

Blown Away

Chance version

Simple rules for musket-era battles with toy soldiers

Setup - encounter scenario

Each side should have a deck of cards, the same number of men and artillery pieces, and one commander. Players place 4 objectives, such as a small hill, walled field, bridge, and village, across an 8 foot long table, near the middle. Optimally, each player writes his setup arrangement of troops on a piece of paper before placing them on the table, so that one player is not reacting to the other's setup. Units may have any number of men in them, but may be of only one type (infantry, cavalry, or artillery). However, different types of infantry may be in the same unit (such as pikemen and musketeers). Officers, drummers, and flag bearers are included as members of a unit. Units of 10 cavalymen, 4 artillerymen, and 13 infantrymen (10 soldiers plus a command element of an officer, drummer, and flag bearer) work well. Once they are assigned to a unit, men must remain part of that unit for the rest of the game. Units may be placed up to 7 inches from the player's own rear edge of the table. After setting up, players flip a coin to determine who moves first.

Course of play

Move or rally, and move commander
Fire long-range artillery
Conduct combats

Turns alternate. Each turn, a player may do one thing. He may move one unit or rally one unit. He may also move his commander any distance. Then he may fire any or all of his long-range artillery, and conduct combats with any or all of his engaged units. A player is never required to move, fire, or conduct combat if he does not choose to.

Moving

Infantry and artillery may move up to 6 inches (exception: artillery prior to 1750 may not move); cavalry may move up to 12 inches. A unit with all its remaining men "in ranks" (not running) may pivot on the center man in the front rank any number of degrees (artillery pivot on the cannon axle), then move forward. A column will follow the front men like a snake, while a line will remain rigid. Units may move obliquely forward up to 45 degrees. They must stop when any of their men are less than 4 inches from, and facing or being faced by, enemy troops. Units may pass closer than 1 inch by enemy troops when neither side is facing the other. Units may pass through friendly troops. A unit may change formation and the direction it is facing, but may not move that turn. A unit engaged in combat with an enemy unit may not pivot or move. Nor may units move if they have both men in ranks and men running. Units with no men still in ranks (all remaining are running) may move in any direction as an unorganized mob up to 18 inches, but may not pass closer than 6 inches from enemy troops. If a unit encounters an enemy unit that has all running men, the running unit is moved away 18 inches by

the owning player, and the moving unit completes its move. Running units unable to go the entire 18 inches are eliminated.

Rallying

A player may rally a unit if 1) it has at least one man remaining in ranks and none are 6 inches or less from any enemy men in ranks who are facing them, or 2) it has no men in ranks and all of its running men are 24 inches or more from any enemy men in ranks facing any direction. In the first case, the unit may return to ranks as many men who are already in ranks. For example, if a unit of 15 has 3 men in ranks, 3 killed, and 9 running, it may rally 3 of the running men. Next turn it may rally the remaining 6 running men, if the player decides that is the one thing he wants to do with his turn, because it will then have 6 men in ranks. In the second case, the unit may rally 1 man if the commander is next to the unit. Thereafter, rallying proceeds as in the first case (rallying 1, then 2, then 4, etc.) if the player decides that is the one thing he wants to do with each of his turns. Thus rallying a unit with no men in ranks takes longer than a unit with men in ranks. Artillery gunners that have run 6 inches from their cannon return to it when they rally. If they have run farther, after they rally they must be moved back to their cannon, 6 inches per turn, before they can fire it again.

Long-range artillery

After moving or rallying one unit, the moving player may (if he chooses) fire long-range artillery. Each artillery piece gets 4 cannon balls (represented by markers such as black marbles) at the start of the game. It may fire at any enemy unit in a clear line of sight between 4 and 36 inches away and 45 degrees left or right of its boresight. One man is killed in the target unit. He is put in the storage tray, unless the target unit is engaged in combat, in which case the killed man is left where he fell. No men run when a unit is hit by long range artillery. Only one artillery gunner is needed to fire a cannon. When it fires, the artillery piece eliminates 1 cannon ball marker if the target unit is in the open or in soft cover such as woods; if the target unit is behind a wall, eliminate 2 cannon ball markers; if the target unit is behind a redoubt or in a trench, eliminate 3 markers. An artillery piece without enough markers may not fire.

Combat

Combat is between all types of opposing units (infantry, cavalry, artillery) that are less than 4 inches apart, with at least one of the opposing units facing the other. The moving player may choose whether or not to conduct a combat with a particular unit of his. He may only conduct combat once per turn with each of his units, but an opposing unit can be engaged by more than one unit. Cavalry may not conduct combat against an enemy unit behind a redoubt, wall, in woods, or in a trench.

To conduct a combat, each player turns up the top card in their deck. An infantry or artillery unit defending behind a redoubt, wall, or in a trench adds 3 to their card. If one card is higher than the other (Ace = 1, Jack = 11, Queen = 12, King = 13), one enemy man is killed. The winning player gets to choose which one of the enemy men to kill and which one(s) will run. Normally, one man runs 6 inches to the rear (and faces to the rear) for each man killed in the fight thus far. So with the first man killed, one man

runs; when the second man in the unit is killed, two men run; when the third man is killed, three men run; etc. To keep track, leave killed men on the field until the engagement is over. While engaged in combat with an enemy unit, men killed by long-range artillery are included in the count. When an artillery unit is in combat, the cannon never runs; the gunners do.

If both cards are equal in value, both sides "win" the combat. Each side loses a man killed, and the number who run is based on the number of men already killed in each unit; these are selected by the opposing, not owning, player.

A unit's command element, consisting of a flag bearer, commanding officer, and other special figures such as drummers, may not be killed or made to run until they are the only ones left in ranks. Of these, the flag bearer must be the last to go.

Special combat situations

When artillery wins a combat, one enemy man is killed and the number of men who run is equal to the number on the winning card, so up to 10 men may be caused to run (Jack, Queen, and King each cause 4 men to run). Always use the face value of the card for the number of men who run, even when defending behind a redoubt, wall, or in a trench.

A win by cavalry causes 1 more man to run than would normally.

A unit with any pikemen or guardsmen left in it after taking a casualty has 1 less man run than would normally.

A militia unit has 2 more men run than would normally after taking a casualty.

A win by a unit attacking the flank or rear of an enemy unit causes 4 more enemy men to run than would normally.

End of engagement

An engagement usually lasts more than one turn. While it continues, each side may involve additional units. An engagement is over when one or both players have no men in ranks remaining in that particular fight. Return all killed men to the storage tray. Note that as men are killed or run, remaining men in ranks may be more than 4 inches from the enemy they are engaged with. Regardless, the units remain engaged until it is over.

Re-engaging before rallying is complete

A unit may have finished an engagement, leaving it with both men in ranks and men running, and its dead removed to the storage tray. If the unit is engaged in combat by an enemy unit before the unit has rallied all of its running men, calculations for the new fight proceed normally: with the first man killed, one man runs; when the second man in the unit is killed, two men run; when the third man is killed, three men run; etc. (taking into account special types like pikemen, guardsmen, and cavalry). The unit will, of

course, have less depth because it began the fight with fewer men in ranks; some were already running.

Winning an encounter scenario

As soon as men in ranks of one side completely occupy, or were the last to occupy, three of the four objectives, that player wins. Having been the last ones to pass through an objective counts as being the last to occupy; a garrison does not need to hold an objective.

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