

* Combined arms includes having two or more troop types (infantry, cavalry, artillery) in front-line or supporting units, not counting ranged artillery fire

** Terrain advantage is conveyed by defending against troops attacking through rough going, or by holding a strong defensive position (along a riverbank, at the crest of a steep hill, being attacked across a swamp or bridge, etc.)

Each side now rolls a die, which is added to the points total determined above. The high scorer is the winner of the combat.

If the low scorer is beaten but not doubled by the winner, then the winner's front-line units will be destroyed on a 1-2 in 6, and may advance to occupy the defender's position. Supporting bases (including ranged artillery if subjected to counter-battery fire) are destroyed on a 1 in 6. The loser's front-line bases are destroyed on a 1-3 in 6, supporting bases (including ranged artillery if subjected to counter-battery fire) are destroyed on a 1-2 in 6, and the rest are pushed back out of engagement range of any enemy unit.

If the low scorer is doubled by the winner, then the winner's front-line units will be destroyed on a 1 in 6, and may advance to occupy the defender's position. The loser's front-line bases are destroyed on a 1-4 in 6, supporting bases (including ranged artillery if subjected to counter-battery fire) are destroyed on a 1-3 in 6, and the rest are pushed back out of engagement range of any enemy unit.

If the low scorer is tripled (or worse) by the winner, then the loser's front-line bases are destroyed on a 1-5 in 6, supporting bases (including ranged artillery if subjected to counter-battery fire) are destroyed on a 1-4 in 6, and the rest are pushed back out of engagement range of any enemy unit.

Ties represent an on-going combat. Both sides roll for each front-line unit, which is destroyed on a 1 in 6.

VI. Artillery Fire

Artillery may either perform ranged fire or perform close-range fire. When performing close-range fire, they are simply part of the front-line or supporting bases involved in a combat. Ranged fire may be performed as an action or re-action, and is resolved immediately. In this case, there are some changes to the normal combat resolution. Artillery bases may fire singly, or may combine with other artillery bases in their formation. When firing, one or more enemy bases within range and LOS are selected as target bases. Combat is resolved using only these bases, with the following combat outcomes substituted:

- Target is Beaten: On a 1-2, target unit must fall back out of gun range.
- Target is Doubled: Target base(s) destroyed on a 1, must fall back out of gun range on a 2 or 3.
- Target is Trebled: Target base(s) destroyed on a 1 or 2, otherwise must fall back out of gun range.

The firing base(s) cannot be harmed. Note that artillery may also support combats within range by simply adding their number to the friendly bases counted in a normal short-range combat. Ties indicate that there is no effect.

The Sound of the Guns ***A Grand-Tactical Miniatures Wargame***



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This game represents grand-tactical combat of the mid-19th Century. The focus is on the deployment and planning aspects of large-size battles. Size of miniatures is unimportant, as time and ground scales are variable. All dice are ordinary 6-sided dice.

The Sound of the Guns was inspired by that phenomenon which occurs at the end of a night's gaming, when the battle has not yet been decided. In this case, the referee will say "I think this flank is going to crumble, that attack will falter in the center" (etc., etc.). Players then agree or disagree, and the outcome of the game is thus decided in a few minutes.

I. Formations

Formations can represent any desired troop level. Typically, a formation of several bases will represent a brigade, but this can be anything from a battalion to a division, so long as historical unit organizations are respected. Bases of all types may be mixed in a formation. Basing is assumed to be consistent - that is, an infantry base on one side represents the same number of troops as an infantry base on the other, etc. All bases should be rated in terms of quality: Inferior, Average, or Superior. Formations may change during the game as desired, with a single formation splitting apart into two groups or two or more groups joining to create a new formation at any point except during combat outcomes. Artillery bases typically represent batteries. All troops in a given formation should be placed together on the tabletop, with bases touching another base in the formation. Formations are at least half as wide as they are deep, in bases.

Higher-level commanders (army commanders, corps commanders, and – for small battles - divisional commanders) are fielded as separate units on the tabletop.

II. Turn Sequence

(a) Both sides roll for initiative, with ties re-rolled. The high roller chooses to take the initiative or give it to his opponent. The strategic attacker gets a +2 to the roll on the first turn.

(b) The player with initiative indicates one or more formation(s) of troops which will perform an action: maneuver, attack, or ranged fire (artillery only). The target and path of each attack or maneuver is indicated on the tabletop. Formations may not move within engagement range of an enemy formation except to attack it or to withdraw directly away from it. Actions are performed in any order desired by the player with initiative. For each action, the opposing player may choose to make a re-action (spoiling attack, maneuver in response, or ranged fire with artillery) with any units desired. Players then take turns reacting to the preceding re-actions, with the initiating player going first. Each subsequent round suffers an additive penalty to tactical range. This stops when no units are able to react or wish to do so. Combats other than ranged fire are not resolved until all maneuvers and maneuvers-to-attack have been performed.

(c) Command bases are moved by both sides after all other movement has taken place. This is the only time command bases may move.

(d) All combats are resolved in the order specified by the initiating player. Units are moved as combat outcomes are resolved.

No base may take part in more than a single action per turn (maneuver or fire). The turn sequence is repeated until the battle is resolved.

III. Tactical Range

Tactical Range is a way of measuring the potential movement of formations in response to enemy maneuvers. It is calculated as follows:

First, measure the distance of the nearest part of the formation in question to its nearest command base. The distance measured does not have to be a straight line, but instead should be the path which messengers would take to reach the unit. This distance is adjusted as for cavalry. This is subtracted from the visible move distance of the move made by the attacking or maneuvering enemy formation which triggered the reaction, using the slowest unit type in the formation, adjusted for terrain:

Infantry, Cavalry, and Horse Artillery - double inches in rough terrain
Foot Artillery - quadruple inches in rough terrain
Cavalry and Horse Artillery in Open - halve inches in open terrain
All troops - halve movement on roads for maneuver actions

Visible move distance is the distance the acting enemy unit moved within LOS of the command base of the reacting troops.

The resulting distance is the tactical range - that is, the distance which supporting units and counter-attacking units may move in response to an enemy action. Artillery units may fire unless the penalty for re-action is greater than the distance to their commanding officers' base.

Note that the first action is taken by the initiating player with no penalty. The re-action to that move is penalized by the distance between the re-acting formation and its command base. The re-action to the reaction is further penalized by a third of the engagement range. Each subsequent reaction is penalized by a further third of the engagement range (thus, a re-action to a re-action suffers a one-third engagement range penalty; a re-action to that gets a two-thirds penalty; a re-action to that re-action gets a three-thirds penalty, and so on.)

You may not make a reaction to bring bases into support or front-line combat except in reaction to moves made by enemy bases also involved in that combat.

IV. Engagement Distances

To determine the engagement distance, first determine the size of the battlefield represented by the tabletop. Thus, using an 8' x 4' table which represents a battlefield 4 miles wide, then each foot on the tabletop represents half a mile.

Engagement distance is a quarter mile (or a half kilometer, for metric). For non-artillery formations incapable of sending out skirmishers, this range is reduced by half. This is the distance or less which must exist between formations to conduct an attack of any sort (other than artillery fire). It is also the maximum distance which may exist between a supporting unit and a front-line unit for combat resolution.

To determine the range of artillery, the historical ranges of the gun types should be compared to the ground scale as determined above. This represents the maximum range for artillery attacks and counter-battery fire. Note that there is a distinction between artillery attacks and counter-battery fire, and close-range artillery support. To engage in close-range artillery support, guns should be involved in or supporting combat.

Note that a maneuver action may never bring the maneuvering formation within an enemy formation's engagement range. This is only possible by making an attack maneuver.

V. Combat Resolution

There are three types of bases counted as involved in close-range combat resolution: front-line, supporting, and ranged artillery. Front-line formations include bases which are within engagement range of an enemy base. Supporting bases are those belonging to a formation some part of which is within engagement range of a friendly front-line base, but not within engagement range of an enemy base. Ranged artillery are bases outside of engagement range, but within artillery range and LOS of the enemy front line. When combat resolution begins, each player may choose to move any supporting bases forward to become front-line bases. This decision can be made in response to an opponent's decision to commit supporting bases to the front line. This same process is followed for committing ranged artillery support.

To resolve a combat, the attacker and defender each count up the number of bases in front-line and supporting formations, and artillery firing at long range in support. Each base counts as a single point. This number is modified as follows:

- For each cavalry base in combat in built-up or rough terrain: -½ point
- For each artillery base in direct support (not ranged firing): +1 point
- For the side which has combined arms* in the open, against an opponent which does not: + ½ point per base
- For an entrenched defender: + 1 point for each entrenched unit
- For each Superior base: +1
- For each Inferior base: -½
- For defender with terrain advantage**: + ½ point per base
- For defender attacked along two or more axes, separated by 90 degrees or more: -½ point per base
- For each supporting base other than ranged artillery: -½ point