

Quick and Dirty

by Bryan R. Hansel

Plastic Soldier Warfare

While the tan soldiers wait on top of a hill for the green soldiers to move into their position, they bombard the green clad enemy with all the mortar fire they can muster. They must maintain this hill if their whole front line is going to hold. Oliver directs his advanced scout unit to flank the green soldiers and take them by surprise. This could be their last chance of winning the war.

The purpose of this variant is much like the purpose of the D&D Fantasy Warfare system presented in Space Gamer issue 100. In every campaign dealing with modern military or futuristic setting there will come a time when the player's character will be involved in a large battle that needs to be resolved quickly. This system allows extremely large battles to be played in a matter of hours, and it does so without letting the characters fade out of view.

Representing the Soldiers

And it's hard to afford many metal or plastic soldiers of high quality. Sure, it's easy to afford a task force of perhaps thirty soldiers, but what happens when you want to have a battle with hundreds on a side? The easiest solution to this problem is just to use toy plastic soldiers. They cost under two dollars for fifty, and they are easy to find. When using plastic soldiers it's best to use all the same type of pieces for a squad. (i.e. A mortar squad would be represented by only mortar soldiers.) Also, when you use pieces like this you can assume that the special weapons are still usable until the whole squad is eliminated.

Turns

Turns are divided into three phases: Command Phase, Initiative Phase, and Action Phase. All movement and actual combat happens in the action phase. All three phases must be completed each turn.

Command Phase

There are two types of orders: Fire at Will or Move & Shoot. Before initiative is determined each player must give each squad one of these orders. The best way to do this is to write the order on a piece of paper and lay this order side-down on the battlefield next to the squad. Squads which do not receive any orders are treated as if they had a Move order, but they do not move. Heroes and commanders never need orders. They can move or fire when they like.

Fire at Will: With this order a squad may fire once at any time during the turn regardless of initiative. (i.e. If every squad has this order, they may all fire at once.) A squad with this order may not move.

Move & Shoot: A player may only move one squad at a time. The squad may fire after it moves. The squad may decide to fire before it moves, but then it may not move for the rest of the turn. In effect, the squad ends its move when it decides to fire. Any squad which has orders to Move & Shoot may opt to instead charge into Hand-to-Hand. Movement is doubled, and the charging unit receives a +1 for the first round of combat. If the charging squad does not reach the enemy squad before rounds 1 and 1/2 times its normal movement, then the enemy squad receives one round of free fire on the charging group.



Initiative Phase

Both sides roll a D8. The highest roll wins, and that player may choose to move first or second. The moving player moves one squad, then movement alternates between the players. Each player moves one squad at a time until all actions have been resolved.

Movement

All squads have the base movement of five inches (or one hand length or some such common device). Members of a squad must always remain within two inches of another member of the squad. Terrain may also effect movement. An easy rule — any type of tough terrain reduces movement by half. Squads may face any direction at the start of movement and the end movement.

Vehicles have the base movement of twenty inches (four hand lengths). They may only make one forty-five degree turn per movement phase. Vehicles with tracks or wheels that move separately may turn up to 180 degrees in one phase if they are not moving forward.

WEAPONS TABLE (D8)

Type	Miss	1 Hit	2 Hits	3 Hits	4 Hits	Range
Light	1-5	6	7	8+	NA	50" (or two armlengths)
Heavy	1-4	5	6	7	8+	100"
Massive	1-3	4	5-6	7	8+	200"

Area Effect Weapons (D8)

Type	Miss	Perfect Hit	Radius	Range
Thrown	1-5	6-8	1"	10" (or two hand lengths)
Launched	1-4	5-8	2"	400" (or anywhere in the room)
Un sighted	1-6	7-8	2"	400" (or anywhere in the room)

Rules of Engagement (Combat)

• **Basic Rule:** To see if an attack is successful roll a D8 and compare the result to the weapons table.

• **Weapon Types:** A light weapon is a hand held weapon such as a rifle, M16, M60 or grenades. A heavy weapon is a troop carried weapon of destruction, such as a mortar or bazooka. A massive weapon is a vehicle mounted weapon or large weapon like a cannon, artillery, or bombs.

• **Multiple Targets:** An attacking squad may fire at no more than two separate targets. A target may be a complete squad, or an individual item. Attacking two targets increases the difficulty of the action, therefore hit rolls receive a penalty of minus three.

• **Area Effect Weapons:** These weapons effect an entire location. The easiest way to simulate this is to make a circle template (or use the spread of your hand). Anything under the template is considered hit. (Likewise anything grabbed by your closing fist is hit.) Individual figures are allowed a saving roll of a six or better on a D8 to see if they survive. If an area effect weapon misses, it must go somewhere. Roll a D12 and use the result like the numbers on a clock. Twelve o'clock being the direction the weapon came from. The weapon explodes D8 inches in the direction rolled from it's intended target. Also, launched weapons can be fired at targets that the weapon user can not see. But the firer needs to know the location of the enemy. This can be radioed in by a figure which can see the target. The successful hit roll of a radio spotted shot suffers a minus two penalty.

• **Allocating Ranged Weapon Hits:** If a target has a number of individual targets within it (i.e. a squad), then the hits need to be placed. The closest figure to the attacking squad is killed first. Then the closest figure to the killed figure, and so on. This continues until all hits have been resolved.

• **Hand-to-Hand (HTH):** When two squads enter into HTH combat all the figures in both squads are given an opponent. Combat is resolved immediately and continues until one squad is destroyed. A squad may retreat from HTH only if it has unused move orders. Each pair of figures in HTH combat rolls separately for resolution. Each player rolls a D8 and add any respective modifiers. The lowest result in each pairing is killed. After this first round of casualties, pair the figures again and continue until only one side survives.

• **Death:** After a battle has been won, the winning side may recover 60% of its dead as just wounded. They may also recover 20% of the enemy as prisoners. The losers in the battle may recover 20% of their dead as wounded.

Wounds (optional)

Instead of killing a figure with a hit, a figure can be just wounded. Roll a D8 on the wound chart to find the wound. Heavy Weapons and Massive Weapons hits roll with a plus three modifier to wounds.

Wound Table (D8)

1: Walking Wound, Mobile but Injured

2: Vicious, Incapacitated

3-5: KO, Knocked Out

6 or above: KIA, Killed in Action

• **Walking Wound:** The figure may only move half of it's normal movement.

• **Vicious:** The figure may only fire with a -1 penalty. This figure may be carried by any other, but only at half normal movement. If carried the figure may not fire.

• **KO:** The figure is still alive, but must be carried by another pair of figures. After the battle is over the winning side may take half of the enemy figures left on the field with this designation as prisoners.

Morale (optional)

Squads must check morale when they are first hit, or when they lose half of their troops or when their squad commander dies. Commanders or Heroes never need check morale. A squad passes it's check on a five or better result is rolled on a D8. Broken squads must retreat away from all enemy forces, until they pass a morale check. They may still fire, but only after they retreat their full move.

Building a Squad

In any army there are different types of troops, and by using traits the referee can create these various troops. After a troop type is created then the information of the troop type should be written down for later play. Things to consider when deciding troop type are the size of the unit, usually between eight to sixteen, and how many squad commanders does the unit have, usually one or two. More than one squad commander allows the unit to be split forces and continue as two smaller squads during play.

Trait Table

- **Armored:** Takes only one half of hits rounded up.
- **Command:** Doesn't need orders, doubles movement rate, adds +2 to moral check of neighboring units.
- **Elite:** Doubles movement rate, gains +2 in HTH, may only use Light weapons.
- **Green:** -1 to hit and morale dice.
- **Heavy:** Uses heavy weapons.
- **Light:** Uses Light weapons.
- **Scout:** doubles movement rate, may be placed on board after all enemy units are on the board.
- **Sharpshooters:** Gains +2 hit and increases the weapons range when ordered to Fire at Will.
- **Swift:** Doubles movement rate.
- **Untrained:** -2 to hit.
- **Veteran:** +1 to hit and moral rolls.

Vehicles and Structures

Basically, a vehicle is armored so that it can not be hit by a Light weapon. Each vehicle requires five hits before it is destroyed. Bunkers and other structures require five hits before they are destroyed. Vehicles and structures can also hold figures. If a player has one of these items, he may hide troops in them at the beginning of the game. He only reveals the number when they leave the vehicle or structure. Some structures allow the figures to fire out of them without penalty. Decide these things before the game starts.

Sergeant: Rock Guys

Heroes are the player characters involved in the battle. They may use any skills available to them. If player characters will not be in a battle, then heroes may be purchased. Heroes may move twice in one turn whenever they would like, and they never need orders. They also gain a plus four bonus in HTH. Heroes take two hits before they die.

Unit Advancement:

As an army grows through play, it may allow its units to advance one by one by adding traits. The referee must decide which traits may be added or subtracted. During play a set of four Ignobles need to be checked for actions before a single unit may be advanced, and these Ignobles need to be checked for each advancement.

• **Glory & Reputation:** A unit in the army has completed a task so great or impossible that it is respected by the rest of the army. They are praised where ever they go.

• **Strategy & Valor:** A unit completes a strategy and defeats an opponent, or stays behind to hold off the enemy during a retreat.

• **Prudence & Set-Backs:** A unit knows when to retreat, or if a unit has been defeated. They can learn from their mistakes.

• **Supplies & Training:** The unit needs to spend time training away from combat. They may go to camps or practice missions. This also may represent an upgrade in equipment being captured on the field.

Conclusion

This variant, as you can tell is not completely serious in regards to reality. But I feel that in war, people are killed, and sometimes it is hard to determine exactly what happened to kill them. War is not a bunch of statistics; it is hard to predict. That is why this game is so simple, because it makes the action fast and hard to predict. It also does this without leaving the player characters out in the cold to die.