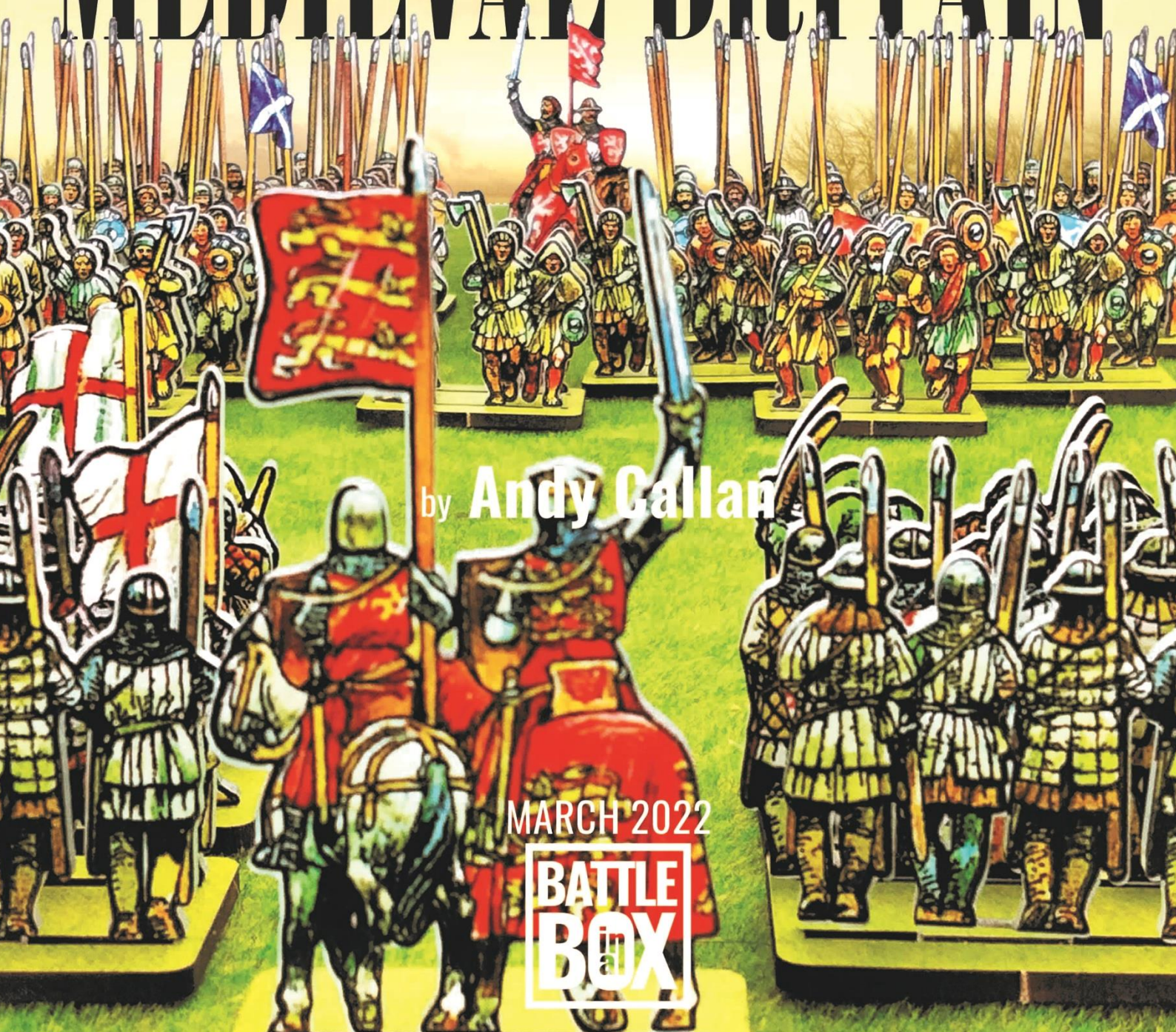


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STARTERPACK RULES

BATTLES IN MEDIEVAL BRITAIN



by **Andy Callan**

MARCH 2022

**BATTLE
BOX**

illustrations by Peter Dennis

War-gaming on a tabletop battlefield with miniature figurines is an attractive and absorbing hobby. But until now, it has always presented a newcomer with the daunting prospect of spending weeks, if not months, in painting the armies before they are ready for action. As a result, many people lose interest before they ever get to play a game.

WoFun miniatures now offer a revolutionary solution to this problem. The figurines come ready-printed in full color, and all you have to do is simply press them from their sprue and slot them into their bases. No paints, no glue – all the hard work has already been done for you!

Best of all, a ready to use 28mm WoFun regiment costs less than a similar number of unpainted hard plastic miniatures and is far cheaper than metal castings. The 18mm scale troops are even more economical.

So now you can buy affordable, battle-ready armies and get straight down to wargaming action.

As someone who has spent more than fifty years of his life enjoying war-gaming – painting armies, fighting battles and writing my own rules – I was interested to learn about this brilliant technical breakthrough which could open up the hobby to a new audience.

So, I was very happy to be asked to contribute to the WoFun project by writing a series of rules for download by customers. They are aimed specifically at gamers who have never played a historical wargame before and are designed as a simple introduction to the hobby, to get players used to the idea of battlefield manoeuvres and rolling dice to decide combat.

As WoFun launches additional products, I will be writing rules in this style for each new historical collection, and I look forward to working on this exciting collaboration.

BATTLES IN MEDIEVAL BRITAIN

In the late 13th- and early 14th centuries, King Edward 1 and his successors fought a series of campaigns with the objective of bringing both Wales and Scotland under the control of the English crown. Despite their best efforts they failed and the Welsh and Scots maintained their independence – for the time being at least. Bannockburn (1314) is the most famous victory in Scottish history but, in defeat, the English learned

tactical lessons which were to serve them well in future battles. For the next two centuries English armies, using a powerful combination of dismounted Men-at-Arms and Longbowmen would win a series of major battlefield successes against the Scots and French.

These wargames rules are designed for the wars in Wales and Scotland but they can also be used for contemporary battles in Europe and the early years of the Hundred Years War. They are suitable for beginners to the hobby of historical tabletop wargaming and have been specially written for the WoFun Miniatures Peter Dennis Signature Collection.

This two-player game sets out to re-create the battles of this period in a quick and simple way. After the basic rules you will find some suggestions for a more advanced and challenging game.

Each player needs an army (see below for an example of a small battle) a handful of dice (the ordinary, 6-sided kind) a pack of ordinary Playing Cards, and a ruler or tape measure.

All measurements in these rules are expressed in “base widths” (BW) so they can be used with any scale of miniatures. A 28mm scale WoFun base is 4cms wide or 3cms in 18mm scale.

Andy Callan



Starter Pack - Battle

A base of Close Order Infantry (Spearmen or Archers) has 2 ranks of 4 figurines

A base of Open Order Infantry Skirmishers has 3 -4 figurines in 2 ranks

A base of Mounted Knights has 1 rank of 3 figurines

A base of Light Cavalry has 3 figurines in 2 ranks.

The English army is organised as follows:

2 companies of Knights, each with 6 bases

2 companies of Archers, each with 6 bases

2 companies of Spearmen, each with 6 bases

1 mounted Army Commander and his standard-bearer.



The Army has a total strength of 36 bases, not including the Commander.

The Scottish army is organised in a different way:

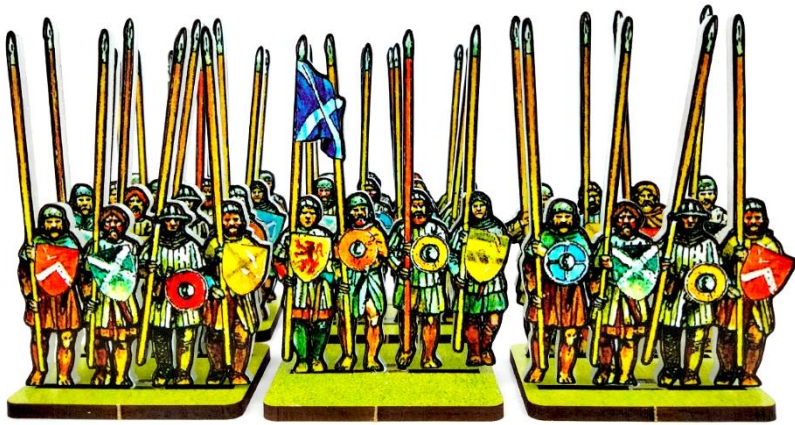
2 large companies of Spearmen, each of 12 bases.

1 company of Skirmishers, of 6 bases

1 company of Light Horse, of 6 bases

1 mounted Army Commander and his standard-bearer.

The Army has a total strength of 36 bases, not including the Commander.



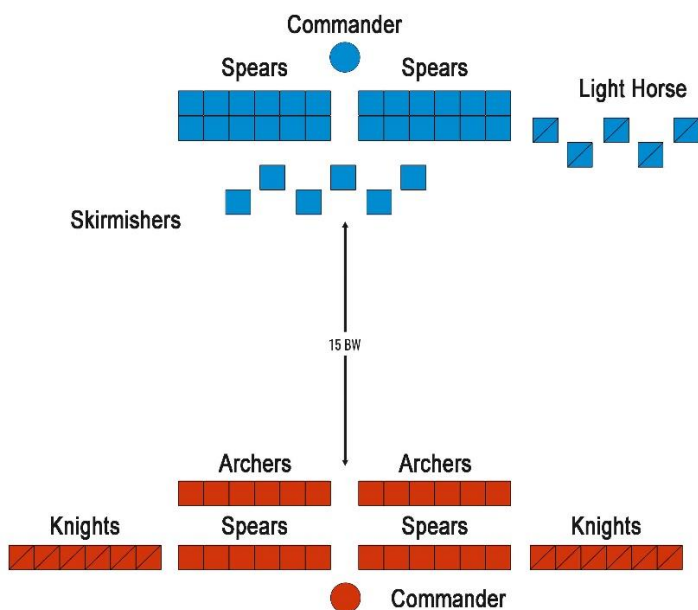


GET READY TO START THE BATTLE.

Set up the two armies, facing each other and at least 12 BW apart (so, this is 48cms in 28mm scale or 36cms in 18mm). See the diagram below for a typical starting line-up but you can choose to arrange your troops in any way you like – you are in command!

Usually this will be a cavalry force, such as the King’s Household, in the case of a Royal Army.

Deploy the opposing armies at least 12 base widths (12BW) apart.



2. Troop types

Each Division is made up of a number of different types of troops:

Missile troops: Archers, Crossbowmen or Skirmishers (armed with javelins, light bows & knives).

Cavalry: Knights and Light Horse

Spearmen: Infantry with various types of pole-arms. Scottish and Welsh Spearmen used extra-long spears, referred to here as ‘pikes’.

1. Organization and Deployment

Organize your Armies into “Battles” (Divisions), each of roughly equal size. A small engagement might consist of just one Division a side (like in the case of our “Starter Pack”) but usually there are three - the Vanguard, Main Battle and Rearguard. Sometimes an army might have a smaller fourth Reserve Division.

3. Units

The troops in each Division form one or two companies of each of these three troop types. So each Division can have up to 6 companies (but some armies don’t always have all 3 troop types) and each army can have up to 20 (6 per Division, plus a Reserve of 1 or 2). Each company should be at least 6 bases strong. It is best to have all your companies the same size (or double-sized in the case of a big “Schiltron” of Scottish Spearmen) to make record-keeping easier.

Having some troops in 2 small companies rather than 1 big one will give you more tactical options but these smaller units are weaker in combat and less resilient to losses.

4. Army Strength

Count up the number of bases in each division and in the Army as a whole and make a note of these totals - it will be important later for deciding victory and defeat (see Section 13).

5. Order of play in a turn

At the end of each turn the Players roll dice to see which side will have the Initiative -the choice of taking the first action next turn. The winner takes the Initiative marker (use a coin or other token).

Use a set of 6 red playing cards, 2 x Jacks/Knaves, 2x Kings, 1 Queen and 1 Ace.

In the case of a tied roll the side which has the least number of stands in its "dead pool" takes it. Within each turn there are six Actions, which always take place in the following sequence: -

1. 1st Missile action. One side's Missile Troops take an action, then those of the other side. (Jack = J for javelins etc)

2. 1st Cavalry action. One side's Cavalry take an action, then the other side. (King = K for knights)

3. Spearmen action. One side's Spearmen takes an action, then the other side. (Queen = Infantry is 'the queen of the battlefield')



4. 2nd Missile action. One side's Missile Troops take an action, then the other side. (another Jack)

5. 2nd Cavalry action. One side's Cavalry take an action, then the other side. (another King)

6. Battle Management: Check Morale (see Section 11) then dice for Initiative. (Ace = A for administration)

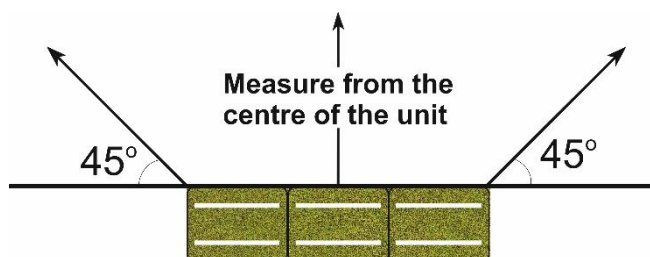
Missile Troops can do any **two** actions in a full turn, choosing from a) Move (Advance or Manoeuvre) or b) Shoot. So they can shoot twice, move twice, move & shoot or shoot & move. Crossbows can shoot only once a turn. Skirmishers can move & shoot (or shoot & move) and count this as only **one** action. A "Rally" (see 7, below) is a free action for all Missile Troops.

Cavalry can do any 2 of a) Move b) Charge or c) Rally (this is a free action for Light Horse)

Spearmen can do only 1 action: a) Move b) Charge or c) Rally.

6. Definition of Actions

Moves: Light Horse move up to 10BW, Spearmen up to 6BW and all other troop up to 8BW. **Advance:** Move a unit forward either straight ahead or up to 45 degrees forward from the right or left of its front corner (see diagram A)



Manoeuvre: A move in any direction other than forwards - such as sideways or backwards or 'wheeling' to face a new direction. All troops except Skirmishers or Light Horse move no more than HALF their usual maximum distance

Charge: When **Knights** charge, in order to get the charge bonus in Melee (see Section 9) they must move straight ahead, at least 3 BW and not pass through any friendly troops or cross any obstacle on

the way. Once a unit of Knights has charged twice in the course of a battle their horses become “blown”. After that they can still attack the enemy, but they don’t get any charge bonus.

When **Spearmen** charge into Melee they must move at least 2 BW and not pass through any friends or cross any obstacle. They only get the charge bonus once in an battle.

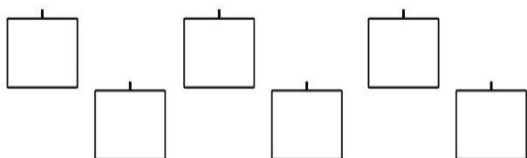
A Charge must always be declared before you move the unit. Otherwise a forward movement which ends with the unit touching the enemy is simply a “move to engage” and gets no charge bonus.

Rally: Re-order the bases in a company in any way either a) to close up any gaps in the formation caused by previous losses OR b) recover from disorder (re-align the bases). Roll a dice and successfully rally for anything except a 1.



7. Formations

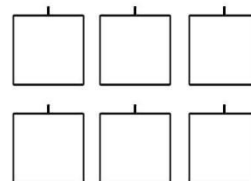
Open order: Used only by Missile Troops, Skirmishers and Light Horse. Missile troops usually deploy in front of, or beside, other troops in their Division. They can shoot both ranks at a target in range (measure from the front rank). Open order troops can move at full speed in bad going. They can pass through any friendly troops who are in line or open order (& vice versa).



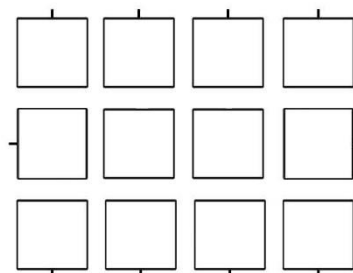
Line: Cavalry, Spearmen Archers & Crossbows. Lines can pass through each other but must then halt.



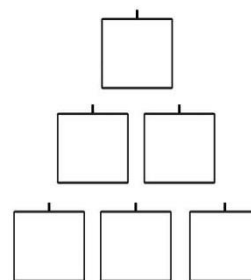
Block: Spearmen formed 2 bases deep. A Block of Spearmen counts 1 ½ ranks when fighting enemy to the front (Pikemen count both ranks) A Block which advances to continue the fight after winning a round of Melee can move up the 2nd rank bases to fill any gaps as part of the move action. In Melee (Section 10), the Enemy count internal overlaps against gaps in a Block but not overlaps on the ends of the formation. However, its flank and rear are vulnerable to attack.



Schiltron: The word is used here to describe a defensive Block of Pikemen, 3 bases deep. It can’t move but it has no flanks or rear. It counts 2 ranks fighting in any direction.



Herce: Used only by late period English Longbowmen (see Section 2.4) who can also deploy in Line or Block.



8. Shooting

Range is 10 BW for Archers and Crossbowmen, 3BW for Skirmishers (including a notional 'run-up').

The arc of fire for all troops is 45 degrees left or right (diagram A). The target priority is enemy who are

shooting at you. You can't shoot through friendly troops or into enemy engaged in Melee.
 Crossbowmen can do only one shooting action in a turn, because of their slow re-loading

Roll 1 dice per base shooting. **Hit for 5 ½ & 6.** (Re-roll 5s and hit if the 2nd roll is a 4,5 or 6).

Targets must make a **saving throw** for each hit suffered.

Knights and English or Scottish Spearmen save for 4, 5 or 6; all other troops save for 5 or 6. For each failed throw you lose one base. The shooting player chooses the first base lost each time and the target Player chooses the second. Continue alternating choices if more than two are lost.

Always put lost bases in the Division's dead pool.

A command base cannot be destroyed by shooting (fallen bodyguards are always replaced!) but the Commander himself might be at risk if a unit he is with takes losses (see section 12).

9. Melee

If a unit's move brings one or more of its bases into contact with an enemy, the two units must fight a round of Melee (close combat). Any remaining bases can keep moving up to the limit of their movement allowance in order to make contact further enemy bases (**see diagram**).

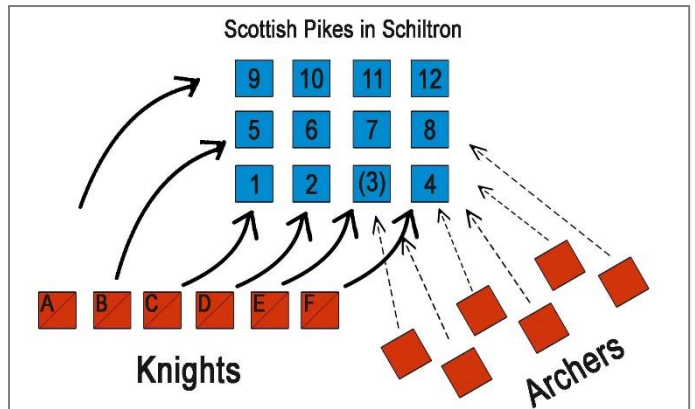
Light Horse or Missile Troops in open order can choose to evade an attack by running back immediately up to half a move (so Cavalry might still catch them!) as a free action but they then can't shoot again in the same turn. Skirmishers can only attack other skirmishers.

Count the number of bases touching or overlapping an enemy.

A Block of Spearmen also counts half of the bases in its second rank (round UP) vs any enemy in contact to their front. A Block of Pikemen counts both ranks of bases.

A Schiltron of Pikemen counts two ranks of bases vs enemy in contact in any direction and the enemy counts only **internal** overlaps against it (not any overlaps against the ends of the formation).

Apart from a Schiltron, any unit attacked or charged in its flank or rear can turn only 1 of its bases to face the enemy.



A large Scottish Schiltron is under attack from a mixed English force of Knights and Archers

In their first "Missile Action" of the turn the English Archers shot at the Scots and destroyed a base (number 3).

In the following Cavalry Action the Knights advance to engage the Schiltron, moving as far as they can to maximise the number of stands they bring into contact with an enemy stand. Note that since the first Cavalry action comes before the Spearmen Action, the Scots don't get the chance to Rally and close the gap left by the loss of base 3.

The Knights have 5 bases touching the enemy (A, B, C, D, F) and 1 internal overlap (E). So, they roll a total of 6 combat dice, hitting for 4,5,6. They did not move straight ahead so they do not get the charge bonus (which would have let them hit on 3s as well).

The Scots have 5 bases touching (1,2,4,5,9) and one overlap (5). In addition, since a Schiltron counts 2 ranks in contact with enemy in any direction, 10, 6 and 8 count as well giving them a total of 8 combat dice, hitting for 5 or 6.

Since cavalry need to beat infantry by at least 2 bases to continue the fight, the most likely outcome here is that the Knights will have to withdraw and try again later, perhaps with a better angle of approach that would enable them to charge. Meanwhile the Archers can keep shooting to try and open up some more gaps in the Schiltron.

All the Scots can do is grin and bear it, which might seem harsh, except that it is exactly what happened at the battle of Falkirk, in 1298. Their only option is to change formation to a Block so as to counter-attack, but this is risky, as the enemy can simply evade, it will expose their flanks and they would need to pass a "manoeuvre" test to change formation by rolling 4 or more – and if they roll a 1 they would fall into disorder!

Roll 1 dice per base or 1 dice per 2 disordered bases (round down).

In the 1st round of a Melee:

Knights who are charging hit for 3/4/5/6, Spearmen who are charging hit for 4/5/6.

Archers hit for 5 or 6 (representing their “closing fire”).

Other missile Troops hit for 6.

In later rounds and in any other circumstances:

Knights hit for 4, 5 or 6, Spearmen hit for 5 or 6, all other troops hit for 6.

In bad going (e.g. woods or marshes) Skirmishers hit for 5 or 6, all other troops hit only for 6.

Do **saving throws** as for Shooting, but Knights fighting any mounted troops save for 3+, since there are no foot soldiers trying to kill their horses.

Choose losses from amongst the bases in Melee, as for Shooting.

10. Results of Melee

If one side loses **more bases** than the other it is pushed back by the difference in base-widths, keeping any gaps caused by the losses. Any troops behind them are also pushed back.

If defeated by **4 bases or more** the losing side also becomes **disordered** (stagger the companies).

The Melee will continue in the next Action if either side moves back into contact.

If both sides lose **the same number** of bases they stay locked in combat and the fighting must continue in their next Action. Neither side can disengage.

Special cases:

Cavalry who fail to beat troops on foot by at least 2 bases must withdraw from the Combat. They make a free action, moving straight back one move and are disordered.

11. Morale

Put all lost bases into a “dead pool” (one for each Division). Any **Company** which has lost more than half of its original number of bases is **“worn out”**. It must retreat to behind a company of friendly Spearmen (if there are any in its division) and will take no further part in the fighting except to shoot in self-defence. If

any enemy move to engage it in Melee it must retreat off the table – put the bases straight in their “dead pool”. A company of **Spearmen** which has lost more than half its bases and has no friendly Spearmen to fall back on must retreat off-table immediately.

12. Commanders

The Army is led by a Commander-in-Chief, represented by a special “Command Base” with the great man, his personal standard and escort. He may lead a unit in a dire emergency. Each Division is led by a Commander, with a banner-bearer. If he is on horseback he may move up to 12BW at the start of a turn to lead a unit in his Division. This gives him the right to re-roll one of its dice, for any purpose (e.g. for a saving throw) once per Action.



He is **at risk** each time a unit he is leading loses more than 1 base in a Shooting or Melee Action. Roll 2 dice. He is wounded for a roll of 2 or 3 and can no-longer re-roll dice. If he is wounded again while on the losing side in a **Melee** he is **captured** and the battle is lost immediately, if he is the Commander in Chief.

13. Winning and losing

When an **English Division's** Knights retreat off the table the whole Division is defeated and all its other remaining troops must also retreat.

In the case of a **Scottish or Welsh Division** this happens when their Spearmen retreat off.

When a Division is defeated the opposing enemy division must pursue with all of its Light Horse, Archers and Skirmishers (if it has any). Only the troops who did not join the pursuit can now turn to fight

against a neighbouring enemy Division. An **army** is defeated a) when it has lost more than half of its original number of bases (so 19, in the case of the Starter pack armies)

OR b) when two of its Divisions have been defeated
OR c) when its Commander-in-Chief is captured or retreats off the table.

Advanced Rules

Once you have played these simple rules a few times you may wish to try something a little more challenging. The core rules are the same as before but now you have to deal with the added complexity of terrain features, issuing orders, new types of troops and some special tactics.

1. The day of battle

A day of battle lasts for up to 8 turns, named after the medieval canonical hours. These are **Matins** (dawn), **Prime** (early morning), **Terce** (late morning) **Sext** (mid-day - this is a special double-length turn) **None** (early afternoon) **Vespers** (late afternoon) and **Compline** (Dusk). One player records the passage of time using the 8 numbered black playing cards, including two 4s for the special double-length Sext 'hour' and the other Player keeps track of what is happening within each turn using the "Turn Order Chart" (see the cards - p5).

2. Terrain

Instead of a plain battlefield, some extra terrain features will make for a more interesting game. Unless you are going to reproduce the terrain of a historical action, one Player sets out the battlefield, then the other chooses which side of the table to deploy on.

Steep Hills: Except for those in open order, all troops who move on a steep hill must roll a dice each time they move and become disordered on a roll of 1. Cavalry cannot charge up them.

Low hills do not affect movement but Infantry cannot charge up them.

Archers on a hilltop can shoot over friendly troops below so long as the target is more than 2BW away from the nearest friends in the line of fire.

Bad Going: (Woods and marshes): Apart from infantry in open order all troops move only half their normal distance in bad going and always become disordered. Knights can't move at all in bad going so will never enter it voluntarily.

Streams, ditches and hedges as obstacles: Unless the difficulty of crossing a battlefield obstacle is agreed beforehand and known to both players, the first time a unit tries to cross it roll a dice:

4/5/6: Easy to cross. The unit gets to the other side this turn but this always ends its move.

2/3: Difficult. Cross this turn but get disordered OR treat it as easy to cross next turn if undefended.

1: Very difficult. Infantry can only cross it next turn and then get disordered. Impassable to Cavalry. The result obtained by the first unit rolling to cross an obstacle applies to any other unit trying to cross it



later in the battle.

Any obstacle is "easy to cross" for Infantry in open order - so they don't need to roll.

After crossing any obstacle, Spearmen or Knights must end their move (no matter how much they have already moved).

Field defences (wolf pits and caltrops)

These were sometimes prepared by an army on the defensive. Only reveal them the first time any troops (of either side!) pass through them. They can move only half distance and cannot charge.

Cover:

Missile troops lining the edge of a wood shoot normally but add 1 to their saving rolls when shot at. Troops previously hidden in a wood are in Ambush and hit for 4,5,6 the first time they shoot

Any troops **inside** a wood cannot be hit at all, except by shooters who are also inside it.

Crossbowmen with pavises count as in cover when shot at (save for 4,5,6). They move only 6BW.

3. Manoeuvres and orders

These armies did not have the training to carry out complicated battlefield **manoeuvres** so, except for Skirmishers or Light Horse (who can manoeuvre at will) you must always test to see if the unit understands and carries out a manoeuvre order. Roll a dice and score 4 or more, otherwise:

Knights will instead attack the nearest enemy and become disordered if you rolled a 1.

Archers and Crossbowmen will stand still and await another order.

Spearmen will also stand still but if you rolled a 1 they become **disordered**.

Roll a dice in the same way if you give an order to change formation (e.g. from Schiltron to Block).

Any unit which a Commander has joined can re-roll a failed order.

New Action: "Re-organize". Use this to re-form two depleted companies into a new, full strength unit. The Divisional or Army Commander must first join one of the companies and then move them together. The two companies must each be at least half-strength and the new unit cannot be any bigger than an original full-strength company (so, typically, if a company of 3 bases was combined with another with 4, the new unit would have only 6 bases). When two companies of Knights are combined, if either of them have already charged twice the new unit gets no charge bonuses.

4. Army Composition

English Armies

Should have roughly equal numbers of bases of Knights, Spearmen and Archers. Skirmishers,

Crossbowmen and Light Horse should each make up no more than one tenth of the army's bases.

Scottish Armies

Spearmen must make up at least two thirds of the army's bases. Knights, Light Horse, Archers, Crossbowmen and Skirmishers should each make up no more than one tenth of the bases.

Welsh armies

Spearmen and Archers must each make up at least one third of the bases in the army with the rest made up of Light Horse or Skirmishers. Welsh armies do not have Knights or Crossbowmen.

"Wee folk"

Bands of camp followers occasionally joined in the fighting (as at Bannockburn). They are only ever available to Welsh or Scottish armies fighting on 'home' territory as part of a special battle scenario



and will appear only when the initiative is won with a roll of 6. Any losses they take are ignored for Army morale purposes. They are activated at the same time as friendly Missile troops.

They move 6BW, hit for 6 and save for 6.

Later English Armies (1330 onwards)

In the decades after Bannockburn English armies learned the lessons of the Scottish wars to develop some new battle tactics, combining heavy Infantry with massed Longbowmen, which would bring them a series of great victories from Dupplin Moor (1332) to Agincourt (1415).

An English army of this later period should be almost entirely infantry-based, with Longbowmen (*we use this term to distinguish them from "Archers" because of their new tactical function, not because of any difference in weaponry*) outnumbering Knights on foot

and spearmen by AT LEAST two to one and other troop types numbering no more than one tenth of the total.

Longbowmen shoot massed 'arrowstorms', counting all the bases in the special 'Herce' formation or both ranks in a block and hitting for **5s & 6s** each time. But they have enough ammunition to shoot only six of these arrowstorms in the course of a battle – record this by placing a small dice with the 6 uppermost next to each company and reduce the number by 1 each time it shoots. Once their arrow supply is exhausted Longbowmen cannot shoot again but when fighting in Melee they always hit for 5&6 (rather than 6, like earlier Archers).

Men-at-Arms (Dismounted Knights and other heavily-armoured Infantry) can form bases on their own or as the front rank of an Infantry base, backed by a rank of spearmen. These “**heavy infantry**” (which can also be used by later Scottish, French and other continental armies) move 4BW, count 1 ½ ranks in melee hitting for 4,5,6 and always save for 3,4,5,6.

French Armies

Mounted Knights must make up at least half of the army's bases with the rest being Spearmen and Crossbowmen.

5. Army Points

To achieve a rough balance of forces on your tabletop battlefield use this simple points system:
Each base of Knights or Men-at-Arms costs two points, all others cost 1 point each.

Some Final words

These simple rules can't cover every possible situation that might come up in a game. In such cases the only way to decide a point at issue is to boil it down to a question of "Can I do something - Yes or No?" roll dice to decide, and then move on with the game. You can discuss it further after the game and perhaps agree a "House Rule" for future use. Most rules evolve like this...

Many rule writers seek to avoid this sort of thing by trying to explain everything in minute detail and at great length.

These days it is commonplace for published wargames rules to run to over a hundred pages of text. However, personal experience suggests that the more you try to tighten up rules, the more legalistic they become, often to no good purpose. This has troubled rules writers since wargaming began:

"There is not a piece of constructive legislation in the world...that we do not regard the more charitably for our efforts to get a right result from this apparently easy and puerile business of fighting with tin soldiers..." H.G.Wells (1913)

Andy Callan, March 2022



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