

**MILIHISTRIOT QUARTERLY**  
**THE JOURNAL FOR MILITARY MINIATURE ENTHUSIASTS**  
**PRESENTS**

# METALSMASHING



**Quick, Simple Wargame Rules**  
**covering the Ancient and**  
**Medieval Eras**

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This is a basic set of rules for battles from the Ancient to the Medieval era. It is intended for soldiers as small as 15mm, and as tall as 30mm. If you use larger figures and / or a larger space, double the moves. Likewise, if your space is very small, then measure in centimeters rather than inches.

The average space for a game would be 4" by 2" or smaller. Using these rules, you can even play on a coffee table. All you need are miniature soldiers, terrain pieces, measuring sticks and six-sided dice.

## Scale

To recreate the battles of old, you would need thousands of miniature figures and a massive playing area. Even small skirmishes might involve a thousand or more men. Likewise, the ranges of weapons range from 200 yards for a crossbow to a mile or more for a culverin. A skirmish could involve movement and firing over a mile of terrain. A larger battle would rage over anything from a square mile to several miles.

How much space would it take to recreate a mile of battle? If you used 25mm figures, it would be 65 foot by 65 foot. For HO, which is 20m scale, it would be a little over 64 foot. 15mm is close to 1/120, and that would be 44 foot. Imagine setting up and moving thousands of figures over 65 foot!

What we do is scale everything down. We scale down the movement, the range of weapons and the number of men in a unit. This allows us to recreate a battle in a much smaller space. "Scaling down" has been used for years. It does not sacrifice the realism of the game. Scaling allows you to enjoy a full battle in minimal space, with a manageable number of pieces.

**Units:** The kind of warfare described in this game was organized. The Ancient armies such as the Romans were very organized; medieval armies had a looser kind of organization. Most soldiers were organized into units. These were led by experienced soldiers or nobles.

Our game works better if we replicate the units of old. In our scaled-down world, an infantry unit would be nine to eleven men and a commander. A cavalry unit would be four to five men and a commander. An artillery unit would be two machines and their crews.

You would also need the overall command unit. This would have a general on horseback, a standard bearer, an assistant and an extra man.

Now comes the problem of moving all those men. The way to make it easier is a trick called "traying." We make a base out of wood, plastic or cardstock. It might be 4 inches long and 1 inch wide. To it we glue four footmen, all in the same position. To make a unit, we could make two of these trays. Our third tray would have our commander and the remaining riflemen. Should you decide on a 12-man unit, you might make the third tray with an officer, a standard bearer, and two footmen.

Of course, you could opt for six-man trays.

Cavalry Trays might have two or three horsemen. You could also make trays of five to six horses.

An artillery piece might be trayed with two or three crewmen. The other crewmen could be loose.

To make consistent trays, consider what others do:

For 25mm to 30mm figures, most players tray their men at one-inch intervals so that each controls a 1" by 1" area. Cavalry controls 1" by 1 1/2"

For 15mm to 20mm, some prefer to have a 1/2 inch interval. Cavalry gets 1/2" by 1 inch. Of course, some use 3/4" and 1". Some who use 20mm might stick to 1" and 1 1/2" for cavalry.

## Moving Your Army

Movement: To simulate how different soldiers move, we use a simple trick. Imagine if a man and a horse were going to race. Instead of the race being a set distance, such as 500 yards, it would be a set time. It might be a few seconds. If a man and horse both ran five seconds, the man might go 10 to 15 yards. The horse might go 20 to 30 yards. We use a similar thing in our game. A man moves half the distance of a horse, simulating how fast he goes.



Men and horses in the field go slower than if they were on a road. The speeds below are measured in numbers. Most people use inches, but for smaller spaces you might use centimeters. If you have a very large space, you might double them. (If you double movement, you must also double firing range.)

Type	Off road	On road
Light Infantry	5	7
Armored Infantry	4	6
Light Cavalry	10	14
Armored Cavalry	8	12
Wagon	7	11
Pushed artillery	3	5

Some kinds of terrain make it even harder to move. The chart below shows movement in rough terrain” going uphill, going through a swamp, or fording a river at a ford (you cannot ford a river that has no ford). (Note that with swamps, there is no “road speed.” If a road goes through a swamp, it is assumed to be

above the muck and so normal road speed applies when using it. The swamp speed only applies to going through the swamp when off-road).

Type	Off road	On road
Light Infantry	4	6
Armored Infantry	3	5
Light cavalry	8	10
Heavy cavalry	6	8
Wagon	4	7
Pushed artillery	2	3

If a unit goes from road to open land, or vice versa, it must change its speed. For example, a cavalry unit moves 5 inches on a road, and then goes into woods. This leaves seven inches. However, since off road speed is ½, then the unit can only go 3 ½ inches into the woods.

If a unit goes from regular to rough terrain, he must adjust accordingly. For instance, a caisson going on a road five inches comes to a ford. That would leave 6 inches. Since the rough terrain speed is about 2/3 of the regular road speed, and the ford in one the road, he would go 4 more inches. For determining speed when moving from regular to rough terrain, we use a “rough guess-timate” that rough terrain speed is 2/3 of normal movement.

### Other movement rules:

Light footmen & light cavalry can leap a wall that is chest high or lower. They have to go around higher walls. Heavy foot have to go around, or use ½ of their movement to climb over. Heavy cavalry can jump walls that are waist high or lower to a man. Otherwise they must ride around them.

Wagons and artillery must be pushed around walls.

Men can enter a house. Cavalry, wagons and artillery cannot enter.

## Shooting

In our game, the two ways to fight the enemy are to shoot him or melee. Shooting is very simple. You roll one die for every six shooters. Only the front rank can fire. To the number that comes up on the dice, you add or subtract as follows:

- Target is at long range: -1
- Target is behind soft cover (bushes): -1
- Target is behind hard cover (wall, in house): -2
- Target is 2 inches or closer: +1
- Target unit has his back to you: +2
- Cavalry firing from horseback: -2
- Target has shield: -1
- Target has armor: -2
- Crossbow at short range: +1
- Arquebus or hand-cannon at close range: +2
- Sling: -1

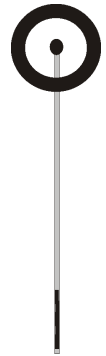
Weapon range: the chart below shows short and long range. Anything further than long range cannot be shot.

Weapon	Close range	Long range
Short Bow	0-3	3-6
Long Bow, Norse Bow	0-4	4-8
Light Crossbow	0-4	4-7
Arbalest Crossbow	0-6	6-12
Hand cannon (early gun)	0-3	3-5
Arquebus	0-4	4-8
Sling	0-3	3-5
Javelin / spear	0-2	2-4

If less than 6 men are firing, subtract their number from 6. The sum is the amount to deduct from the dice when you roll for them to shoot. For example, if four men are shooting: 6 minus 4 = 2. Deduct 2 from the dice roll.

## Artillery

Catapults, trebuchets, ballistae, bombards and culverins are a specialty all their own. The first thing you need make are firing sticks. One should be 10 inches, the other 16 inches. Mark 1 inch increments on the first six inches. On the other end, affix a circle. The circle should be 2 inches in diameter. Make the circle of wire, and affix its center to the end of the stick, as shown on Page 5.



Your artillery will need crews. Each culverin, trebuchet or bombard should have a crew of 6 to 8 men. Each catapult or ballista needs a crew of 4 to 6 men. 2 men must always be at the weapon, and the others must stay within one infantry move of the gun. If your catapult or ballista crew is reduced to 2 men, they fire at half rate, i.e. every other turn. If your culverin, bombard or trebuchet crew is reduced to 3, it fires at half rate. Any less than that, and the weapon cannot operate until you send up more artillerymen. Infantry and cavalry cannot operate artillery. Only artillerists can handle it.

Artillery pieces can either move or fire in one move. They cannot do both.

Each weapon had different ways of firing.

**Flat Trajectory:** Ballistapults and culverins were direct-fire weapons. They were fired directly at the front of enemy troops and targets in a relatively flat trajectory.

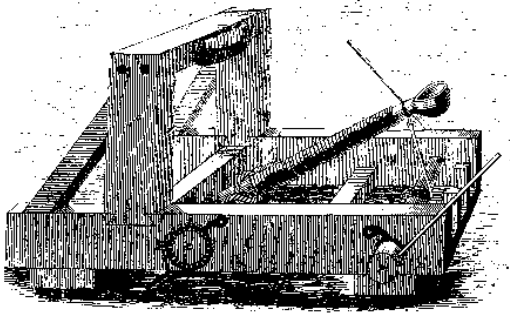
**Parabolic:** Trebuchets, onagers, catapults and bombards were fired in a parabolic trajectory. Their ammunition fell downward onto the enemy.

Some bombards could also be fired like culverins.

To fire a parabolic weapon at a target, place the stick so that the back end passes over the weapon, and the circle is over the target. Roll a die

1 means the shot fell 1 inch short – move the stick back one inch  
 2 means the shot fell 2 inches short – move the stick back 2 inches  
 3 means the weapon overshot 1 inch – move the stick forward 1 inch\*  
 4 means the weapon overshot 2 inches – move the stick forward 2 inches\*  
 5 and 6 means it hit right on target.

If you roll a 3 or 4, and it puts your circle past its full range (more than 10 or 16, depending on the weapon). then the piece is considered to have misfired, causing no casualties. Artillery



cannot fire past its range

Whatever number you get, everyone in the circle can be hit. Roll 1 die for each man in the circle. Add or subtract to the number as explained below:

- Target area is in woods - +1
- Target was on other side of wall from impact (center of circle): +2
- Target was in first floor of house: +2
- Target was on same side of wall as impact: -1

When you add or subtract, you get the final number. Here is what the final number means:  
 If the final number is 1, 2, 3 or 4 he is removed.  
 If it is 5 or 6 means he is saved.

Parabolic weapons have a short range and long range. They cannot fire at targets within this short range. Parabolic weapons can only fire at targets in their long ranges. For instance, an onager cannot fire at targets closer than three inches.

Weapon	Short range	Long range
Catapult, onager	3	10
Ballistapult	0	12
Trebuchet, Mangonel	4	16
Culverin	0	14
Bombard*, Haufnitze	5	16

\* Some bombards can also fire flat trajectory projectiles. You must determine this before the game begins.

Flat trajectory weapons launch in a straight line, cutting a swath through the ranks. Use a thick wire and place one end at the artillery piece, and the other at the enemy. Anyone it touches must roll a die to survive.

- Target is behind wall +1
- Target is in house. +1
- Target has back turned on the weapon -1

If the final number is 1, 2, 3 or 4 means he is removed. If it is 5 or 6 means he is saved.

If a culverin hits a stone or heavy wood wall, it will blast a half-inch wide gap. The wall absorbs the projectile's power, so that it can only continue one inch through the wall. The spear from a ballistapult will be stopped by a wall.

## Melee

When enemy soldiers come within ½ inch of each other, they can melee. This is hand-to-hand combat. First, a 4" diameter circle is placed so that its center is over the first two fighters. Everyone within the circle is considered involved in the melee. Each side adds up the points value of men in the circle.

Each player rolls one die, and multiplies it by the number of points he has in the circle. The one with the higher number wins. The loser loses half of his men. The winner loses one half as many casualties as the loser. Thus, if the loser had lost ten men, then the winner

loses five. The winner holds the ground, and the loser retreats ½ move.

If both sides get the same number, making it a draw, then both lose half their men as casualties. In that case, victory will depend upon who brings up reinforcements fastest

Light infantry – 1  
Armored infantry – 2  
Light cavalry – 2  
Heavy cavalry- 3  
Archer , crossbowman, arquebusier – 1

A unit of 8 or more men armed with polearms gets a bonus against men armed with short weapons. They also get the bonus against cavalry. The men with polearms get a free strike when a melee starts. Before rolling for the melee, roll one die for each six men with polearms, making the usual deductions as if for archery. Remove casualties Afterward, melee normally.

## **Morale**

The difference between victory and defeat was often a matter of the state of morale. For this reason, we need to look at morale to determine if a unit stays and fights, or retreats.

### **When to check morale:**

Loss of 25% of men: unit halts one turn and checks morale  
Loss of 50% of men: unit halts one turn and rolls for morale  
Getting hit from behind by equal or larger force: unit rolls for morale.  
Getting beat in a melee or by projectile weapons: roll for morale.  
Loss of command unit: all units within two moves of command unit must check morale

### **Factors which adjust more dice roll:**

Losing 25% of one's unit: -1  
Losing 50% of one's unit: - 2  
Command unit within sight: +1

Command unit within 1 move: +2  
Losing of officer -1  
Losing of command unit (for units within 2 moves of command unit) -2  
Unit separated from other units more than 1 move away from allies units) -1  
Elite Unit (Knights Templar, Praetorians, etc) +1  
Unit has defeated an enemy unit within the three previous moves: +2  
Unit was defeated by enemy unit within three previous moves: -2  
Unit is unharmed: +1  
New officer joins unit: +1

## **Morale results:**

Roll dice add and subtract factors listed above.

5, 6 Unit follows orders and fights  
4 Unit holds for one move  
3 Unit retreats one move  
2 Unit retreats for two moves.  
1 Unit routs: retreats until it leaves battle or until checked

## **Checking a routed unit**

To stop a routed unit, an officer must confront it. He rolls a dice. 5 and 6 mean the unit is rallied, and returns to battle. 3, 4 means the unit halts and must check morale on the next turn. 1, 2 means the unit continues to rout. The officer can remain with the unit and try to rally it again the next move

Any unit that Loses its officer automatically halts 2 moves.

## **Terrain**

Rivers can only be crossed at fords and bridges. Houses can provide cover. Up to four men can be in a small house, and six in a large house.

Artillery can do direct fire against houses. Roll a die. 1, 2 and 3 means nothing happened. 4, 5 and 6 mean damage was done. 4 hits by artillery can destroy a small house. 7 hits can

destroy a large house. When a house is destroyed, all occupants are removed from the game. For light guns, subtract 1 from the die roll. For mortars, add 1 to the die roll.

Direct artillery fire can attack walls and fences. On a 5 or 6, the shell punches out a 1 inch wide gap. 1, 2, and 3 do nothing. 4 reduces a 1 – inch wide section to half its previous height.

## Capturing Equipment

It is possible to capture artillery and equipment. So long as no enemy soldier is within two inches of the item, you can seize it. You need to have two men touch the item. The next move, your men can move it away. You can capture artillery and wagons. However, only artillerymen can operate a catapult, ballista, culverin, bombard or trenbuchet. If you capture artillery, you cannot use it unless it is manned by your artillerymen.

## Sequence of Play

Both sides move simultaneously, each starting from his left and moving to the right. Players have five minutes to complete movement. After moving, combat is resolved in this sequence.

- 1) Fire artillery
- 2) Shoot Archery and hand guns
- 3) Settle Melees
- 4) Check Morale

## Supplies

Along with dice, you will need several items to play **Metalsmashing**. These include:

Miniature soldiers and their equipment  
Miniature trees  
Miniature lakes

Miniature bridges  
Miniature walls and fences  
Miniature houses

Several companies manufacture small soldiers that fit our game. Many different manufacturers make Romans, Gauls, Greeks, Knights, Vikings, Crusaders, and Saracens.. These range from inexpensive 25mm plastic figures to various metal castings ranging from 15mm to 30mm.



Houses can be found at hobby shops that sell wargame supplies. They often have Medieval and Ancient style structures. Model railroad shops that carry Faller kits might have a few old style German buildings for HO scale. Also, some of the older Airfix first have been reissued.

You can buy miniature walls and fences in several scales where they sell trains.

Most hobby shops carry miniature trees. They also have lichen, which can be used to simulate bushes.

Miniature bridges can be gotten in hobby shops.

Another source of bridges, castles and structures is aquarium decorations.

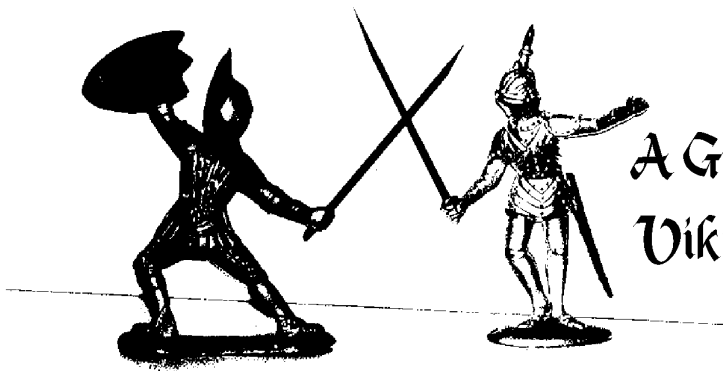
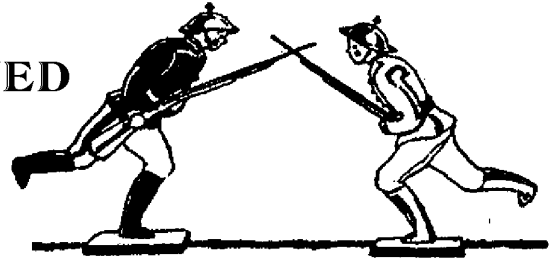
Rivers, lakes and roads can be cut from the appropriately- colored paper.

Miniature hills and mountains can be found at shops that sell trains.

*This set of wargame rules has been prepared for you by **Milihistriot Quarterly, the Journal for Military Miniature Enthusiasts**. If you enjoy military miniatures, toy soldiers and miniature wargaming, you will enjoy visiting our website at [www.milihistriot.com](http://www.milihistriot.com)*

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