

# **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) and "Disorder" markers.**

**GENERAL RULE :** *In case of any dispute, the Umpire has the final say. If there is no Umpire, then dice for it.*

## **ORGANIZATION :**

Units of about a dozen Infantry/Cavalry or a Gun & 4 crew. (*Standard-size units are easiest to manage*).

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

**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 of these 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 "*Grenadiers advance & fire!*").

He can then activate another unit (unless he's a Duffer).

He can't give an order to a unit which has been joined by 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 on his own 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 determined by drawing cards from a deck 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 set of "**Bonus Cards**", namely:-

1 x **Free Action Card** : a single free action by any unit eg fire (if loaded ) or move once.

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 1<sup>st</sup> Pause card is drawn**, fight any Combats continuing from the previous turn.

•**When the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 the cards have been drawn: 1. Any Infantry or Artillery not activated this turn can fire or re-load without orders. 2. Fight Hand to Hand combats.**

**3. Test Morale. 4. 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 such as : "**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 they take 2 smoke markers. *You can tap-load a rifle in one action instead, but it then fires as a musket.*

•**Skirmish by Pairs** (Elite Light Infantry only) 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).

For 4+ : **all troops** can about face & evade 1 move, **loaded troops** can fire at short range, **Cavalry** can counter-charge.

**FIRING** : all troops start off loaded. Take a smoke marker whenever they fire. No need to re-load bows!

- 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 against 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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!*).

## **RISK TO CHARACTERS (under fire or in hand to hand)**

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!*

**HAND TO HAND COMBATS** (*work these out at the end of a turn, after all cards have been drawn*)

Once engaged, the opponents are locked in combat and they 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 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> ranks (n/a if attacked in flank/rear). Cavalrymen count 1½ vs any 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 (only Columns & Cavalry can charge - Cavalry can't charge a Square) or 5/6 if attacking a defended obstacle.

**Roll all hits again** (Indians re-roll 1s)

**1/2 = no effect, 3/4 = Take a Disorder marker**

**5/6 = a Kill (lose a figure)**

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.

**MORALE** *Keep track of a unit's “Morale Tally” - the current number of hits (Disorders & Kills) it has on it.*

**Test Morale** for a unit or formation a) **immediately**, if it loses a round of Hand to Hand Combat

b) **at the end of any turn** when its Morale Tally is higher than the number of men left standing in the unit.

**Roll 2D6s.** A unit with a “Hero” or “Leader” Character, or any units in a “Formation” may re-roll one dice.

Elite Troops may re-roll 1s, Raw+Indians **must** re-roll 6's.

**For a total = or higher than its Tally the unit is OK.**

If the total is **lower** : the Unit (& any Character with it) immediately backs off 1 move and take a disorder.

**BUT for a roll of 4 or less** : the unit ROUTS! Remove it (& any Duffer with it). Other Characters get a free 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.