A full discussion of Edit Mode and how to use it can be found on the game’s mod development forums. Unless you are actively developing a mod, it is recommended to leave this off, since it will slightly reduce game performance.
- **FORCE SINGLE THREADING:** If you know that your CPU has a single core, then you can enable this option.

2.2. In-Game options

There are many more options that can be adjusted in addition to those in the launcher. Once you launch the game, click “Options” from the main menu. Here you will see a wide variety of performance, preference, and informational options. The Options are divided into three areas: the initial Main Options, the Video Options, and the Control Options.

Main options

- **MUSIC VOLUME:** Controls the volume of playback for all scenes in the game. Right is high, left is low, and full left will disable music.
- **SOUND VOLUME:** Same as for music, but this one controls all sound effects.
- **MOUSE SENSITIVITY:** Affects how responsive the game will be to your mouse movements. Left is low sensitivity, right is high sensitivity. Adjust this for the best mix of precision and responsiveness.
- **INVERT MOUSE Y AXIS:** When Disabled, moving the mouse upward will look upward, like most first-person shooters. When Enabled, moving the mouse up-

ward will look downward, like most flight simulations.

- **CONTROL BLOCK DIR:** This setting is used to determine how your character will handle blocking. Under the default setting, “Automatic”, your block is chosen based on the type of attack of the enemy nearest you. So if your enemy is using an overhead swing, you will block high. The other setting forces you to manually choose a blocking direction by moving the mouse. The automatic setting is highly recommended for new players.
- **CONTROL ATTACK DIR:** This setting determines how you will select your specific attack direction. The default and recommended setting is “By Inverse Mouse Movement”. Using this setting, you need to move your mouse towards the direction you want to attack from, at the instant you start to press the left mouse button. For example, if you want to attack from right to left, you must move your mouse from left to right at the time you start your attack. Think of it as though you are moving your hand to prepare for the attack. The alternative method is “relative enemy position”. Here, you choose which direction to attack by glancing slightly to one side of the target. So if you want a left-to-right slashing attack, look slightly to the left of the target before attacking.
- **DAMAGE TO PLAYER:** How much overall damage you take from enemy attacks. The recommended amount for new players is $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$.
- **DAMAGE TO FRIENDS:** How much damage friendly troops will take in battle. The recommended amount for new players is $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$.
- **COMBAT AI:** This setting has a large effect on the AI’s ability to attack, dodge and block. Setting it to “Good” will result in a more challenging game, while “Poor” will result in an easier one.
- **COMBAT SPEED:** How quickly the combat motions are carried out. Faster speed will make the combat very difficult while slower will make it easier.
- **BATTLE SIZE:** Determines how many combatants will be allowed in a single skirmish. Generally, higher numbers of troops on the field will reduce the player’s individual effectiveness, making for a more challenging game determined more by troop types and tactics than individual prowess. It can also have negative impact on game performance. Low numbers will result in an easier, more “player-centric” game, and better performance.
- **SHOW ATTACK DIRECTION:** Displays a yellow arrow on the screen to help you judge which attack you are about to execute.
- **SHOW TARGETING RETICULE:** Displays a crosshair in the center of the

screen to help aim ranged weapons.

- **SHOW NAMES OF FRIENDLY TROOPS:** Displays the name (or type) of allies in a label over their head, to help tell friend from foe.
- **REPORT DAMAGE:** Prints a message that gives a numeric value for damage inflicted or received, as well as the Speed Bonus of the hit. This can be useful while practicing your combat technique or simply to see which weapons work best for you.
- **REPORT SHOT DIFFICULTY:** If you score a hit with a ranged weapon, a numeric value is displayed based on the distance to the target.
- **REPORT CASUALTIES:** When enabled, messages will be displayed every time a friend or ally is killed or knocked unconscious.
- **REPORT EXPERIENCE:** When enabled, messages will be displayed whenever you gain experience points.

The **Video options** are accessed by pressing the button in the lower-left corner of the main options screen. Some of the Launcher's options are duplicated here; however, there are also a number of unique options:

- **MONITOR GAMMA:** Adjust the game's gamma level for better visibility on your monitor. Most monitors have their gamma around 2.2, which is the default for Windows systems.
- **GRASS DENSITY:** Determines how many grass objects will spawn per square area. More looks better but slows down the game.
- **CHARACTER DETAIL:** Weights the game's LOD (level of detail) system. The LOD system replaces character models and items with more efficient, low-polygon versions at a certain distance. This slider controls what that certain distance is. With the slider to the left, character models will become blockier at shorter distances; with the slider to the right, character models will only become blocky at extreme distances. This setting can have an important impact on the game's frame-rate.
- **CHARACTER SHADOW DETAIL:** This slider adjusts the complexity of the shadows cast by characters. Moving the slider left will result in blurred but faster shadows, while moving the slider right will give more precise shadows at the expense of frame rate. This is not the same setting as "Shadow Quality", which controls real-time shadows cast by the environment.
- **NUMBER OF CORPSES:** Determines the number of dead/unconscious bod-

ies to leave on the battlefield while in combat. More bodies will result in more realistic battle scenes, but will slow down the game's frame rate.

- **NUMBER OF RAG DOLLS:** Limits the number of bodies which will be modeled with physics at any given time to allow them to collapse realistically, roll down hills, etc. Leaving this number low can improve your frame rate in complex battle scenes with many combatants. If you have a multi-core CPU, you can leave this number high, since the physics calculations will be delegated to the second core.
- **BLOOD STAINS:** Adjusts at what distance you will see blood on characters. More blood often means a lower frame-rate.
- **CHARACTER SHADOWS:** Enables or disables character shadows.
- **ENVIRONMENT SHADOWS:** Enables or disables shadows cast by buildings, items, terrain, etc.
- **REALISTIC SHADOWS ON PLANTS:** Enables or disables shadows rendered on trees and grass. "None" will disable shadows. "Quick" offers a limited form of shadow casting that is faster than the highest setting (not available on all systems). "Full" offers completely rendered and very realistic shadows, but can have an impact on performance.
- **PARTICLE SYSTEMS:** Enables or disables particles, such as smoke and sparks above a fire or the dust cloud created by a galloping horse.
- **ANISOTROPIC FILTERING:** Enables or disables a texture-sharpening effect which can result in crisper visuals on surfaces you view at an angle. (Recommended setting: enabled)
- **FAST WATER REFLECTIONS:** Enables or disables a lower quality but much faster method for rendering reflections on water. (Recommended setting: enabled)

The **Control options** are accessed by pressing the button in the lower-left corner of the main options screen. Here you see all keys defined by the game. If you want to change a key, click the displayed button and then press the new key. Note that the Map Controls mirror your normal movement keys.




3. The Land Called Calradia

IN MOUNT & BLADE, you play as an adventurer in Calradia, a land of warring kingdoms where banditry runs rampant, creating many opportunities for an adventurer who is willing to take great risks. In this section, we'll tell you a bit about the land, its kingdoms, politics, and people.

Kingdoms: Calradia is a medieval agricultural society whose technology is roughly equivalent to that of the period of around 1150 - 1350 A.D. in Europe and Asia. The economy is driven almost entirely by human and animal power. There is no magic known to the Calradians other than that of legend and folklore, which has no impact on actual gameplay.

As you travel across the map, you will see many kinds of settlements. Villages are small communities which sustain themselves by farming, fishing, or by pursuing other small-scale crafts. Towns are larger, walled settlements which are centers of trade and industry -- the best places to find mercenaries, or to buy weapons and



armor. Castles are predominantly military bases, where lords can watch over sections of countryside, or retreat if threatened by larger armies.

The land of Calradia was once a province in a proud empire, but is now being fought over by five successor kingdoms: the Kingdom of Swadia, the Kingdom of the Vaegirs, the Kingdom of the Nords, the Kingdom of the Rhodoks, and the Khergit Khanate. Each kingdom has a unique mix of troops, and although they are fairly well-balanced, some force compositions may work better or worse than others against specific opponents.


The kingdoms will frequently go to war against one another. As the player, you can stay neutral in these wars, or join and help one of the kingdoms in the fight against its enemies. You will also have opportunities to change your allegiance and switch sides throughout the game, if you do not wish to stay loyal.

The kingdoms are feudal states ruled by a king, queen or khan who is followed by a larger number of lords, who have given oaths of loyalty as vassals. The vassals in turn rule over fiefs, swaths of farmland centered around a village, castle, or town, from which they draw the income to raise armies to bring to the service of the monarch -- or, sometimes, to rebel against him. A far-seeing lord may invest in improvements to his fief which will increase income, help him protect it against raiders, or bring other benefits. A lord who is fortunate enough to rule over a town may also wish to make sure that the trade routes are free of bandits, so that they can tax passing caravans.

Wars in Calradia, as in other medieval societies, are usually grueling campaigns of attrition. The most common tactic is to attack the enemy kingdom's economic base by raiding its villages or waylaying its caravans. Sometimes, kings may raise an army capable of laying siege to a castle or town, though taking it can be a long and costly process.

Kings and lords will often have quests for you to complete, as will village elders and town guild leaders. The game keeps track of your relationship with every lord and lady, as well as with every town and village, so completing quests can bring a number of benefits. Among other advantages, good relations with a settlement will let you buy and sell there at more favorable rates. It will also be easier for you to recruit troops at villages if you have good relations with them.

There are two ways for you to join and serve a kingdom. You can either serve as a mercenary or a vassal, though it is much easier to become a mercenary for a kingdom. Just talk to the lords a few times and ask for a task. If the kingdom is at war, one of the lords will offer you a contract as a mercenary sooner or later. Being a mercenary is



easier, but the downside is that you won't be given fiefs, even if you capture them.

If you gain renown and the trust of a ruler, you may hope to become a vassal as well. To do that, you will need to make an oath of homage to the ruler of your kingdom.

It is not possible for you to become a king or queen, because the lords and nobles of the kingdoms will never accept an outsider as their ruler. You may, however, find the opportunity to influence who will become the king, queen, or khan.



4. Character Stats and Skills

DOUR MOST IMPORTANT asset is yourself. Over the course of time, with practice and better equipment, your character can become one of the most renowned warriors in the land. However, it is essential that you have some kind of plan as you roam around battling foes, or you'll quickly find yourself fighting them alone with no money and no friends. To develop a plan, you need to understand the different ways that you can improve your character.

4.1. Character Generation

The first thing you have to decide when you start a new game is what sort of background you have followed up to this point in your character's life. Different backgrounds will give you different starting abilities and skills, and different equipment. Some backgrounds simplify the beginning stages of the game by pre-allocating skill and attribute points, while others offer more character flexibility by allowing you

total control over your development.

It is important to note that any character can become equally skilled in any given area. The choices you make at the beginning of the game merely provide an accelerated start for the way you would most like to play, so do not worry about making a “bad” choice. Likewise for your character’s gender: it does not affect your character’s chances for advancement, only what your character looks and sounds like in the game.

After you have chosen your character’s background, you have the chance to sculpt your face. This has no effect on gameplay, so feel free to make whatever adjustments you like. You can change your character’s appearance at any point.

You will need to choose your game’s save policy. If you choose to allow quitting without saving, you can back out of bad events like being taken prisoner, and reload a past save point any time you like. Players who want extra difficulty may choose the “Do not quit without saving” option. Once you pick the saving policy, you cannot change it again for the rest of the game.

The last step of character generation is to assign your initial points. You will have some basic stats thanks to your background choices, and now you have the chance to fine-tune them a little more. You start at *character level* one with 4 *attribute points* to spend, along with a number of *skill points* based on your starting intelligence (based on background), and a number of *weapon proficiency points* based on your agility (again, based on background). Read the next sections for detailed information about what each stat and skill does.

Experience, or XP, is what you will use to advance your character. XP can be gained by defeating enemies in battle yourself, or through an army that you command; by fighting in the arena; and by completing quests. At certain thresholds, you will earn a new character level, at which point you will receive 1 attribute point, 1 skill point, and 10 weapon proficiency points. You can return to the character screen after each new level and assign the new points you have earned. Spend these wisely, your choices are permanent once you leave the character screen.

You can review your character information and assign new points you earn from advancement from the Character Screen, which is accessible from the main view or by pressing the ‘C’ key (default).

4.2. Attributes

Your character has four major attributes which affect what you can do in very pro-

found ways. Attributes do two things: they give you some kind of immediate advantage, and they also allow you to increase skills that are dependent on that attribute. See the section on *skills* for more information. When you create a new character, you will get four points to spend on attributes, and upon each level-up, you will receive one more. These choices cannot be changed once committed, so be sure to spend them wisely!

The attributes are:

- **STRENGTH:** Every point of Strength will increase your hit points by one, as well as provide bonuses to your damage. Also, some weapons and armor have a minimum strength requirement to use.
- **AGILITY:** Every point of Agility increases your attacking speed by 0.5%, and gives you an additional 5 weapon proficiency points to spend as you like.
- **INTELLIGENCE:** Every point of Intelligence gives you an extra skill point to spend as you like.
- **CHARISMA:** Every point of Charisma increases your maximum party size by 1.

4.3. Skills

There are many skills in the game, each of which has a *base attribute*. A skill cannot be raised higher than one third of the base attribute: for example, Tactics, which is governed by Intelligence, could not be raised past 3 if your Intelligence was 9. You must first allocate more points to a base attribute if you want to raise skills that are hitting this bottleneck.

Skills come in three types. *Personal skills* apply only to individual characters and their abilities. Just because you're good at riding a horse doesn't mean anybody else automatically becomes good at it too. *Leader skills* are only effective if the leader (you) knows them. Lastly, *Party skills* are those used by your entire band. Only one character in the party needs to know the skill for the whole party to gain its benefit, though the skill will become more effective if the leader (you) also knows something about it. In other words, a party skill's effective level is a combination of the skill level of the person who has the best rank in it, as well as a bonus based on your own rank in that skill. The bonuses look like this:

YOUR SKILL	PARTY SKILL BONUS
1	0
2 to 4	1
5 to 7	2
8 to 9	3
10	4

The party skill bonus is applied even if you are the person with the highest rank in the skill. So if you have a rank of 8 in Tactics, then the effective level of the skill for the party is $8 + 3 = 11$.

The skills with their base attributes and types are as follows:

- **IRONFLESH** (strength) (personal skill): Each point gives you 2 extra hit points.
- **POWER STRIKE** (strength) (personal skill): Each point adds 8% damage to each hit with a melee weapon.
- **POWER THROW** (strength) (personal skill): Each point adds 10% damage to each hit with a thrown weapon. Some thrown weapons require a few points in Power Throw to use (e.g. axes, javelins).
- **POWER DRAW** (strength) (personal skill): More powerful bows have a minimum Power Draw requirement to use. Power Draw also adds 12% to each hit with the bow, until four levels beyond the bow's minimum Power Draw requirement; for example, if the bow's Power Draw requirement is 2, then a skill level of 2 will add 24%, while a skill level of 6 will add 72%, while any level beyond 6 will still add 72%. Finally, higher Power Draw makes powerful bows easier to use by improving your accuracy and the time you can keep your aim steady while the bow is drawn.
- **WEAPON MASTER** (agility) (personal skill): Each skill level adds 40 points (starting from 60) to your weapon proficiency limits. Beyond this limit, you cannot increase weapon proficiencies by investing points into them. Weapon proficiencies can also be increased with practice, even beyond the limit set by Weapon Mastery, but the rate of increase will slow down as you get further from the limit.
- **SHIELD** (agility) (personal skill): Each point reduces the damage your shield

takes by blocking a hit by 8%. It also increases your shield's effective size versus ranged attacks, and improves how quickly you can block with a shield.

- **ATHLETICS** (agility) (personal skill): Increases your base running speed, either making a lightly encumbered character run faster than normal, or letting a heavily encumbered character move at normal speed.
- **RIDING** (agility) (personal skill): Some horses have a minimum riding requirement; this skill also increases your speed and agility while sitting astride a steed.
- **HORSE ARCHERY** (agility) (personal skill): Reduces accuracy and damage penalties for using a ranged weapon from a moving horse. Note that no penalties are applied if you are mounted but not moving.
- **LOOTING** (agility) (party): Increases the amount of loot obtained by 10% per skill level.
- **TRAINER** (intelligence) (personal skill): At midnight of each day, a hero with the Trainer skill adds experience to every other party member of a lower level than himself. Higher ranks in Training add more experience to each party member.
- **TRACKING** (intelligence) (party skill): A single point in Tracking allows you to see tracks left by other parties on the world map. Additional points let you spot tracks from a greater distance and make each track reveal more information.
- **TACTICS** (intelligence) (party skill): Every two levels of this skill increases your starting battle advantage by 1. Battle advantage determines how many soldiers you can have on the battlefield at the start of a battle and how large your reinforcements will be. This skill will also let you retreat from a battle with fewer casualties.
- **PATH-FINDING** (intelligence) (party skill): This skill increases your map travel speed by 3% per skill level.
- **SPOTTING** (intelligence) (party skill): This skill increases your map sight range by 10% per skill level.
- **INVENTORY MANAGEMENT** (intelligence) (personal skill): Each point adds an extra 6 slots to your inventory.
- **WOUND TREATMENT** (intelligence) (party skill): Each point adds 20% to your party's healing speed; it also allows crippled horses to be healed automatically if they are in your inventory.
- **SURGERY** (intelligence) (party skill): Each point adds a 4% chance that a party member, when struck down, will be knocked unconscious instead of dying. This

chance is added to a base chance of 25%. Also, the chance applies only to regular troops, since heroes always survive anyway.

- **FIRST AID** (intelligence) (party skill): Each point will allow your hero characters to regain 5% of the health they've lost during a particular skirmish or battle. Note that this is added to a base rate of 10%.
- **ENGINEER** (intelligence) (party skill): This is used to determine how quickly you can build siege machinery. It also affects the speed at which improvements can be built at a fief which you own.
- **PERSUASION** (charisma) (personal skill): This will allow you to try and get your way with words instead of blades.
- **LEADERSHIP** (charisma) (leader skill): Every point increases the maximum number of troops you can command by 5, while increasing your party morale and reducing troop wages by 5%.
- **PRISONER MANAGEMENT** (charisma) (leader skill): Every point increases the maximum number of prisoners your party can have by 5.
- **TRADE** (charisma) (party skill): Every point reduces your trade penalty by 5%.

4.4. Weapon Proficiencies

There are a total of six weapon proficiencies, each covering a different type of weapon. If you plan to do much fighting, you're going to want to increase one or two of these to high levels. Which is best? They are all equally useful, and which you use will depend on your playing style. A higher level of proficiency will let you attack and defend with a melee weapon with greater speed, or to be more accurate with missile weapons.

At each level-up, you will receive 10 additional *weapon proficiency points* to spend as you like. Unless you have one or more points of the *Weapon Mastery skill*, you cannot spend weapon points on proficiencies that have passed 60. As you get to higher degrees, a proficiency will require more than one weapon point to increase by one: that is, if your One-handed Weapons proficiency is at 104, it may take 2 proficiency points to get it to 105, etc.

Weapon proficiencies will also increase over time as you use them by scoring damage on opponents. Melee weapons are practiced simply by causing damage, while missile weapons benefit more from difficult, long-range shots. Gaining proficiency through practice can take significant amounts of time at higher levels. The skill Weapon Mastery not only allows you to spend weapon points at higher levels, but it also allows gains from practice to come faster.



5. Controls

THE CONTROLS FOR Mount & Blade are quite simple, though playing well will require far more than just memorizing a few keystrokes! You can check the controls within the game by going to the Options screen, and then by clicking Controls. There are many settings in the main Options screen that can also affect the way the game will handle.

It is strongly recommended that first-time players complete the Tutorials to learn how to move and fight before you find yourself on a battlefield!

5.1. Moving on Foot

The default keys for moving are the familiar WASD combination:

- 'W': to walk forward
- 'S': to walk backward
- 'A': to sidestep left
- 'D': to sidestep right

You can sidestep and walk forward/backward at the same time for diagonal movement.

Use the mouse to look around. If you are walking, then using the mouse will change your direction of travel. If you are standing still, using the mouse will orbit the view around your character without changing your character's direction. Just press the Forward key and your character will turn to wherever the camera is aiming.

Your character can wade through water at reduced speed and skid down slopes, but avoid jumping off cliffs because you could be badly injured. Trying to go uphill is much slower, and you may have to take the slope at an angle.

5.2. Moving on Horseback

While you are mounted, movement is handled a little bit differently:

- 'W': to increase speed
- 'S': to decrease speed
- 'A': to turn left
- 'D': to turn right

Your mouse will now change which way you are looking but not which way the horse is moving, which is important to remember. The mouse only controls your head.

You can stop your horse by decreasing your speed until you halt. If you're walking the horse backward, press 'W' to increase your speed from backward to halt.

Horses are not nearly as good at climbing as men on foot, so pay attention to hills. They also don't turn as quickly, and can collide with trees and obstacles if you don't steer around.

5.3. Other Controls

Non-combat/general:

- 'F': Perform an action when you see a keyword; e.g., open a door, talk to somebody.
- 'I': Open your Inventory window.
- 'P': Open your Party window.
- 'C': Open your Character window.
- 'ESC': Show the game menu, allowing you to save, quit or adjust your options.

Also exits a display (like the Character window) if you are in one.

- **'F12'**: Quicksave the game. This saves in the same slot as the Save option in the Escape menu.
- **TAB**: Leave current area.
- **SPACEBAR (PRESS)**: Cancel your travel destination and pause time on the world map.
- **SPACEBAR (HOLD)**: Passes time on the world map.
- **CTRL+LEFT MOUSE BUTTON (PRESS)**: Sends the item under your cursor to the other side of the table when trading or looting.

Real-time/combat:

- **LEFT MOUSE BUTTON (PRESS)**: Make a quick attack with the current weapon.
- **LEFT MOUSE BUTTON (HOLD)**: Begin aiming with a ranged weapon, or start and hold a melee stroke which will be executed when you release the button.
- **SPACEBAR**: Jump with your character or horse. Note that there's a limit on how quickly you can jump, and a horse must be moving at a minimum speed before it can jump.
- **RIGHT MOUSE BUTTON (HOLD)**: Defend yourself with your shield or weapon. Some weapons cannot be used defensively, like knives and bows.
- **RIGHT MOUSE BUTTON (PRESS)**: Cancel aiming with a ranged weapon,.
- **~ (HOLD)**: Free the camera to orbit the character, even while moving.
- **SHIFT (HOLD)**: Zoom in temporarily. Useful for sizing up the enemy from a safe distance or aiming ranged weapons.
- **'F1' THROUGH 'F11', AND '1' THROUGH '5'**: Issues commands during a battle. See Section 12.2, *Battles: Commands*.
- **'R'**: Switch between first-person and third-person views.
- **MOUSE WHEEL UP**: Cycle to your next equipped weapon.
- **MOUSE WHEEL DOWN**: Put your shield away or take it out manually. Particularly useful if you have a weapon which can be used with one hand or two (like a bastard sword).



6. Inventory and Items

YOUR INVENTORY IS not a backpack, but rather a representation of everything you own, packed onto horses or carried by people in the party. There is no weight limit, but a very great amount of carried weight will slow your party. You can offset this penalty to a degree by using pack animals, or spare horses in your inventory. There are only a limited number of inventory slots available to put items in, and each item takes up one slot regardless of its size. You can increase the amount of space you have to store things by putting points into your *Inventory Management skill*.

You can open your inventory window at any point, provided you are not in combat, by pressing the 'I' key (default). During combat, you can still access your inventory, but you must activate the chest that will be put at your starting location to do so. By accessing your inventory during combat, you can change your weapons and use different armor. Ammunition is not reloaded, though if you have spare bags of ammo in your inventory, you can swap the unused spare bags for whatever you're currently

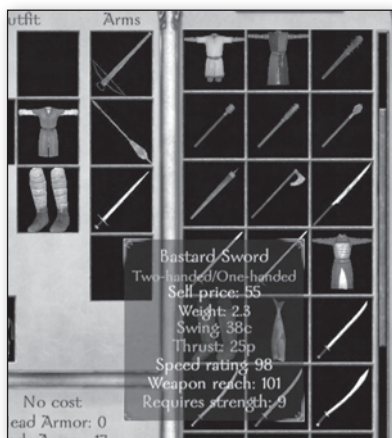
carrying. Horses are a special case. You cannot retrieve horses from your inventory during combat, though if you equip a new horse in one skirmish of a multi-skirmish battle, you will change horses between skirmishes and be riding the new horse for the next one.

6.1. Item Stats

Detailed information about items will be shown if you move your mouse over the item. All items have a weight and a cost. Other information about the item will vary depending on the item type.

Shields have a condition rating that indicates how beat up (or carefully designed) they are. Shields that are Cracked or Battered have seen hard service, and will be more easily damaged than new shields, whereas shields that are Thick or Reinforced are specially made and will withstand more damage. If a shield is broken during combat, it will degrade one level. If it is already “Cracked”, it will become permanently destroyed. Shields have the following stats:

- **SIZE:** The physical width and height of the shield. Larger shields tend to be heavier, but offer much improved protection against incoming projectiles. A shield offers the same amount of melee protection regardless of its size: either you block or you don't, as there is no “missed chance”.
- **RESISTANCE:** The toughness of the shield, mostly due to its material, which makes it more difficult to damage. The Resistance value is removed from hits blocked by the shield. Thus, a shield with a Resistance of 5, blocking a hit of 30 damage, would take only 25 damage to itself.
- **DURABILITY:** The amount of damage that the shield can withstand before being broken. Shields are automatically repaired back to full durability between each skirmish of a battle, though this cannot restore a shield's initial condition



(i.e. you can't make a "battered" shield back into a normal one).

- **SPEED:** How quickly the shield will be ready after you begin to block. A fast shield effectively offers no delay, while a large, slow shield will have a noticeable delay before you are protected.

Weapons have a condition rating which indicates how well or poorly made they are, or how badly it's been abused during its life. Weapons that are Cracked, Chipped, Bent or Rusty will deliver less damage than a new weapon (and be much cheaper), whereas weapons that are Heavy will deliver a little more damage at the cost of being a little slower. Weapons that are Balanced or made of Watered Steel will deliver a little more damage and be a little faster, and much more expensive. A weapon's condition can never become better or worse than when you find it: a Cracked pike will never break, nor can it ever be repaired. Weapons have the following stats:

- **DAMAGE:** The base potential of the weapon to cause injury, assuming a moderate degree of a skill and an impact speed of 100%. In general, high numbers here are better. Each attack type that the weapon is capable of has its own listing. Finally, the type of damage is shown by a character code: *c* stands for cutting damage, *p* stands for piercing damage and *b* stands for blunt damage. Piercing and blunt damage are more effective against armored opponents, while blunt damage has the additional advantage of knocking enemies unconscious so that you can capture them alive.
- **REACH:** How far away you can hit somebody. Weapons that are longer than your opponent's can potentially allow you the first hit, but weapons only do their maximum damage at their maximum reach. That is, if you try to stab somebody with a Spear when you are close enough to count their nose hairs, you will do almost no damage; conversely, a Dagger, which has a very short reach, will be quite effective at this distance.
- **SPEED RATING:** How fast the weapon is between separate attacks. Higher is better.
- **BONUS VERSUS SHIELDS:** Some weapons, like axes, are very effective at hacking apart an enemy's shield and can reduce it to splinters in only a few hits. If the weapon has that ability, it will be indicated.

Armor pieces also have a condition rating. Armor that is Tattered, Ragged, Battered, or Crude will protect you less than new armor (but be much cheaper), while armor

that is Sturdy, Thick, or Reinforced will provide more protection (and be much more expensive). The condition of armor can never become better or worse than when you find it: a Ragged leather coat will never fall apart, nor can you repair it back to normal. Armor only has one stat: how much protection it offers.

Ammunition is anything that you can launch or throw as a ranged attack. Arrows are used for a hand bow, bolts are used for a crossbow, while weapons you can throw by hand include rocks, knives, daggers, axes, javelins and jarids. Ammunition is contained in “bags”, each bag taking up one inventory slot. Some types of ammunition can be found Bent, meaning it does less damage than normal. Some types of weapons may have multiple forms of ammunition they can use: for example, if you have a hand bow, you can launch a normal war-pointed arrow, a barbed arrow, or a bodkin arrow. Ammunition has the following stats:


- **NUMBER OF ROUNDS:** Expressed as x/y , x being how many rounds you actually have right now, and y being the maximum number of rounds the bag can hold.
- **DAMAGE:** Thrown weapons show their actual damage here, while arrows and bolts will add or subtract a little damage beyond whatever the launching weapon is rated.

Horses have a variety of attributes, and conditions that can further modify them. See Section on horses on Page 27 for details.

6.2. Equipped Items

Your character has several slots for items that are “equipped”, representing things that you are actively wearing, wielding or using. With a few exceptions, you must put something into one of your equip slots to use it. The total weight for all your equipped weapons and armor is called your *encumbrance*, and is shown below the equip slots. The more weight you are lugging around, the slower your character will move while on foot. You can reduce the effects of carried weight by putting points into the Athletics skill.

- Weapons placed in your equipped slots are on your person, in quivers and sheaths and harnesses. Anything that is equipped is immediately accessible, whether you are in town or in the middle of a battle. If you want to use a shield, it should be equipped in one of the weapon slots. If you’re a ranged fighter of some



kind, you will need to equip at least one bag of ammunition (bolts, arrows, etc). Alternatively, you can put multiple bags of ammunition in the weapon slots to have more ammunition available during a battle at the expense of other backup weaponry. Note that ammunition is not used up permanently, but is instead automatically gathered from combat at the end of a battle. In other words, once you buy it, it's yours forever.

- Your equipped mount is the one that you plan on riding, and is the horse you'll be on if you join a battle or arrive at a town.
- Armor is divided into four different locations: body armor, leg armor, helmet, and gloves. The body, legs and head are each separate areas where you can potentially be hit, and the armor for that area is what will help protect you. That is, if somebody hacks at your leg, a helmet won't help no matter how good it is. This doesn't mean you should pass on wearing a helmet, since hits to the head inflict double damage. Gauntlets are a special case, in that hits to the hand aren't tracked separately. Gauntlets instead add their defense to "body" armor. It's a good idea to buy the best armor for a given weight range that you can afford. The more protective your armor, generally the more it will all weigh, and the more it will slow you down. There is a tradeoff between wearing a lot of armor, and being fast enough to avoid being hit in the first place.



7. Towns and Trading

TOWNS AND VILLAGES usually contain one or more people who are willing to do business with you. Those who sell equipment and horses are usually outside, while the trader has an indoor office you can find by looking for a sign with a coin purse on it. To do business with a shopkeeper, just walk up to them until you see the “Talk” label, and then press the use key. You will have several options available, one of which will be to buy and sell things.

When you’re shopping for goods, you have your own inventory on the right side, and that of the shopkeeper on the left. You can arrange a deal by dragging things from his side to yours, or vice-versa. If you change your mind about an item, just look for items with a “Reclaim” or “Return” price instead of “Buy” or “Sell” and put them back on the other side. A faster way to complete transactions is to hold down the Ctrl key and click on the item. The cost or payment for the total offer is shown near the bottom-center of the screen. Merchants only accept hard cash or goods in



barter, rather than credit. Your liquid funds are shown below your pool of goods, and the merchant's below theirs.

Unless you have some skill in Trade, you will be forced to sell goods at a price that is significantly less than their actual worth. Hey, it's used! Trade is a *party skill*, meaning that as long as one of the heroes in your party has it, you also receive the benefit.

At each town, there are different supply and demand levels for different trade goods, and prices change dynamically as caravans and villagers trade with the towns. At the market, you can choose to invest some time learning what the current prices are like, which will give you a generally good idea of which items will bring you the best profit.

Making a tidy profit on trade is as simple as finding a place that sells low what another town buys high: buy it cheap, sell it dear. However, trade goods are heavy and bulky, so you should either have enough spare horses to easily carry all your merchandise, or hire some guards for protection. Ideally, you should do both.

All towns also have a tavern where you can find many interesting and useful people. You can find a town's tavern by looking for a sign bearing the image of a pitcher.. Different types of mercenaries can be hired here to swell your numbers. You can also meet a ransom broker who will buy your prisoners from you, or a book merchant who will sell you books with which you can develop your skills. The travelers, on the other hand, will give you useful information and help you find people you are looking for.

If you are lucky, you can also find other adventurers here who may be willing to join your party and become your companions. These companions are very useful, as you can equip and level them up as you do your own character, and they will contribute to your party skills. Since they are special heroes blessed with great luck just like you, they will survive all attacks with non-lethal wounds rather than getting killed. However, they will also cost you more than normal troops, and they may decide to leave you if they don't like your management style, or after a lost battle. If some of your companions leave you for any reason, you will still be able to run into them in taverns and hire them back.



8. Horses

GETTING AROUND ON foot is not only slower than riding, it's generally more dangerous. With the greater agility of a mount, you are able to choose your own ground against slower ground troops. You gain a tactically and psychologically important height advantage against men on foot, and if you have a horse trained for combat, they become a weapon in their own right as they bulldoze through enemy formations. A person's social rank could often be determined by the kind of horse they owned, and a knight's mount could be just as costly as his weapons and armor.

8.1. Horse Types

There are several kinds of horses at various price points, some better suited to a task than others. An archer will not be served best by riding a lumbering armored war-horse, and a lancer should feel rather embarrassed trying to fight from the back of an aged mule.

- **SUMPTERS**, or mules, are cheap animals bred for the lower class as riding or working animals. Often used in caravan trains.
- **SADDLE HORSES** are fairly cheap mounts bred for a placid disposition and a smooth gait. A good traveling horse for a good price.
- **STEPPE HORSES** are bred by the nomads of the plains, small and with feisty personalities. They are not any faster than your average saddle horse, but they are tougher and more agile.
- **COURSERS** are light mounts originally meant for carrying and intercepting messages, with wiry muscles and excellent running speeds. While their low strength doesn't allow for much armor, they are fast and agile, and can run circles around other animals.
- **HUNTERS** are the animals of nobility and the military, with most of a courser's speed and some of a warhorse's strength and endurance. They are bred for their ability to handle rough terrain at speed during a hunt.
- **WARHORSES** are slower than other types of mounts, but are much stronger, allowing them to wear mail armor for protection. As the mount used by heavy cavalry, they are trained to trample over enemies rather than stop or dodge around them, making them extremely dangerous to men on foot.
- **CHARGERS** are the largest type of horse, used by elite cavalry and wealthier knights. They are bred for size and power, and wear thick and elaborate armor. They are even more effective at crushing footmen into the ground thanks to their immense weight.

8.2. How and Where to Get One

Horses can be bought from the horse trader, who will have a small selection of mounts to choose from. If you don't like the horses on offer, you can simply shop somewhere else or come back later. No one trader is guaranteed to have a given type of horse for sale. Hold your mouse over a horse before you make your purchase to see its type and its abilities. In all cases, higher numbers are better:

- **SPEED:** Top speed over flat ground.
- **AGILITY:** Ability to maneuver. Note that all horses are more agile when moving slowly than when galloping.
- **ARMOR:** How much resistance the horse has to attacks. This works in the same fashion as your own armor. If a horse is said to be armored, then said armor comes with the horse and you will not need to buy the armor separately. This

means that you will also be unable to add or remove armor from the horse.

- **CHARGE:** How much blunt damage the horse will inflict if it tramples over an enemy at top speed. Moving at slower speeds will cause less damage. Also, horses with a lower charge rating will be more likely to stop than to overrun an enemy.


You can often find horses that are *lamed*, or *swaybacked* (old), or just plain *stubborn*. These special horses have some issues: lame horses are very slow due to previous injuries (but can be *cured* over time), swaybacked horses are a little slower than normal, and stubborn horses require more Riding skill to use. All of them are cheaper than a normal horse, however. Likewise, you can find horses that are exceptional specimens. *Spirited* horses are faster and more agile than normal, while *heavy* horses have more endurance and a greater ability to trample enemies. However, these carry a hefty price premium.

8.3. Using a Horse

When you get a horse you want to ride, click on it in your inventory window and move it into the box labeled “Horse” to indicate that this is your chosen mount. If you are drawn into a battle, you will begin the battle already mounted on this horse. Read *Combat: Fighting from Horseback* on Page 43 for specific information about using weapons while mounted, or using your horse AS a weapon.

Horses are large animals, and have substantial inertia. When you’re riding a horse, you will have to hold down the “Forward” key (default ‘W’) for a second or two while your horse builds up speed. Horses also cannot turn as quickly as humans, so watch where you are going and try to plan your maneuvers ahead of time. You can turn faster when you are moving slowly, meaning that executing a crisp turn will involve slowing down before you start to turn and then speeding up once you’re facing the new direction. All horses are slower when going up or down hills, or when moving through water.

To dismount, use the mouse to look down at the horse while stopped, and hit the ‘F’ key when you see the word “Dismount”. Mounting works the same way: move close to the horse and look at it, then use the action key when you see the word “Mount”. Note that mounting and dismounting takes a few seconds, during which you are extremely vulnerable. You can start moving the horse as soon as you put a foot in the stirrup, but you can’t attack until you’ve hauled yourself up into the saddle. To dismount, however, you must be completely stopped.



If you have horses that you aren't riding at the moment, they are shown in your inventory. These horses are considered baggage animals, and can help carry your party's equipment. If you're carrying a lot of weight, having an extra horse around can help your speed considerably when traveling on the world map. Horses in your inventory pool are tethered a safe distance back when you join in a battle, so you can't get a new horse from your inventory mid-battle.

A horse can become *lamed* if it's taken down by enemy troops. Lame horses have extreme penalties to both speed and agility. A horse that is lamed can eventually be healed if you have points in the skill *Wound Treatment*. However, you should note that if it was a special kind of horse before being injured (*spirited, heavy, stubborn*), it will be a plain horse after rehabilitation. Broken bones are nature's way of telling horses to slow down.



9. Party Management

SOONER OR LATER, you're going to come across a massive horde of people that want to kill you (or at least redistribute your equipment and wealth to themselves), and you're going to wish you had some help. The good news is that help is out there! Building up your own group of intimidating warriors is not only possible, but it's also a very good idea.

Each mobile unit on the world map is a 'party'. A party is composed of three types of people:

- **HEROES:** Yourself and anybody else possessing special skills that you can convince to join your party. Heroes have individual names, and you can determine how each of them will level up by spending points on character development the same way you can for your own character. You can also give them specific equipment that you want them to use during battle.
- **HIRED TROOPS:** These people, who you hire from the local *tavern*, recruit from villages, or rescue from captors, are unfortunately sword fodder. Nameless and

faceless, it's best not to get too attached to these guys (or gals). They can gain experience and level into more powerful versions of themselves, but you cannot specify how they spend their stat and skill points. They get equipment automatically, and you have no control over what they use.

- **PRISONERS:** Disgraced, defeated, and bound in chains. Whether you ransom them from the ransom broker, sell them into slavery or try to impress them into joining you, their fate is in your hands.

The party window is accessed by pressing 'p' while not in combat, either within a town or on the world map. On the list in the top right corner, you can see a number of labels representing party stacks. Each of these stacks is taken up by one hero, or any number of one type of hired troop; you yourself take up one stack, while 20 hired crossbowmen would all fit in a single stack. Your maximum party size is also shown. Don't forget to include yourself in head counts. On the left side of the party window, you see a list of the skills possessed by your party. Your own character is first, followed by any other heroes that you have recruited. See the Section 4.3, *Character: Skills* for more info about party skills.

You can talk to party members from the party window, but only if you are on the world map. Exit to the world map first if you are not there, and the Talk button will be enabled after you click on one of the party stacks. Talking to a hired troop can be useful to see what level they are or what skills they have. Talking to a hero lets you tell them how they should spend their level-up points, or you can give them new equipment to use.

All active members of a party (those who aren't prisoners, that is) can either be fit or wounded. If a hero is wounded, you will see their current health listed as a percentage after their name. Low numbers are bad. If they become very badly hurt, they will not show up in combat with you. If a hired troop is wounded to the point of being unfit for duty, they will not be sent into battle either. The number of troops who are fit for battle is shown as a different number than the total number you have hired. If a party stack's label reads "Farmer 3/5", then you have 5 farmers total, only 3 of whom are in a condition to fight.

Your party has a Morale level: this is how enthusiastic your troops are to be serving under your command. You can make your party's Morale go up by defeating enemies and by offering better food to eat. Morale goes down if you are defeated, starve your men, or just have a huge number of troops under your command.

Running an army takes a lot of food. It is important to have food on hand, since your party will otherwise dissolve into scavenging. You can buy food in a variety of locations, including villages, where it is made and costs less. Alternatively, you can force the villagers to give you supplies if you don't mind making them hostile to you. Your party consumes from all the different types of food that you have in your inventory, adding each type of food's morale bonus. Having many different types of food will make your men happier.

9.1. Companions

Mercenaries cost money to hire (unless you rescue them) and all troops have wages. They don't fight for you because they like your sparkling personality: they are paid weekly. The total cost of your party's wages is shown in the bottom-right corner of the party window. You can also click on a single party stack to see how much that particular kind of troop costs to maintain: this cost is per man, not for the whole pile. Be sure to have enough hard currency on hand to pay them between trade runs or hunting expeditions, as troops will become unhappy and start to defect if they aren't paid on time. Better soldiers require a higher wage. You can hire a decent-sized mob of farmers with clubs and pitchforks for the same cost as a single armored knight atop a horse, but you should consider the power and ability of the units in question.

When you see the message "Some troops are ready to upgrade", you should open the party screen to see your options. Any troops with a "+" sign after their name has enough experience to upgrade into a more powerful troop. Click on their slot to see how many are ready to upgrade (they gain experience individually), and what they can become. You will sometimes have a choice of two different kinds of soldier that a given minion can become: for example, Swadian militia can become either footmen (light infantry) or skirmishers (light archers). Consider what kind of party you're building before upgrading, or what kind of troops you need most, because you cannot change one type of troop into another once you close this window. You do not have to upgrade troops as soon as they are able, or even at all if you don't want to pay for their higher wage.

If the burden of paying for some of your troops is becoming too great, you can also choose to disband troops. Each click dismisses one man, while holding down the Ctrl button as you click dismisses the entire stack.

9.2. Prisoners

If you can take an enemy alive, they can be quite valuable to you. To take somebody as a prisoner, you will first need at least one point in the Prisoner Management skill. If you do not have this skill, you will not be able to have any prisoners at all. In battle, you should use a weapon that does “blunt” damage, like clubs and hammers. These weapons will knock an enemy unconscious instead of killing him. You can also simply run them over with a horse since horses deliver “blunt” damage. If you’ve won a battle, you will be given a chance to take all unconscious enemies as prisoners.

Prisoners will slow your party, but they are worth a fair bit of money. If you don’t like the idea of selling people as slaves or ransoming your enemies back to their faction, you can offer them the chance to join your party. Note that this has a fairly low chance of success (until recently, they were trying to kill you, remember), and some may flee the moment you take your eye off them. To recruit your prisoners this way, click on the camp button on the map screen, select “Take an action”, and then “Recruit from your prisoners”.



10. The World Map

THE WORLD MAP shows the entire region, and is how you will move to different cities and locations. To get to the world map, just press Tab if you're currently controlling your character in the city view, or click "Leave" at the city menu. Once you're there, moving your party on the world map is as simple as clicking the left button where you want to go, either on the ground or on a city, and waiting while your party is in transit. Time will pass for everybody while you are moving, but you can pause time at any point by pressing Spacebar. Time will also pause automatically when you reach your destination. If you just want to wait in one place, hold down the Spacebar.

10.1. Parties

Yours is not the only group in the world; as you travel, you will see other parties moving around the map as well. Some are friendly, some are hostile, and some are totally disinterested in you. If you click the left button on a party instead of a city or location

on the map, you will follow them as they move.

Parties are color-coded to identify their faction. The number above a party indicates how many people



are in that party. If there is a second number after a plus sign, like “+8”, this shows how many prisoners are being held by that party. Hold your cursor over a party to get more detailed information. For example, a label saying (33/38 + 6) means that the party has 33 men who are able to fight out of 38 total (implying 5 wounded), with a prisoner train of 6 prisoners. The exact composition of the party will be shown below, which is very useful for sizing up enemies before engaging them. Note that NPC parties can grow and change by liberating prisoners, just as you can.

The distance at which you can see other parties is adjusted by the party skill Spotting. If you have several ranks in this, you can see enemies and maneuver appropriately before they see you, a valuable benefit. Note that traveling at night will reduce the Spot radius of all parties on the map, making it difficult to find people to attack (or for attackers to find you).

If anybody in your party has the Tracking skill, you will see colored arrows on the ground. These arrows indicate tracks or signs of movement that a party has made as they travel through this area, with the arrows indicating which way the party went. The color shows how old the track is (red, orange, yellow, green, cyan, blue) and the size shows roughly how big the party was. Move your cursor over a tracking arrow to get more information. If your skills are high, you get an increasingly better estimate of how many people were in the party, and even who they were.

10.2. Speed

Your speed while traveling on the world map is influenced by six things:

1. The size of your party. The bigger the group of people, the slower they'll move.
2. The kind of troops in your party. Mounted troops are obviously faster than those that have to move on foot. If your entire group consists of horsemen, then you'll be galloping along at a better speed than the rank-and-file footmen can sustain. Note that for mounted characters, including yourself, the kind of horse being used doesn't matter: instead, speed is influenced by the personal skill Riding. On foot, the personal skill Athletics influences map speed, making elite foot troops

faster on the map than green recruits. The game calculates your speed by creating the average between the speed of the slowest troop in your party and the overall average speed.

3. The amount of weight in your inventory. This is mostly a factor if you're trading bulky goods. If you're trading or just carrying a lot of 'stuff' and would rather not bog yourself down, consider purchasing some cheap horses to serve as baggage animals: they only have to be in your inventory to help your speed.
4. Terrain and weather. Moving over clear ground in daylight is fastest. You will suffer cumulative speed penalties if you are traveling through a forest, or at night.
5. Every rank of the party skill Pathfinding adds 3% to your speed.
6. Your party's Morale level has a slight effect on map speed; the happier your men are, the more they will push themselves for your benefit.

Based on the type of party you have assembled, speed can be the deciding line between life and death. Unless you have the men to fight off anybody who takes an interest in your group, then traveling slower than potential enemies in your area is a bad idea. There is a definite balance that needs to be struck between being strong enough to attack at will and being fast enough to evade those parties larger than your own.

10.3. Making Camp

You may decide to make camp at any point while on the world map. Simply press the 'Camp' button at the bottom left of the screen. Making camp allows you to take several important actions.

- **RECRUIT SOME OF YOUR PRISONERS:** You may attempt to recruit your prisoners, though this has a small chance of success, not to mention it will lower your party morale, and some of the troops you earn in this way will run away the moment you turn your back. Persuasion and Leadership skills will increase the success rate for this action.
- **SELECT A BOOK TO READ:** If you have any books, this option will let you start reading one of them. Books can be bought from the book merchants in taverns, and they are useful for increasing your characters' skills.
- **RETIRE FROM ADVENTURING:** At any point in the game, you may decide to retire, ending your career as an active adventurer. The game will then give you a score and describe what happened in your later years.



11. Combat

AT SOME POINT, you're going to want to really hurt somebody. Alternatively, somebody is going to want to really hurt you, and you'll have to pre-emptively return the favor before you wind up dead. You should engage in battle only when strictly necessary or when you're confident of the outcome. Sending men into a battle when you're not reasonably certain to win is wasteful of lives and money. But if you must fight, fight well. You should have a good understanding of the weaponry available and how to use it before you venture out into the realm of Calradia.

11.1. Weapon types and traits

Each of the weapon proficiencies has a different family of supported weapons that you can choose from. Which proficiency you choose will ultimately depend on which you enjoy playing the most. Some kinds of weapons also have special behaviors.



ONE-HANDED WEAPONS: These offer the best mix of striking power and attack speed, and let you use a shield for improved defense. Some weapons have extremely limited reach, like a dagger or hatchet. These generally also do not allow you to parry due to their small size.



TWO-HANDED WEAPONS: More reach, more power. Better on the attack than defense, most of these weapons require but one or two hits to flatten an opponent, but you lose the advantage of a shield. A two-handed weapon of note is the bastard sword: using both hands is faster, but you can also choose to equip a shield and use it with one hand. However, using a two-handed weapon this way incurs a 35% penalty to your damage. The same penalty applies if you use any two-handed weapon on horseback, since you would need to wield it one-handed.



POLEARMS: These are all quite long, giving their user an advantage against enemies who have weapons with a shorter reach. Some kinds of polearms require both hands, while others can be used with one or two. Like two-handed weapons, using a polearm with one hand reduces your damage by 35%.



ARCHERY: A bow allows the user to launch arrows far beyond the accurate reach of a thrown missile. The bow has a much higher rate of fire than a crossbow, and if you invest in Power Draw skill and archery weapon proficiency, it may deliver as much damage as a good crossbow. Better bows require a minimum level of the Power Draw skill to use.



CROSSBOW: A crossbow allows a relatively unskilled user to aim accurately, without relying on experience and heavy training. They are ideal for those who wish to have ranged capability without investing the necessary skill points or the extensive time needed to master the ordinary bow. The crossbow must be reloaded manually after each shot: simply use the Attack button a second time to begin reloading. Note that you cannot move while reloading or the process will be aborted. Also, most crossbows cannot be reloaded on horseback.



THROWN WEAPONS: These require only one hand, and as such are unique among the ranged weapons in that they allow you to use a shield between throws. The compromise is that, while they can do a lot of damage, your accurate throwing distance is usually much less than that of a bow or crossbow.

11.2. Damage

To begin, damage comes in three types:

- **CUTTING DAMAGE** is applied by weapons with some kind of sharp blade, like sabers and axes. Cutting weapons have the highest raw damage rating.
- **PIERCING DAMAGE** is applied by weapons that bear a fine point, like spears, thrusting swords and arrows. Piercing damage receives a bonus against armor.
- **BLUNT DAMAGE** is applied by things that batter and break but do not penetrate, like hammers and clubs. Horses also deliver blunt damage when they trample enemies. Blunt damage will knock an enemy unconscious without killing them, so that they may be taken prisoner. Like piercing, blunt damage receives a bonus against armor.

If you turn on the option “Show Damage”, then you will be shown how much damage was applied and to whom whenever you score a hit (or receive one). This can prove useful in training your combat reflexes. Generally, a good hit will also result in a solid slicing or stabbing noise, while poor hits result in a thump sound.

The amount of damage you inflict or receive depends on several different factors. Obviously, the first is the damage rating of the weapon. A number is randomly rolled between half of the weapon’s rated damage and its full rated damage. Thus, a mace rated for 20 damage will roll a random number between 10 and 20. Your proficiency with the weapon type influences this roll. Your skills will add to the damage: Power Strike for melee weapons, or Power Draw/Throw for ranged weapons.

The weapon’s impact speed will also play a role, for melee and ranged weapons alike. Mount & Blade uses a physics model which takes into account the speed and direction of your weapon, as well as the speed and direction of your opponent when calculating damage. The effect of this calculation will be reported to you as a speed bonus. If you’re sidestepping left past an enemy, you’ll do more damage if you strike right to left (opposite their motion relative to you), than if you strike left to right. Most weapons will do more damage in the middle of their stroke than at the beginning or end: jabbing somebody with a spear is more effective if you’ve got some weight behind it than if the point runs into them immediately. Your speed bonus can be positive (extra damage) or negative (less damage), even to the point of doubling your hit or negating it entirely.

Speed bonuses are also very important for ranged weapons. Your missiles will

lose most of their starting speed at long ranges, and therefore will do much less damage. On the other hand, hurling a javelin forward while riding a horse at full gallop will devastate any opponent you hit, since the speed of the horse will be added to the speed of your hurling motion.

Where you hit the target can have an effect as well. You will hit where you're looking, to a degree. To try for the feet, aim low; to hit the head, aim high. Blows to the feet will generally do less damage, and blows to the head will do more.

The armor of the target reduces the damage that is inflicted. After factoring in your weapon's rating, your skills, and the speed of impact, the game produces a number which is referred to as your "base" damage. Armor reduces this damage by a random factor of between one half and its full rating against cutting damage, while this is further reduced to between one quarter and one half versus piercing or blunt damage. For example, armor with a rating of 20 can block between 10 and 20 points of cutting damage, or between 5 and 10 points of piercing or blunt damage. Apart from directly subtracting some damage, armor also reduces the damage by a percentage.

11.3. Fighting in melee

Mount & Blade combat is designed in such a way that randomly pressing various buttons (sometimes called button mashing) won't work very well. Instead, you must be aware of your movements as well as those of your enemy, and act accordingly. It is therefore important to properly understand the combat system.

A shield can block all types of melee attacks from opponents in front of you, and can also intercept incoming missile weapons. Pay close attention to your shield's durability (shown with the shield icon at the lower-right corner of the screen). It takes damage with every hit it absorbs. Your shield is repaired automatically, but only after the fight is over. If it's wrecked during the fight, it will lose one level of quality (becoming "battered", etc). If it's already "cracked" and gets wrecked, then it's permanently destroyed.

If you don't have a shield, you can only use the Right Mouse Button to parry with your weapon. Parrying can only block one type of stroke at a time, like an overhead chop, or a slash from the side. Parrying has no effect on missile weapons. When you're parrying, you should watch your opponent to see what kind of stroke he is starting to make, and block once he starts his stroke. A quick weapon is better on defense than a big and heavy one. Don't try to parry before your opponent makes his movement, or he will just change to a different type of stroke and bypass your defense.

Generally, landing a hit is about timing. You need to time your stroke so that you can bypass their defense, be it a shield or a parry. Don't attack in a frenzy and hope to get lucky, as this will lead to you getting hurt; patience is the key. Wait for them to drop their shield to attack, or perhaps dodge back when they swing, then step forward and whack them while they recover. Be calm and methodical.

11.4. Fighting at range

If you're carrying a ranged weapon, you can attempt to hit the enemy before they can hit you back, unless of course they also have a ranged weapon. Users of the bow and crossbow cannot use a shield since their weapon requires both hands. If you have a thrown weapon, you can use a shield as well.

To launch a missile from a ranged weapon, turn to face the target and hold down the Left Mouse Button. This will cause the targeting indicator, a large white circle, to shrink down as you aim. If you're using a hand bow, you should release the button promptly when the indicator is at its smallest: if you wait too long, muscle fatigue sets in and your aim will wander. A high level of skill can increase your aiming time. Crossbows allow you to aim as long as you like, as do thrown weapons, since you are not constantly fighting the bowstring while trying to aim. If at any time you wish to stop aiming your shot, click the Right Mouse Button to abort.

The amount of ammunition you have left is shown just above your remaining health. Missile ammunition is automatically refilled for free at the end of a battle. However, during the battle, you are limited to whatever you have in your quiver, unless you go back to your inventory and retrieve more (if more is indeed available). A good tactic for characters who depend heavily on ranged weapons is to carry more than one bag of ammunition in their equipped weapons list.

When you release it, the missile from a ranged weapon may land anywhere inside the target indicator. Characters who are not very good with a bow will have to depend pretty much on luck to hit anything until they get more practice. Trying to use a ranged weapon from a moving horse is also very difficult, and you'll not be very accurate unless you have points in the Horse Archery skill. There is no penalty for using a ranged weapon if you're on a horse that is standing still.

Missiles are affected by gravity: that is, the farther away you are from your target, the more you need to aim over their head so that the projectile falls down to them when it reaches that distance. The Zoom key (hold Shift) can be invaluable here because you can watch your shot to see where it lands in relation to the target and adjust

your aim accordingly. Thrown weapons are slower and thus have a much more dramatic arc than arrows and bolts, limiting their effective range. Missiles require some compensation as well: you will need to lead your target if it's moving. Crossbows, especially heavier ones, will launch their missile with great speed, so less lead and distance correction is needed to hit the target as compared to bows.

If you are shooting at an enemy with a shield, and he realizes what you are doing, he will simply block your projectile with his shield. You can get around this by having an ally distract the enemy so that he's not facing your direction. Shooting somebody in the back isn't perhaps very honorable, but trust us: he'd do the same to you. If you're confident of your abilities and only facing one opponent, you could also wait until he gets within range and lowers his shield to attack you. You then have a very brief window of opportunity to get in a shot before they gut you. You can break a shield with many hits, but this will require a lot of ammunition. Throwing axes and javelins are more effective at ruining a shield than arrows and bolts.

A LAST NOTE: it is wise to pack a backup weapon unless you are very confident of your own capabilities and your party's ability to distract the enemy. If you run out of ammunition, or a nearby enemy starts landing hits on you, a ranged weapon is of no use.

11.5. Fighting with a lance

Lances and most other kinds of polearms can be used from horseback in a special kind of attack. This involves getting up to a sufficiently high speed, "couching" your weapon (grasping it firmly under your arm), then running it through an enemy. This type of attack can deliver tremendous damage, but it can be tricky to pull off.

First, the prerequisites. You need to be on a horse capable of a moderate speed of 6 or more, so don't try lancing from the back of a lame mule. A high Agility is also a desirable trait for your horse since it makes it easier to maneuver for and land your hit. Also, you will obviously need a polearm. Lances, spears, military forks, and many more are all suitable weapons. A longer weapon is usually more desirable than a shorter one that does higher damage, because it means you can hit the enemy before he can take a swing at you (or your horse).

Get some distance between you and the enemy forces, then slow and turn around to face them. Spur your horse up to its maximum speed. If your mount is fast enough, you will drop your weapon from an upright carrying position to a horizontal killing

position. **Do not touch the attack button:** The lancing attack is automatic, provided you have enough speed and a suitable weapon. You need to turn your horse as you come upon the enemy so that your weapon's point impales them. It's easiest to aim the lance if you position your camera view so that you're looking down the lance instead of from one side or the other. If you're attacking troops on foot, you will need to look down at them slightly or the point will pass over their head. On the other hand, if you're attacking other horsemen, keep your view fairly high so that the lance hits the man and not the horse (unless you are actually trying to kill it).

You will find it difficult to lance uphill because you can't get up enough speed. Going down steep hills will also slow you down. Try riding across the slope, rather than against it. Water will prevent you from lancing at all, and trees and rocks may make it difficult to maneuver. Sometimes it's best to know when terrain is simply unsuitable to lancing, and instead switch to another weapon.


11.6. Fighting from horseback

There are some special things to note when you're fighting from the back of a horse, both for melee and ranged weapons.

When striking at a person on foot while wielding one- or two-handed weapons (not polearms), the best tactic is to slash at them just as you are passing and not when they're still slightly ahead of you. Stabbing or overhand swings are better suited to fighting a mounted opponent. Two-handed melee weapons can only be used with one hand from horseback, which results in speed and damage penalties. Polearms from horseback work a little differently, in that when you ready your weapon for a thrust, you can aim it anywhere you like with the mouse.

You can trample enemies with a horse, which is extremely useful. Horses deal "blunt" damage whenever they hit an enemy on foot with sufficient speed, so you can knock enemies unconscious by trampling them. If they are carrying a shield, you can hit them with your horse's shoulder to make them stagger, and slash at them before they can get their shield back up. Note that this doesn't work well against foot soldiers with polearms, because they can get a hit at your horse before they are knocked down. If your horse takes a strong hit in the chest with a polearm, you will be halted, which can prove to be very dangerous if you're surrounded.

When using ranged weapons while on a moving horse, your accuracy and damage will suffer a great deal if you do not have the Horse Archery skill. An unmoving horse does not have this penalty, though you will be easier to hit. When using a bow,



you can only shoot to the left side of the horse, because you're holding the bow with your left hand (sorry, no option for left-eyed archers). Crossbows can fire to either side, but note that only the Hunting and Light crossbows can be reloaded on horseback; the others can be fired, but not reloaded.

11.7. Fighting against mounted opponents

Enough about riding down the poor ground pounders; what are you supposed to do if you ARE a ground pounder and some armored warhorse comes thundering at you? You might be fighting on foot by choice, or you may have had your horse killed under you. Either way, understanding the appropriate tactics is essential if you want to live.

What makes a horse dangerous? Speed and mass. It's a huge animal that will knock you down and trample you if you get in its way. The guy on its back may even have a long pole which he will use to run you through. The key to defeating a horseman while on foot, is to take away their advantages. There are two tactics you can use that are very effective.

The first tactic is to simply pick a location that makes it difficult for a horseman to come towards you at full speed. Steep hills and obstacles like rocks and trees will slow and funnel them, giving you time and space to maneuver around them. Shallow water is also an extremely effective defense.

The second tactic is to carry a long polearm, and use it to stop the horse. Spears, lances, and pikes are your anti-cavalry tool: a strong hit to the horse's chest as it approaches will cause them to stop and rear. The hardest part is timing: you want to have your weapon at full extension at the same time as the horse runs into it, for maximum damage and safety. If you wait too long, your spear won't be in a position to hit the horse before you're run over, or the horse will be stopped close enough that the rider can still chop at you with their weapon. If you thrust too soon, your strike will be wasted, the horse won't stop, and you'll be flattened.



12. Battles

WHEN TWO OR MORE parties hostile to each other meet on the world map, a battle will break out. If one of the involved sides is friendly to you and the other is hostile, then you can decide to join in and help your allies. You can also pick a fight on your own just by intercepting (or wait to be intercepted by) a hostile party. Once you've joined the battle, you will be given several choices, depending on the parties involved.

- **LEAVE THE BATTLE:** Run away! Nobody exchanges any blows so there are no casualties on either side. This option is not always available, especially if you are the slower party or outnumbered.
- **SEND YOUR TROOPS IN:** If you have some men under your command, you can opt to stay back from the fight and send them in without you. This should be used with caution. Generally, your troops will not fight so well without you on the line beside them, but this can save time and hassle if the fight looks to be

a slaughter. The other advantage here is that if you take the field personally, you cannot leave until either you or all enemies are defeated. If you have a large party, you can wear down enemies through sheer attrition. After the skirmish, you will be shown a summary result of your troops' efforts.

- **ATTACK THE ENEMY:** Charge! Personally lead your men into battle. Which units you actually deploy in combat with is random, but based primarily on their placement in your party list: units that appear higher on the list have a higher chance of appearing. Use the "Move up" and "Move down" buttons in the party window before entering the battle to influence what units you will fight alongside.

If you have joined a battle that was already in progress, you will command a mixed force consisting of both your units and those of your allies. If you have arrived at a battle in progress and neither side is your enemy, your only choice will be to not get involved. The battlefield is not the appropriate place to make a political statement by joining one side or the other on a whim.

12.1. Battle Phases

A battle is fought over the course of one or more 'phases', based on the option "Battle Size" in the options window. "Battle Size" dictates the total number of troops that can be deployed on the battlefield at any one time. This limit is divided between the two sides according to the battle advantage, which in turn is determined by the numeric strengths of the two sides, and each side's tactics skill level.

Troops that are wounded in one phase will be wounded for the rest of the battle. Likewise, the health levels of heroes are carried over from one phase to the next (though you regain some health based on your party's *First Aid skill*). You can disengage from a battle after a phase, but by doing so you forfeit all battlefield salvage from enemies you have defeated up to that point.

Over the course of a fight, troops will continue to arrive in the area. Both sides can receive reinforcements after the fighting has begun. Only those parties that started the initial battle can have reinforcement waves: another party cannot join from the world map.

A phase of the battle is over once one side's troops, including reinforcements, are entirely defeated (dead or unconscious). A battle is also over when one party is entirely slain or wounded.

You can retreat from a fight once it's started by pressing the Tab key, provided you are far enough from enemy forces to escape. Not all of your men may be so lucky: some may be killed or wounded as they try to disengage. Only try to retreat if things are looking very grim.

12.2. Commands

As the leader of your party, you will be able to command your soldiers during a battle. Choosing the right commands to give your men can be the deciding factor between a glorious victory and terrible defeat.

First, select who you want to command:

- **'1' KEY:** Everybody on the field, regardless of troop type.
- **'2' KEY:** Archers. Ranged troops who are on foot. These troops go under the name crossbowmen, archers, skirmishers, etc.
- **'3' KEY:** Infantry. Troops who are on foot and who do not necessarily have a ranged weapon.
- **'4' KEY:** Cavalry. Troops who are currently mounted on a horse.

You may also combine these groups to command them more effectively:

- Holding down the Ctrl key while you press the key for one of the groups above will let you combine the newly selected group with the one that has already been selected. For example, if you want to select Infantry and Archers, you just need to press '3' for infantry, and while holding down the Ctrl key, press '2' for archers.
- The '6' key lets you select "Others", meaning everyone other than the currently selected group.

Once you have selected the recipients of your orders, you can proceed to issue your commands:

- **'F1' KEY:** Hold this position. Instructs your men to stay within a short distance of where you are currently standing. They will fire ranged weapons if they have one, but will not move to engage the enemy in melee unless the enemy comes close enough. Useful when trying to have your men stay on defensive ground of some kind; for example, if you have mostly foot soldiers, then you could have them hold position near a steep incline to help protect them from cavalry charges.

- **'F2' KEY:** Follow me. Your men will fall in around you, or travel to wherever you are, and stay close as you move.
- **'F3' KEY:** Charge! Give your men permission to break ranks and pursue the enemy individually.
- **F4' KEY:** Mount/Dismount toggle. Sometimes you will want your mounted troops to fight on foot, usually if the mission's terrain is not good for cavalry. Pressing this key once will order your mounted troops to dismount. Pressing it again will order them to mount their horses again.
- **'F5' KEY:** Hold Fire/Fire at will Toggle. Order your ranged troops to hold their fire by pressing this key once. Press again to let them fire at will.
- **'F6' KEY:** Advance Ten Paces. Your troops will walk in the general direction of the enemy by ten paces and hold there.
- **'F7' KEY:** Fall Back Ten Paces. Your troops will move back from the general direction of the enemy by ten paces and hold there.
- **'F8' KEY:** Stand Closer. Your troops will shorten the distance between each other. This order is especially useful for preparing your infantry for a cavalry charge.
- **'F9' KEY:** Spread Out. Troops will increase the distance between each other. This order is useful for reducing your casualties against enemy archers or cross-bowman.

12.3. Losing a Battle

The enemy was too powerful. The sun was in your archers' eyes. The meat was undercooked and you spent half the night at the latrine. You hate Mondays. Whatever went wrong, we understand. Nobody can expect to win all the time in a sport so complex and unforgiving as combat, and the sooner you can analyze what went wrong and patch your men up, the sooner you can exact revenge.

If you sent your men in without you and they were all defeated, you can withdraw and hope that the enemy force doesn't pursue you.

If you personally went into battle and were defeated but you still have troops in your party in fighting condition, they will drag you out and patch you up as best they can. At that point, you can choose to flee or to engage the enemy once more.

Finally, if you are defeated and there are no troops left to rescue you, the battle is over and you have lost. The enemy may take some or all of your troops as prisoners, and will help themselves to the supplies and equipment carried by your baggage

train. You will keep your experience for personal kills during the battle, but no more will be awarded.

Note that all is not lost. If you lost any companions after your defeat, you may look for and find them in the taverns of nearby towns. If you manage to catch up to the enemies that defeated you and beat them, you may be able to rescue your soldiers who were taken captive, and retrieve any items they took from you.

12.4. Winning

If on the other hand your forces are victorious, you will be able to take what your defeated enemies had in their possession. Note that you may have to share these with your allies, if you had any, according to the relative strength of your force with respect to theirs.

First, you can take any unconscious enemies as prisoners. Remember that to knock an enemy out without killing him, you need to use a weapon that does “blunt” damage like a club, or trample them with a horse. If you sent your men in without you, they can sometimes manage to beat an enemy or two into submission for you; however, if you take the field, they will generally be more bloodthirsty and kill enemies outright unless they have a blunt weapon.

Second, you may liberate any prisoners that the enemy party had and adopt them into your own party.

Third, you may help yourself to anything that the enemy troops carried. Usually, it will be pretty beat up though you can sometimes find pristine equipment. Weapons, armor, ammunition, even their food and mounts are yours for the taking. Note that your own soldiers and allies will also take a share of the loot, so you’ll not be able to salvage absolutely everything, but only a random selection. In general, all regular soldiers will get one share, your hero companions will get 3 shares each, and as the leader, you will get 10 shares of the loot.

And last, you will get a large amount of experience above and beyond whatever you personally earned for enemies defeated. This experience is shared amongst the entire party, so you will not get all of it unless you fought alone. As commander, you get the largest portion, while other heroes get a lesser but still substantial amount, and hired troops get a small amount of experience.

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