

(Current as of game version 7.1)



Your Squad and You

Introduction

Greetings! Have you been curious about Command Missions? How do they work? What's the best composition? Are they even worth it?

If not, well... leave, because you won't care about what I have to say. If you ARE curious though, maybe I can answer some or all of your nagging questions! I have run dungeons of all levels NUMEROUS times with my squad and have learned quite a bit about how the system works.

I had to learn all this because I looked for guides to show me the best way and, well, they all suck. They're all super outdated and have a lot of guesswork when it comes to the specifics because, I assume, they didn't devote that much time to making the perfect squad like I did.

So here I am, writing what I know down for posterity. If it helps anyone looking to make a super squad like me, great! If not, oh well. Let's begin.

Basic Questions and Answers:

- "How do I level my squadron?"

This is not a guide for how to level your squadron, because that's really just a time investment and it's not very complicated. Command missions can speed up the process by getting your squad experience, but are not necessary at all for that purpose. No, this guide is about command missions and command missions only, which is its own separate system layered on top of the original squadron system after-the-fact. If you want the basics of running a squad, here is a good resource: https://ffxiv.consolegameswiki.com/wiki/Adventurer_Squadrons

- "I've run dungeons with trusts before, are command missions the same?"

Similar in some ways, VERY different in others. Like with trusts, your squad will tail you as you go through the dungeon and mostly act autonomously. Also like the trust system, you have to have a standard light party composition to run a dungeon with your squad (tank, healer, two DPS) with you filling one of those roles.

And that's about where the similarities end. Squadron NPCs are generally much "dumber" than trust NPCs in that they *do not react to enemy attacks at all*, nor do they have quick "reflexes," as in, they don't decide to do anything nearly as quickly as trust NPCs can. A squad healer will heal you, but often not as quickly as you would probably prefer. Likewise, if you pull aggro on a mob during a trash pull, a trust NPC tank will provoke it quickly, while a squad NPC tank will not even react unless you manually change its target.

That's another thing: you have a limited capability to command your squadron NPCs, being able to order them to engage an enemy, disengage entirely, and use their unique limit break, Ungarmax, which costs 1 LB bar, does some single-target damage, and boosts party damage for 15 seconds.

Lastly, you can obtain stat modifiers for your squadron that affect their performance. More on those later.

- "Can I use squadrons to run dungeons and level up?"

Sure, it's a good way to level from 20-60, but your squadron will NOT level up at a comparable rate to you, so it's finicky if they aren't leveled up already. Also, command missions only offer a fraction of the dungeons available to run from levels 20-60. Some of the dungeons are also MSQ dungeons, which can now be run with trusts. If you hate running dungeons with other people, command missions can fill that gap a bit, and trusts can fill the whole MSQ up through

Stormblood. As of right now, the only remaining dungeons without any NPC party system are non-MSQ dungeons that the squadron system doesn't cover, but Yoshi-P recently revealed that they will be (slowly) working on adding trusts to non-MSQ dungeons as well. It is unclear how that will integrate or overlap with squadrons at this time.

- “So... then what's the point?”

Well, you do have to run five different command missions to reach the current max Grand Company rank of Captain, so if you want those sweet Grand Company Captain glammers, ya gotta do it. After that, it's really just for fun. There's definitely a certain satisfaction you get when your squadron is at its peak.

Note: In a Q&A session following live letter 68, Yoshi-P spoke a bit about the future of squadrons. The Trust system is getting updated to include all MSQ dungeons in the game, starting with 2.0 dungeons in patch 6.1. Later, when asked about squadrons, Yoshi-P said that once the new trust system updates are complete, they plan to “replace” squadrons with the new trusts. Translations of this comment were a little rough, but what seems to be the most accurate interpretation of this statement is that the squadron AI will be replaced with Trust AI, and that squadrons may be able to become new low-level trust members, **not** that squadrons will be gone altogether. In all likelihood, this means that a lot of this guide will become obsolete. As of 7.1, no update has occurred.

Ultimately, this will be a net positive change even if they get rid of the stat boosts for squadrons (**not** confirmed to be the case at this time!). The trust AI is far, FAR more reliable than the squad AI, and the little additional tricks squadrons have only slightly close the gap. Plus, if you do get to use squadron members as trust NPCs, theoretically the number of available dungeons to run with them would increase by a lot! That's pure speculation on my part, though. Also, having your squadron stuck at level 60 REALLY limits your glamour options, **which is the MOST important thing!**

These ding-dongs get hit by everything!

Yes, your squadron NPCs do not react AT ALL to enemy attacks. They eat everything, they do NOT do mechanics, and they will ONLY switch targets if you order them to or if the target they were on becomes untargetable or dies. So how do they survive? Simple: they're too dumb to die! Specifically, they ignore most mechanics that do anything more complicated than deal damage. They NEVER get targeted by special attacks like the

(Current as of game version 7.1)

bog bubbles in Brayflox or the Minotaur's triple-charge in Fractal Continuum, only *you* get targeted by those (so plan ahead!).

Note: as of 7.1, certain changes to trust dungeons have bled into how they work with squadrons, so there are *some* mechanics that now can target squad members and not just you. However, the squad members still do not react to these attacks in any way, so be mindful of what's happening. I have yet to see any of these mechanics pose actual danger so far, though.

Squadrons also have naturally high HP pools to help with them eating a lot of damage. **THEY ARE NOT INVINCIBLE**, they WILL die if you push too recklessly on trash pulls, but in boss fights they will generally be fine no matter what and require minimal healing.

The Classes:

Yes, that's right. Classes, not jobs. Your squad, no matter their level, can only be a basic class, which means they DO NOT have access to ANY job-specific abilities. Arcanists will never have egis, pugilists will never have riddles, lancers will never have jump, etc.

HOWEVER! The squadron classes are sort of... frozen in time. They have access to class abilities from all the way back in early Stormblood, even ones that have since been removed from player characters. That means arcanists have shadow flare and bane, conjurers have break, gladiators have flash, etc. Abilities that have simply been updated *will* have their updated effects, though. Namely, tank stances are *extremely* effective. So as long as your squad tank hits something, it should keep hate just fine.

Also of note: your squad's abilities are not affected by level sync. They will have the full range of their abilities in every dungeon they can run.

I will break down the roles below, with tier rankings for effectiveness based on my observations:

- **Tanks:**

- **Gladiator:** A tier. Has *tons* of mitigation tools and uses Flash for enmity (which further helps mitigate damage by blinding enemies!). Knockback rarely matters, but it also has access to tempered will, which can sometimes be nice, though it will not use it strategically.
- **Marauder:** A- tier. Has fewer mitigation options than gladiator and uses Overpower as an enmity generator, damaging enemies in a circle around

them but having no other effects. This class *may* do slightly more damage than gladiator can, but I haven't noticed over all my runs. A perfectly good tank, just not quite as versatile as gladiator.

Note: You may notice both tanks using Ultimatum sometimes, which is an AOE provoke. Unfortunately, ultimatum runs on OLD provoke rules (provoke was changed in Shadowbringers while ultimatum was removed from players), meaning it doesn't actually build enmity, it just places the tank at the top of the enmity list. Yes, those are two different things. Squad tanks are too slow and dumb to really capitalize on this, so ultimatum often doesn't accomplish much for them.

- **Healers:**

- **Conjurer:** C tier. Aha, I fooled you with that "s" up there! This is the **ONLY** healer class available for your squad, being the only healer *class* in the game. And yes, it's C tier. The conjurer AI is just *bad*. They react so slowly and they use Break disturbingly often, which just afflicts an enemy with the heavy status. Woo.

Note: I recommend you be the healer for your squad whenever possible to increase the damage output since the squad doesn't need much healing anyway. If you **DO** bring a squad healer, I also recommend you don't be the tank, or frustration will probably ensue.

- **Melee DPS:**

- **Lancer/pugilist/rogue:** B tier. The melee DPS are all fairly interchangeable. They do about the same damage and have pretty much the same foibles in that they take forever to engage enemies and have to run around to do positionals. They also *rarely* AOE, making trash pulls a bit more lengthy. But despite how slow they are against trash, they do high single-target damage, so bosses will usually die a bit faster if you bring melees, just not quite enough to make up for the slower trash pulls.

- **Ranged DPS:**

- **Arcanist:** S tier. The king of AOE damage in the squad, packing bane to spread DoTs, shadowflare for area damage, AND emerald carbuncle to use AOE auto-attacks as well. Trash *melts* against an arcanist, and they still do good damage to bosses as well. Also has physick, which isn't a substitute for a healer but will help mitigate how frustratingly slow the healer AI is with its own cures. The only drawback is that sometimes

carbuncle can get locked out of boss rooms if it doesn't make it in before combat starts, and the arcanist won't resummon it until after the fight. A minor annoyance, but still.

- **Thaumaturge:** C tier. You would think with black mage being such a nuke machine that thaumaturge squad members would match arcanists in AOE damage. Sadly, that is not the case. Thaumaturges do decent single-target damage but don't cast fire 2 often at all, and their cast times are fairly slow. Ultimately, you're better off bringing a melee.
- **Archer:** B tier. Archers used to be king back when you could exploit the squad AI to make archers spam barrage and disintegrate bosses in seconds. But that's long since been patched out, so now archer is a respectable DPS against single targets, somewhere between a thaumaturge and a melee but quicker to engage, and they do slightly more AOE damage with quicknock too.

As you can see, the "best" composition for a command mission (focusing solely on damage) would be a **marauder, two arcanists, and you as the healer**. But that sort of min/maxing is totally unnecessary for any command mission and it's kind of boring. Personally, I just have one of everything in my squad (minus rogue) and go with whatever I feel like at the moment. Also, every class has different physical/mental/tactical stats for squadron missions, so some diversity is good for those. Plus you can glamour your squad, and if you're like me, you don't want them all looking the same. You can get by just fine with any set-up, so go nuts!

Battle Tactics:

These are the modifiers I mentioned earlier, if you remember. Every time you complete a command mission, each individual squad member who went on the mission has a *chance* to level up a random battle tactic, with the chance going down the more they already have. Getting the last couple of battle tactic levels can take quite a while if the RNG is bad, but if you get lucky, you may not need to worry about that (see below).

As for what they do, they simply raise that squad member's stats by a set percentage. Some of those half-baked, outdated guides I whined about in the intro suggest that different tactics may change the squad member's behavior, like a tank with defensive tactics will manage aggro and mitigation better, but after many many hours of research, I can safely say that that is B-U-N-K. Hogwash. Poppycock. **Squad AI is set, and battle tactics do NOT affect it at all.** I welcome anyone to try and prove me wrong.

The four tactics are listed below in order of most useful to least useful:

- **Offensive:** Increases the squad member's damage output by 12% per level, to a maximum of +60%. The only tactic you want and the only tactic you need. Squad members already have fat HP pools and take reduced damage, so increasing their damage output is all that really makes a difference. Tank, healer, DPS, doesn't matter, every squad member ideally should have max offensive tactics, and anyone who suggests otherwise is misinformed.
- **Balanced:** Increases the squad member's HP and damage output by 6% per level, to a maximum of +30%. If your squad member stubbornly refuses to level up its offensive tactics, this is your next best option. It's half as much damage and the HP doesn't matter, but if it's the best you got, it's the best you got. Damage is king.
- **Independent:** Increases the squad member's HP, damage mitigation, and damage output by 4% per level up to a maximum of +20%. Again, damage is the only stat that actually matters, and this is only a third as good as offensive, but RNG can be cruel so if this is your biggest damage boost, so be it. Every squad member starts off with one level of independent by default.
- **Defensive:** Increases the squad member's damage mitigation and HP by 6% per level up to a maximum of +30%. WORTHLESS GARBAGE, DO NOT USE. In case you haven't been absorbing my words, DAMAGE OUTPUT IS ALL THAT MATTERS. This does not boost damage output at all, so it's completely and utterly pointless. Every squad member starts off with a level of independent, so there is absolutely NO situation where defensive is your best option. NEVER USE THIS.

Command Missions:

All Grand Companies have the same selection of missions. In fact, the squadron system is EXACTLY the same across the Grand Companies, and they even travel with you if you switch companies. The only difference is that your squadron members can wear GC-specific gear, so if you want to dress them up, that may affect your choice of GC.

Note: Main Scenario dungeons have all been made available to run with duty support, and some things have changed about them as a result. I'll admit some laziness in not running each one with the squad to check each and every little change, but they can

(Current as of game version 7.1)

ONLY get easier, so it's probably fine. **Non-MSQ Dungeons are being updated one by one in 7.X and beyond, so updates to those will take a while.**

The available command missions are as follows, with ratings for how smooth they tend to go based on my personal experience:

- **Halatali (lvl 20) - Updated in 7.1**
 - Rewards 4500 squadron experience and costs 1000 GC seals
 - **Rating: Decent** - A straightforward dungeon with straightforward bosses. The first two bosses don't pose any threat to you or your squad even if you get hit by AOE's. You will need to redirect your squad's target on the last boss when he goes invincible, as letting the fireball add reach the boss now does quite a lot of damage to you. Still, not too hard to handle if you stay on your toes!
- **The Thousand Maws of Toto-Rak (lvl 24) - Updated in 6.1**
 - Rewards 5400 squadron experience and costs 1200 GC seals
 - **Rating: Good** - Toto-rak used to be the most tedious dungeon in the game despite not being too dangerous. Now it's been updated to be very clean and straightforward. With simple bosses, it's a smooth, fast run with the squad, guaranteed!
- **Brayflox's Longstop (lvl 32) - Updated in 6.1**
 - Rewards 7200 squadron experience and costs 1600 GC seals
 - **Rating: Good** - Another fairly straightforward dungeon. You can pull a lot of trash at once between bosses if you want, but just be careful and you should be fine. The final boss used to be a bit more difficult, but now it's just dodging ground AOE's, no sweat.
- **The Stone Vigil (lvl 41) - Updated in 6.1**
 - Rewards 9000 squadron experience and costs 2000 GC seals
 - **Rating: Decent** - There's a lot of trash to go through and the squad will get hit by the stunning tornadoes the second boss throws out, but the danger overall is minimal if you don't go crazy on the pulls.
- **Dzemaal Darkhold (lvl 44)**
 - Rewards 9900 squadron experience and costs 2200 GC seals
 - **Rating: Bad** - Messy trash pulls, an AWFUL first boss, and a tedious final boss make this an annoying dungeon for squadrons. The first boss can be simplified if you tank, but it's still not a smooth ride overall. Has been

updated to be slightly less messy between the first and second bosses, but it's still pretty bad.

- **The Aurum Vale (lvl 47)**
 - Rewards 10800 squadron experience and costs 2400 GC seals
 - **Rating: Meh** - The squadron is immune to the stacking poison mechanics from the first and last bosses, and aren't threatened by the damage the second boss puts out if you don't bait attacks their way. But the trash pulls can get sticky if you aren't careful, and the squad is NOT immune to bad breath. Could be worse, but far from simple.
- **The Wanderer's Palace (lvl 50)**
 - Rewards 11250 squadron experience and costs 2500 GC seals
 - **Rating: Decent** - The squad won't help you at all with the many oils and levers and throat stabbings, but the trash and the bosses don't pose much threat.
- **Pharos Sirius (lvl 50)**
 - Rewards 11250 squadron experience and costs 2500 GC seals
 - **Rating: 🤢 TERRIBLE 🤢** - Trash pulls and the last two bosses are mostly fine. The first and second bosses are NIGHTMARES with the squad though. You have to be VERY careful to not let things spiral out of control, and even then, you need some luck.
- **Copperbell Mines (Hard) (lvl 50)**
 - Rewards 11250 squadron experience and costs 2500 GC seals
 - **Rating: Bad** - Three bosses with unique mechanics that your squad will not help with. Not as much of a death spiral as Pharos Sirius, but still a pain to handle all on your own.
- **Brayflox's Longstop (Hard) (lvl 50)**
 - Rewards 11250 squadron experience and costs 2500 GC seals
 - **Rating: Decent** - The bosses have some unique mechanics to deal with, but they also have shallow health pools so they go down quick. The trash can be murderous if you pull big, but perfectly manageable otherwise.
- **The Wanderer's Palace (Hard) (lvl 50)**
 - Rewards 11250 squadron experience and costs 2500 GC seals
 - **Rating: Bad** - Once again, the bosses have unique and deadly mechanics that your squad will be little help for. The first boss's room-wide fire

damage is especially hard to manage and the last boss has a doom mechanic that you need to be fully healed to stop. Doable, but tedious.

- **Sohm AI (lvl 53) - Updated in 6.2**
 - Rewards 12600 squadron experience and costs 2800 GC seals
 - **Rating: Good** - Finally a simple dungeon! The first boss can't eat your squad but it can eat you, so watch out. The second boss can do high damage but probably won't kill you if you keep your health up. The last boss drops meteors only on you, so stay on the move and tell your squad to attack her wings when she goes invincible.
- **The Vault (lvl 57)**
 - Rewards 13500 squadron experience and costs 3000 GC seals
 - **Rating: ✨GREAT✨** - You *can* die if you go crazy on the trash pulls, but that's about it. The bosses' special attacks won't do much to the squad, so this is probably the easiest higher-level dungeon to run. The final boss's chains are easy to deal with, and since he goes untargetable for his add phase, the squad will automatically target the fireball adds.
- **The Fractal Continuum (lvl 60)**
 - Rewards 15750 squadron experience and costs 3500 GC seals
 - **Rating: Good** - One of two level 60 dungeons you can do. The massive trash pull between bosses 1 and 2 can easily kill you, but it IS possible to pull everything at once and survive, if you want to risk it. Other than that though, the bosses are easy and the other trash is pretty simple even when pulling multiple packs.
- **Pharos Sirius (Hard) (lvl 60)**
 - Rewards 15750 squadron experience and costs 3500 GC seals
 - **Rating: Good** - The other option for a level 60 dungeon. It's probably just a little tiny bit harder than Fractal Continuum, with more dangerous big trash pulls and a second boss than *can* wombo-combo you instantly to death if you're reckless and unlucky... but it also gives slightly better loot drops, so it evens out, in my opinion. Note: conjurers and arcanists may attempt to heal the walls in the last trash room of the dungeon.

Note: You only have to have the dungeon unlocked to do the command mission for it. You do not have to have completed the dungeon beforehand.

(Current as of game version 7.1)

Conclusion:

There you have it, my compiled thoughts and observations from years of running command missions with my squad. Some final notes:

- Replacing a squad member replaces their battle tactics gains too, so try to make sure you have everyone you want in your squad *before* grinding command missions. Some squad members can be tough to find (RNG, baby), so good luck!
- Though command missions cost GC seals, you get all the same gear drops you normally get from the dungeon and there's a challenge for doing 3 command missions in a week that gives you 5000 GC seals, so you can easily make a GC seal profit from these if you turn in the loot, especially with a seal booster (which you can earn from squadron missions!).
- You can run command missions even if your squad is undertaking a squadron mission too, so long as you can fulfill the standard light party composition with the four remaining members. If you plan on running both simultaneously, be mindful of who you send away!
- Chemistry bonuses can apply to command missions if the requirements are met, but the rewards are pretty miniscule compared to squadron missions, so don't worry about it.
- There is no reward for maxing out a squadron. This is just for personal satisfaction. That may change in the future, but for now, it's just a quaint little in-game distraction if you don't have anything else you would rather do.

Thanks for reading!

