



Men At Arms

One Brain Cell Medieval Skirmish Rules

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In the Beginning...

These are rules for playing a wargame with toy soldiers. It is intended for several players - say 4 or more. Players control significant leaders – the key lords or knights, who in turn have contingents of fighters under them.

Why 'One Brain Cell'? Well, many sets of wargame rules these days are horrendously complicated, with big thick rule books to read, dozens of additional books to get (at unreasonable expense) and exceptionally complicated rule mechanisms that take ages to work out.

My brain is too simple for this, so I tend to write rules that one require a single brain cell to use and understand. This tends to make games easy to learn and play, and, amazingly, are just as much fun as the dense and complicated game rules for which you have to pay a King's ransom. Odd, isn't it?

So read on, and, hopefully, enjoy.

Jim Wallman
Streatham 2003

Setting up the game

To set up a game you need a reasonable sized playing area. A large table or floor area is ideal. Depending on the story you have in mind, this can be laid out with terrain. A green cloth makes suitable ground. Model trees, lichen etc makes woods, hedges and undergrowth. Cottages, hovels, even mansions an be easily made out of cardboard.

This is the playing area.

Next assemble the toy soldiers (sorry, I mean finely crafted military miniatures...).

The players should have at least one leader each. They *can* take control of more than one leader each - but this might make the play more difficult in some ways.

Each hero has a **contingent** of fighters that are their followers in the battle.

The way these followers are used is described in the rules below. I suggest groups of followers should be between 6 and 20 figures strong depending on type. So a group of armoured and mounted knights might be about 6 figures and a group of rebellious peasants would be around 20 figures.

This all depends on what is in your collection of figures and your personal preferences.

Actions

In each game turn every player gets to perform **Actions**.

All actions are assumed to happen simultaneously.

The Sequence of working things out each turn goes like this:

1. Players declare what ACTION they are doing (see below)
2. Players can move their personal figure and any followers under their command in accordance with the ACTION they said they were going to do.
3. If movement brings groups of followers into weapon range then work out who killed who. Work out archers and long range effects first. Then work out melee.
4. At the end of the turn, all groups of followers that have been fighting have to take a test to see how they are feeling (called the *Morale Test*)



These are the *actions* you can do:

- **Hit Someone** (usually another specific named Player). If you choose this you cannot move your followers around that turn because you are too busy concentrating on your immediate enemy to tell them what to do.
- **Shout "Follow Me, Men!"** Lead your followers towards the enemy (assuming that's where you're heading). All your followers within 20cm of your figure will follow you by the most direct route to the limit of their movement distance (See **Movement** below)
- **Inspire Your Followers.** Sometimes your followers might get a bit downhearted (especially if they've been taking casualties and their morale is low). You can make them happier by stopping what you are doing and giving them a stirring speech, or hurling insults at your enemies (See below for **Morale Test**).

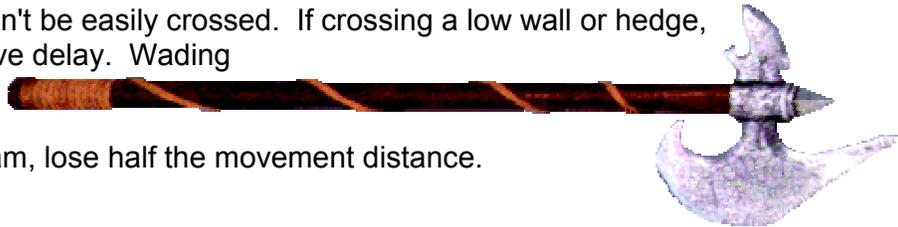
- **Send or Receive a message.** Sometimes you need to tell someone something, or send a message. If you are not within 12cm of that person then you can't talk to them, you must write a note – yes, *really write* with a pen and paper. This is an **action**.
The note is then transported using a messenger from your followers to the person its meant for. Reading the note is an **action** too, so they might not have time to read it when it gets there!
- **Shout "Attack them!"** This is where you can send your followers to attack a specific, named, enemy group.
You don't have to accompany the attack. All your followers move towards the enemy group you pointed at as fast as they can move until they get within weapon range - then they fight. If you are not with them they might not fight as well though (see **Morale Test**).

Movement

Each individual figures move as directed by their leader, up to the following maximum distance each turn:

Type	Distance (cm)
Peasants, lightly armoured soldiers, Archers, Crossbowmen.	15
Armoured Men at Arms	12
Light horseman	40
Armoured Knight	25
Carts, engines, other slow stuff.	8

Obstacles can't be easily crossed. If crossing a low wall or hedge, take one move delay. Wading through a ford or shallow stream, lose half the movement distance.



Shooting :

In order to shoot, archers and crossbowmen may not move in the same turn.



Archers. Roll 1d6 per figure shooting

Vs target	Range:	25cm	50cm	75cm
Peasants/Soldiers/ Archers		4,5,6	5,6	6
Man at Arms		5,6	6	6
Light Horseman		4,5,6	5,6	5,6
Mounted Knight		6	6	-

Archers are limited to 30 arrows



Crossbows. Roll 1d6 per figure shooting

Vs target	Range:	25cm	50cm	100cm
Peasants/Soldiers/ Archers		4,5,6	5,6	6
Man at Arms		4,5,6	5,6	6
Light Horseman		4,5,6	5,6	5,6
Mounted Knight		5,6	5,6	-

Crossbows take one turn to reload.

Crossbows are limited to 30 bolts

The score in the table is the chance of a hit. One hit kills most people. It takes 2 hits to kill a player-leader figure.



Morale test

Events and circumstances can make your followers less keen to fight. The entire contingent is affected by the morale rules, whatever their type.



Roll 1d6 when:

- The contingent takes a casualty.
- The contingent is surprised.
- If the player in command wants the group to take a test
- Commoners being threatened by nobles for the first time (i.e. when a line of knights starts moving towards a clump of peasants).

Add or subtract the following factors:

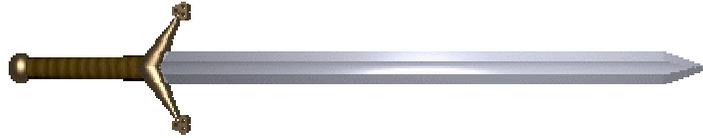
- 1 for each casualty this turn
- 1 for each 10% casualties in game
- 1 visibly outnumbered.
- +2 having a stirring speech from a friendly leader this turn. (The umpire might increase this if the player actually gives a *real* stirring speech.)
- 1 having been directly and specifically insulted by an enemy leader within 20cm this turn.
- 1 if the group's leader is not present
- 1 Higher class enemy troops moved closer to you this turn.

The check the result in this table:

Result	
Score	Outcome
3+	Morale is fine - carry on as desired.
0-2	Contingent may not move closer to any enemy forces. It has to pass a morale test next turn to move closer to the enemy.
Under 0	Contingent must move away from the enemy as quickly as possible. It must pass a morale test next turn to stop running away.

The figure representing the leader/player leading the contingent is not bound by these results and may fight or run away as desired.

Melee (or hand TO HAND COMBAT)



STEP ONE: Break the combat up into 'fights'. A fight is one fighter vs one or more enemies.

STEP TWO: For each 'fight' roll 1d6 per side, add the factors below and compare the scores

Factors in Melee : Peasant -2

Archer -1

Soldier 0

Man At Arms +2

Knight on foot +3

Leader +4

On horseback +1

Outnumbered 2-1 by unengaged enemies -2

Outnumbered 3-1 by unengaged enemies -3

Outnumbered 4-1 or more by unengaged enemies -4

The highest score wins

If they win by 1 or more means the loser is pushed back 5cm

If fighting against Peasants/Soldiers /Archers a win by 2 or more is a kill

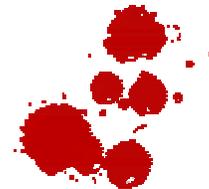
If fighting against Men At Arms a win by 3 or more is a kill

If fighting against Knights a win by 4 or more is a kill

If fighting a Leader a win by 4 or more is a HIT (it takes 2 hits to kill a leader)

If the outnumbered figure wins, it can kill/hit *only one* of its enemies that turn. Winner chooses which one.

This seems complicated, but is, in fact, very simple.



EXAMPLE OF MELEE

4 Soldiers fight 2 mounted knights. So, this breaks down into two fights, each of 2 soldiers fighting one knight. We'll ignore morale for this example.

FIRST TURN	
<p><i>Fight One</i></p> <p>Knight rolls 2 +4 for being a knight -2 for being outnumbered total score = 4</p> <p>Soldiers roll 6 No additions, total score = 6</p> <p>Result is +2 win for the soldiers, which against a knight is a 'push back result.</p>	<p><i>Fight Two</i></p> <p>Knight rolls 1 +4 for being a knight -2 for being outnumbered Total score = 3</p> <p>Soldiers roll 5 No additions, total score = 5</p> <p>Result is +2 win for the soldiers, which against a knight is a 'push back result.</p>
TURN 2	
<p><i>Fight One</i></p> <p>Knight rolls 5 +4 for being a knight -2 for being outnumbered total score = 7</p> <p>Soldiers roll 5 No additions, total score = 5</p> <p>Result is +2 win for the knight, which against soldiers is a kill result. One soldier falls.</p>	<p><i>Fight Two</i></p> <p>Knight rolls 6 +4 for being a knight -2 for being outnumbered Total score = 8</p> <p>Soldiers roll 1 No additions, total score = 1</p> <p>Result is +7 win for the knight, which against Soldiers is a kill result. One Soldier falls.</p>
TURN 3	
The knights are no longer outnumbered, so it becomes two one-on-one fights.	
<p><i>Fight One</i></p> <p>Knight rolls 6 +4 for being a knight total score = 10</p> <p>Soldier rolls 1 No additions, total score = 1</p> <p>Result is +9 win for the knight, which against soldiers is a kill result. The remaining soldier falls.</p>	<p><i>Fight Two</i></p> <p>Knight rolls 5 +4 for being a knight Total score = 9</p> <p>Soldier rolls 6 No additions, total score = 6</p> <p>Result is +3 win for the knight, which against soldiers is a kill result. The remaining soldier falls.</p>
<p>Combat over and all the soldiers are dead, and the knights have won. Not surprisingly.</p>	

Personal Combat

Leaders are special cases (nutcases, some might say - though not within earshot).

If they fight just the followers of other leaders, then use the rules above.

If they fight other Leaders – i.e. people of similar standing, then these rules apply.



Leaders **never** outnumber other leaders. In the event of a multiple fight between leaders, those not involved will watch and cheer from the sidelines until their turn comes.

Each game turn of combat is three rounds of paper - stone - scissors.

The player with the best of three inflicts one hit on their enemy.

Leaders may break off combat and try and run away - but then that wouldn't be very heroic would it? Whatever would their followers think?

ADDITIONAL BRAIN CELLS

If you feel like warming up a couple of extra brain cells, there are a few additional, and optional, wrinkles you might like to add.

Personal Development

Each leader can accumulate experience and reputation which can affect their abilities in combat. This is carried over every time the leader is used in action – ideally over a campaign or series of linked battles.

Score nothing for killing peasants.

Score 1 point for every soldier/archer killed

Score 2 points for every man at arms killed

Score 5 points for every knight killed

Score 10 points for every enemy leader defeated in personal combat

Score 20 points for every action where you are on the winning side.

Accumulated score	Level / Prefix	Benefits
0-100	1 - Noble	The basic level, as in the rules.
101-500	2 - Respected	Melee bonus increased to +5
501-1000	3 - Heroic	Number of hits increased to 3
1001-2000	4 - Impressive	Melee bonus increased to +6
2001-4000	5 - Fearsome	Number of hits increased to 4
4001-8000	6 - Awesome	Melee bonus increased to +7

QUICK REFERENCE SHEET

Sequence of Action

The Sequence of working things out each turn goes like this:

1. Players declare ACTION
2. MOVEMENT
3. COMBAT
4. MORALE

Actions

- Hit Someone
- Shout "Follow Me, Men!"
- Inspire Your Followers.
- Send or Receive a message.
- Shout "Attack them!"

Movement

Each individual figures move as directed by their leader, up to the following maximum distance each turn:

Type	Distance (cm)
Peasants, soldiers, Archers, Crossbowmen.	15
Armoured Men at Arms	12
Light horseman	40
Armoured Knight	25
Carts, engines, other slow stuff.	8

Obstacles take one move delay.
Wading, lose half the movement distance.

Shooting :

May not move and shoot

Archers. Roll 1d6 per figure shooting

Vs target	Range	25cm	50cm	75cm
Peasants/Soldiers/ Archers		4,5,6	5,6	6
Man at Arms		5,6	6	6
Horseman		4,5,6	5,6	5,6
Mounted Knight		6	6	-

Crossbows. Roll 1d6 per figure shooting

Vs target	Range:	25cm	50cm	100cm
Peasants/Soldiers/ Archers		4,5,6	5,6	6
Man at Arms		4,5,6	5,6	6
Horseman		4,5,6	5,6	5,6
Mounted Knight		5,6	5,6	-

Crossbow takes 1 turn to reload.
One hit kills most people.
It takes 2 hits to kill a leader

Morale test

Roll 1d6 when:

- The contingent takes a casualty.
- The contingent is surprised.
- If the player in command wants the group to take a test
- Commoners on first threat

Add or subtract the following factors:

- 1 for each commoner casualty this turn
- 1 for each 10% casualties in game
- 1 visibly outnumbered.
- +2 stirring speech
- 1 insulted by enemy leader within 20cm
- 1 if the group's leader is not present

Result

Score	Outcome
3+	Morale is fine - carry on as desired.
0-2	Contingent may not move closer to any enemy forces. It has to pass a morale test next turn to move closer to the enemy.
Under 0	Contingent must move away from the enemy as quickly as possible. It must pass a morale test next turn to stop running away.

Melee

For each 'fight' roll 1d6 per side, add the factors below and compare the scores

Factors in Melee :

Peasant	-2
Archer	-1
Soldier	0
Man At Arms	+2
Knight	+4
Leader	+4
Outnumbered 2-1	-2
Outnumbered 3-1	-3
Outnumbered 4-1	-4

The highest score wins

If they win by 1+ = pushed back 5cm
Peasants/Soldiers /Archers 2+ = kill
Men At Arms 3+ = kill
Knights 4+ = kill
Leader 4+ = HIT (2 hits = kill)