

"BIG SKIRMISHES/SMALL BATTLES"

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Rules for old wargamers with short attention spans. Inspired by Sharp Practice and Muskets & Tomahawks

What you need : Toy soldiers, lots of D6s, "Smoke" (cotton wool balls) and "Disorder" markers.

GENERAL RULE : *If in any doubt, the Umpire has the final say. If there is no umpire, then dice for it.*

Organization :

Units consist of 10-16 Infantry, 8-12 Cavalry or a Gun with 4 crew (and a team of horses, if available).

Troops can be rated as **Elite, Average or Raw**. *Artillery and Indians are always "Average"*.

Skirmishers, Guns & Cavalry always operate as single units. Infantry units may also combine into a

"Formation" (Line, Attack Column or Square) of at least 2 units – this gives them a bonus in Morale and any Disorders & Kills (see Firing & Hand to Hand, p2) are normally shared out amongst the units.

Line = 2 ranks, Attack Column = 4+ ranks, Square = a compact mass, Skirmishers = about 1 inch apart

Characters *(always have fewer Characters than units. 2 Characters per Player is usually about right)*

Give every Character a name and a Class = as set out in the scenario or Roll 2D6 per Character :-

2,3,4 : Class 1 (**Duffer**). 1 activation per turn *(some officers fall into this category!)*

4-8 : Class 2 (**Professional**). 2 activations per turn *(this covers most officers and all NCOs)*

9-11 : Class 3 (**Leader**). 2 activations per turn *(you can't have more than 2 on a side)*

12 : Class 4 (**Hero**). 2 activations per turn *(rare birds! Never more than 1 on a side)*

When a Character's card is drawn (see Turn Sequence) he can activate and give orders to a unit within his command range. (eg *"Rifles advance & fire!"*). He can then activate another unit (unless he's a Duffer). He can't give an order to a unit which is under the command of a superior officer.

His **Command Range** is his Class x 3 ins. ie 3, 6, 9 or 12 inches, measured to the nearest man.

A Character can join a unit and then move with it or move alone by his Class x 4ins (x8ins mounted).

Joining a unit will make it fight better, but doing so will put the Character in harm's way...

Turn Sequence *Start the game off by simply moving units alternately until the first shot. Then :-*

The order of play is by drawing cards from a pack made up of :-

1 x named **Character Card** for each of the Characters on the Red side and on the Blue side

2 x **Pause Cards** and a number of "**Bonus Cards**", namely:-

1 x **Free Action Card** : a single free action by any unit (eg a loaded unit may fire)

1 x **Joker Card** : 1 Free re-roll of a single dice or a hand of dice at some time this turn.

1 x **Dummy Card** : to keep your opponent guessing that you might really have something...

1 or more **Special Effect Cards** to trigger something specific to the scenario (where appropriate).

Dice for which side gets a Bonus Card when it is drawn (Even=Red, Odd=Blue). You can use it as soon as it is drawn or save it for later in the turn, then play it to interrupt the normal sequence.

•**When the 1st Pause card is drawn**, fight any Combats continuing from the previous turn.

•**When the 2nd Pause card is drawn**, discard any unused bonus cards -any drawn afterwards don't count.

A Character whose card is drawn after that can only activate one unit – a Duffer can't activate anything!

•**After all cards have been drawn, fight Hand to Hand combats, then test Morale. Finally, any Infantry or Artillery unit that was not activated this turn can re-load without orders. RE-SHUFFLE THE FULL DECK.**

Actions :

A unit can be activated only once per turn but it can then take 2 actions. Choose from :-

•**Move** : *a unit is more likely to obey a move order if the Character joins it : "Come on boys!"*

•**Change Formation** : *a simple, shouted order : "Form square! Cavalry coming!"*

•**Fire** : *if a Character joins a unit it will shoot better : "Shoot straight you B*****s!"*

•**Re-Load** : *a unit takes a smoke marker when it fires. Take it off when it re-loads. Rifles take 2 actions to re-load, so take 2 smoke markers. You can tap-load a rifle in one action but it then fires as a musket.*

•**Skirmish** (only Elite Infantry can do this) Half of them fire (take a black smoke marker) and half re-load

•**Rally off 1 Disorder**. A Character **must** join a unit for it to do this: **"Close the ranks there, d**n you!"**

•**Un-limber a gun or limber-up.**

Reaction

If a unit is attacked, dice for it to react in self-defence (Elite +1, Raw -1, already activated this turn -1).

On a score of 4+ : **all troops** can about face & evade 1 move, **loaded troops** can fire at short range,

Cavalry can counter-charge and **Infantry** can form a square (of at least 2 units) against Cavalry.

Firing : all troops start off loaded. Take a smoke marker whenever they fire. Bows don't need re-loading! Measure the range from the front centre of the firing unit to the front centre of the target unit (instead of measuring between individuals). But any men firing must have Line of Sight to part of the target.

- Count the number of men firing (gunners count double) in up to 2 ranks.
- Take off the number of disorders on the unit & add the Class of a Character who has joined the unit.
- Then halve this score vs a target in cover and vs Skirmishers, add a quarter vs a Column or Square.
- Roll the final total x dice (any ½s round down for Raw troops, up for others).

At Long Range : (Bow n/a, Carbine 6-12 ins, Musket = 9-18ins, Rifle = 12-24 ins, Gun = 18-36ins): **6s hit.**

At Short Range : (Bow & Carbine 0-6 ins, Musket = 0-9 ins, Rifle = 0-12ins, Gun = 9-18ins) : **5s&6s hit.**

At Canister Range : (a Gun firing at less than 9ins) : **4s,5s & 6s hit.**

For a unit's 1st shot, or whenever Riflemen shoot, re-roll any 1s (once).

Roll all hits again : 1/2 = no effect, 3/4 = Take a Disorder marker, 5/6 = a Kill (lose a figure)

Movement

Skirmishers move 8 ins, Lines 4 ins, Columns 6ins, (Columns on a road or charging move 8 ins).

Cavalry move 10 ins (charging 16ins). Limbered guns move 6 ins – or you can manhandle them 2ins.

To “about face” takes ¼ move per rank (so Skirmishers take ¼ move, a 2-deep line takes ½ move, etc)

Lose 1 inch per Disorder when advancing. Bad going = ½ speed (n/a Indians, Skirmishers lose 2ins).

NB: a unit can do 2 moves if it uses both its actions to move – but only 1 move can be at the charge rate.

A unit ordered to **move without a Character** joining it must roll a dice : it moves only half distance for a roll of 1 or 2. A unit of Raw Troops or Indians that rolls a 1 doesn't move at all (*they need to be led!*).

Hand to Hand Combats (*work these out as the last action in a turn, after all cards have been drawn*)

Once the combatants are in contact they are fixed in position and can't be reinforced or shot at.

- Count the number of men touching or overlapping an enemy, plus half of any behind them in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th ranks (n/a if attacked in flank/rear). Cavalrymen count 1½ vs Infantry who are not in square.
- Take off the number of Disorders on the unit & add the Class of a Character who has joined the unit.
- Roll the final total x dice (any ½s round down for Raw troops, up for others):

- Hit for **4/5/6**, or **3/4/5/6** if charging (n/a Cavalry vs a Square) or **5/6** if attacking a defended obstacle.

Roll all hits again : 1/2 = no effect, 3/4 = Take a Disorder marker, 5/6 = a Kill. (Indians re-roll any 1s).

The side suffering the most **Kills** in the Combat is the loser and must test its Morale. Note that Kills and Disorders may also force the winner to test (see Morale, below).

If neither side is routed or forced to retreat or if it was a draw the Combat continues – fight another round when **the first Pause card** is drawn on the next turn. Neither side has any advantage this time.

Risk to Characters (under fire or in hand to hand combat)

Roll a D6 every time a unit he is with takes one or more kills - on a roll of 1 he is wounded, and drops one Class (permanently). If this takes him down to 0 or less he is out of action – remove his card from the pack. *A Hero will always recover in time for the next game!*

Morale

Test Morale for a unit/formation a) **immediately**, when it loses a round of Hand to Hand Combat OR b) **at the end of a turn** when it has more hits (disorders & kills) on it than it has men left standing.

Roll 2D6s. Elite troops +1, Raw troops -1, Indians -2. A formation can re-roll one of the dice.

A unit or formation with a “Hero” or “Leader” Character can re-roll one or both of the dice.

Total : 8+ = OK- carry on, **5/6/7 = the Unit** (and any Character with it) immediately backs off 1 move,

4 or less = Routed! Take the unit (& any Duffer with it) off the table. Other Characters back off 1 move.

Hide & Seek :

Troops are spotted a) automatically in the open when they are in Line of Sight of any enemy OR

b) at 6 ins in dense cover (woods & buildings), at 12 ins in light cover, or when they fire from any cover.

Activate any Dummy units that start the game in cover using the Dummy or Special Effect cards.