

War & Battle

*An Advanced Swords & Sorcery
Rules Supplement for use with OSRIC*

By Matthew James Stanham

Foreword

Contents

Introduction

War

Recruitment
Provisions
Marching
Encampment
Ambush
Siege
Espionage
Assassination
Spying
Sabotage
Diplomacy

Battle

Scale
Statistics
Type
Organisation
Formation
Turn Sequence
Movement
Shooting
Fighting
Morale
Discipline
Destruction

Introduction

As the ongoing campaign game develops, it is expected that successful adventurers will eventually rise to positions of political and military importance. Traditional swords & sorcery adventure games are designed for small scale man to man (or equivalent) combat, meaning that their assumptions are not always easy to translate to the larger conflicts in which player characters may find themselves embroiled. This supplement is designed to provide the game master and players with guidelines for conducting campaigns, skirmishes, battles and sieges at the strategic and tactical level. It primarily makes use of the old school reference and index compilation, but is also compatible with other simulacrum games based around hit dice, armour class and fighting ability, such as *Swords & Wizardry*, *Labyrinth Lord* and *Basic Fantasy*.

For ease of use, *War & Battle* is divided into two main sections; the first deals with guidelines for playing at the strategic level of the game, such as managing garrisons, levying war taxes, recruiting and organising soldiers, training and equipping recruits, acquiring horses, feeding and paying an army, spying on the enemy, assassinations, diplomacy, building fortifications, and so on. The second section concentrates on resolving events at the tactical level, which is to say skirmishes, battles and assaults. It allows for actions involving hundreds to thousands of combatants, and for player characters to potentially participate at almost any level, from lowly foot soldier to army commander. At both the strategic and tactical level the emphasis of play is on decision making, luck with the dice will not be sufficient to assure victory!

Battle

Scale

The suggested rules and guidelines presented here use three tactical scales on the imagined battlefield, corresponding to small (1:360 or 1" = 30'), medium (1:720 or 1" = 60'), and large (1:1080 or 1" = 90') engagements; the smallest scale is suitable for when combatants number in the hundreds, the others for when they number in the thousands or tens of thousands. Of course, it is possible to use these rules on different scales, if preferred, as long as the participants agree on a method of conversion. There are two basic stand sizes used, one for troops afoot and the other for those ahorse. A typical foot stand is 2" wide and 1" deep, accommodating anything from 80-360 men in close formation, which is to say in ranks of 20-60 and files of 4 to 6, depending on the scale used and how densely the unit is drawn up. Each scale increase assumes an increase in the number of men in a rank, from 20 to 40 to 60, but file depth is unaffected, as this is chiefly a factor for mounting miniatures on the stand. When foot are arrayed in open order, as with skirmishers and the like, there is assumed to be more space between the men and a commensurately lower number of troops in each stand. With regard to fantastic creatures, combatants ranging in size from goblins and dwarves to gnolls and bugbears count as man sized for this purpose. Significantly larger creatures, such as ogres and the like, are considered to occupy the space of four men, whilst a typical stand of horse is 2" wide and 1½" deep to allow for the size of the horses, but otherwise conforms to foot for the purposes of open and close array. All movement rates and ranges are given below on the small scale, and must be divided by two when a medium scale is used, and by three when a large scale is desired.

Statistics

Stands in *War & Battle* have very similar statistics to characters and monsters in traditional swords & sorcery adventure games, with such things as movement, hit dice, armour class, and fighting ability being as normal. The main difference is that hits are precalculated as an average and stands take damage according to the sum of their hit dice, rather than by tracking hit points. By necessity, morale is also treated differently at this scale than in adventure games, with the number of hits a stand has received is key as to whether it fights on, falls back, or routs in any given turn. Points are also provided for each unit so that the relative strength of opposing forces can be assessed. This is rarely important during a campaign game, but is provided for groups that wish to fight independent actions. The heading for each unit gives its numerical strength, composition, function, and array; each of the remaining statistics are explained hereafter.

Type

For conventional units of foot and horse, there are three grades or types, which are light, medium, and heavy. A unit of light foot can only be arrayed in open order, and a unit of heavy foot can only be arrayed in close order, if expected to function in that role; a unit of medium foot is able to function in either open or close order, but must be specified as arrayed in one or the other before an engagement is fought and cannot shift between the two during its course (except if noted as a special ability). The class of armour worn is key to determining maximum movement rates, but stands in close array are also limited to a movement rate of 9", regardless of armour worn. So, for example, a stand of spearmen in close array and wearing leather armour would have a move of 9" even though their armour would allow for 12". Similarly, a stand of archers in open array and wearing mail armour would have a move of 9" even though their formation allows for up to 12".

In the case of stands of horse, the type of horse, weight of the rider, and presence of barding determines movement in addition to the order it is drawn up in. The following table summarises the possibilities:

Horse Type	Move	Light Rider	Medium Rider	Heavy Rider	Light Barding	Medium Barding	Heavy Barding
Light	24"	-3"	-6"	-9"	-3"	-6"	-9"
Medium	21"	+0"	-3"	-6"	+0"	-3"	-6"
Heavy	18"	+0"	+0"	-3"	+0"	+0"	-3"

A stand drawn up in close array, regardless of rider and barding, has a maximum movement of 18", so a unit of lightly equipped and mounted unbarded lancers would have a maximum movement of 18" in close array, even though the weight of equipment and horse type would allow for 21" in open array.

Organisation

Although in small scale combats companies may operate independently, for large scale engagements stands are typically grouped into larger battalion or even regimental size formations. So, for instance, if a stand is made up of a company of 80 men it might be grouped with five others into a battalion of 480 men, or eleven others into a battalion of 960 men. For a medium sized engagement each stand might represent two companies totalling 160 men and be grouped into battalions of three and six stands, whilst for a large scale game each stand might represent three companies totalling 240 men and be deployed in battalions of two and four stands, which might further be grouped into regimental size forces consisting of three thousand men (twelve stands) or more. Of course, there is nothing limiting the numbers of troops on a stand to 240 men; at the large scale a single stand might represent an entire cohort deployed in eight ranks of sixty, all depending on the size of the battlefield, forces involved, and depth of deployment desired. The intent, and recommendation, is that for any given engagement there are not more than twelve individual units to move about on the battlefield.

For the purposes of *War & Battle*, although it is noted that a stand of men, demi-humans, or humanoids may have anything from ten to twenty percent of its numbers made up of better equipped “sergeants” of greater ability than the rank and file they are ignored in the basic rules for the purposes of determining the combat strength of a given stand. Officers of a significantly higher level of ability are similarly not taken into account in this regard, and are assumed to be commanding away from the front rank, but may be committed to the fighting individually. In the case of very large scale engagements, where such characters might number in the hundreds, it is usually desirable not to have to track such things.

Formation

Stand grouped into larger formations must remain in edge to edge contact with one another at all times. They can be formed in lines, blocks and columns, but in such cases only the rear most rank of stands can be shorter than the preceding ranks. That is to say if ten stands are formed into a block four wide by three deep, the first two ranks must be composed of four stands, but the third and last can be an irregular rank of two stands. If stands are removed as a result of casualties, they are taken from the front and rear ranks immediately shuffled forwards to fill the space. When in contact with fewer stands of enemies, friendly stands are not grouped around to envelop the enemy formation, but rather one is left to overlap on either side (or both sides if possible) and fights as though in direct contact.

Turn sequence

There are two distinct methods of proceeding with the turn sequence. The ‘move and countermove’ method is a system whereby either side takes turns moving their troops during each discrete phase of action; which of them goes first can be determined by a conventional initiative roll, the player with the higher result moving first in each phase. The results of combat are usually applied at the end of the phase to which they belong, so there is little significance as to who goes first in that regard. The ‘simultaneous movement’ method involves each player writing their orders down beforehand so that their forces can be moved at the same time, and thereby give the impression of fluidity of action. The turn sequence is more or less the same, regardless:

1. Determine Initiative (if necessary)
2. Initial Movement
3. Initial Shooting
4. Initial Combat
5. Reserve Movement
6. Reserve Shooting
7. Reserve Combat
8. End Movement

Determine Initiative: When using the ‘move and countermove’ method, each side rolls a die, the player with the highest result moves first, the player with the second highest result moves second, and so on. Otherwise, players write out orders for their battalions during this phase.

Initial Movement: Each player takes it in turn to move his battalions up to their movement rate in accordance with the terrain rules. Units that are charging must be declared to be doing so, and their targets indicated. A unit that is the subject of a charge may declare a counter-charge if it has not yet moved, and both are moved the appropriate distance or portion thereof. If contact is not made, it may still be during the reserve movement phase. Some units are capable of retreating rapidly in the face of an enemy charge, and may attempt to evade if contact would otherwise be made. Similarly, interceptions may be declared during this phase in response to a charge by units positioned to do so.

Initial Shooting: Units that did not move in the immediately preceding phase, and providing that they were not in close combat at the beginning of the previous phase, may shoot once during this phase if they are able.

Initial Combat: The results of charges as a result of initial movement and ongoing melee combats are now determined and applied. Units that have engaged in shooting in this turn make no close combat attacks.

Reserve Movement: Units that have not yet moved in this turn may now be moved normally. Units declared to be charging may also be moved again; counter-charges, retreats, and interceptions may also be declared or continued in this phase. Broken units are moved for the second time during this phase.

Reserve Shooting: Units that did not move in the immediately preceding phase, and providing that they were not in close combat at the beginning of the previous phase and would not exceed their shooting rate by doing so, may shoot once during this phase if they are able.

Reserve Combat: The results of charges as a result of reserve movement are now determined and applied. Units that have engaged in shooting in this turn make no close combat attacks.

End Movement: Defeated units are pushed back or break off; freshly broken units make their initial rout along with any pursuit moves as a result, but are not moved in the next initial movement phase.

Movement

This is the number of inches on the battlefield that the stand may move in a single turn over open ground without becoming fatigued. Stands capable of flying or swimming have such speeds as they are capable of noted here as well. Whilst in open order, foot and horse may move in any direction freely and pass over rough terrain with only a small reduction in movement. In close order foot and horse cannot pass easily over rough terrain and must give up a degree of movement to perform various manoeuvres as outlined below.

Advancing: A stand can advance towards the enemy up to its normal movement, and can shift 1" to the left or right for every 3" or part thereof it moves, which is useful to avoid rough terrain, or other obstacles on the battlefield. An advance can become a charge if the enemy can be reached by the addition of such movement or is otherwise contacted during the advance, but in the latter case a charge need not be declared if it is preferred that the stand advance into combat.

Passing Through: A stand of foot in open order may freely pass through other friendly unit types without disordering them or impeding its own movement. This allows for some interesting tactical options, such as being able to withdraw archers arrayed in open formation in the face of an advancing enemy, or sending out light foot in pursuit of a broken enemy unit. This applies even if the units are routing. A stand of horse in open order may freely pass through light foot as above, but not through close ordered foot or horse.

Bursting Through: Any stand may force its way through friendly units as part of a charge, retreat or rout, but the unit burst through is disordered and must succeed at a discipline check to reform in the following round. This allows for such things as knightly charges from behind heavy foot or retreats behind a second battle line, but with a commensurate risk, as disordered troops are vulnerable to enemy attack.

Falling Back: Whenever a stand drops a morale level it will fall back 3" in the following turn. This may be avoided or voluntarily instigated by means of a successful discipline check. If an enemy stand does not follow up, the unit can choose to retreat the rest of its move away from the enemy. A retreating stand can choose to move up to its charge distance, but counts as disordered until reformed.

Retreating: A unit may always choose to retreat its move away from the enemy, rather than making an advance towards them, but becomes vulnerable to rear attacks from faster moving enemies. A retreating unit may choose to move up to its charge distance, but counts as disordered until reformed. Unengaged stands can always choose to fall back instead of retreating and need not pass a discipline check.

Routing: Whenever its morale level is reduced to 0, a stand automatically routs away from the enemy up to its movement, any restrictions due to formation no longer applying. The unit counts as broken and must be rallied and reformed to take any further part in the battle. A stand that is being pursued cannot rally, and any friendly units within 3" of routers must pass a morale or discipline check or drop a level of morale themselves.

During routs and evasions, both the group in question and any pursuing battalions check for variable movement. This takes the form of a 1d6 die roll that modifies the distance moved in the phase, simulating the confusion and disorder that can take hold in such situations.:

Roll	Result
1	-3"
2-5	+0"
6	+3"

So, for example, if a battalion of medium foot with 9" movement were broken by another battalion of like composition, they would rout away potentially 6-12" each phase of movement. Charging battalions can always ignore a roll of a 1, except when pursuing routers. Pursuing routing enemies with lighter or mounted troops is the surest way to keep them from rallying and returning to the fray.

Terrain: The terrain through which a stand moves and the order it is in affects the amount of movement it is able to take, as the following table indicates:

Order	Open Ground	Rough Ground	Light Woods	Heavy Woods
Open	-	-	-	-3"
Close	-	-3"	-3"	-6"

These modifiers are doubled for horses, the minimum movement being 0". A stand of close ordered troops in rough ground or light woods is considered disordered, as is a stand of open ordered troops in heavy woods; a stand of close ordered troops in heavy woods are considered to be fragmented. Such conditions last until the stands leave the terrain causing the problem.

Shooting

Stands capable of making ranged attacks have a range noted in the form "x/y/z" or "a/b/c/d". The values refer to the ranges in inches at which the weapon suffers a penalty to hit, typically a cumulative -2 for each increment beyond the first; hand hurled weapons, such as hand axes, spears, and so on, typically have a very short range, meaning that stands have to approach very close to the enemy for them to be effective, so they are usually only useful for drawing out defensive formations or seeing off retreating enemies; bows, crossbows, and slings, on the other hand, have a considerably longer range. A stand of long bowmen might have a range of 7/14/21, for instance, and thus expect to get two or three rounds of ranged attacks before the enemy closes with them, though the casualties they would inflict at long range would be far fewer than at short range. Units that intend to withdraw behind their own lines cannot expect to shoot more than once at close range, whatever the case.

This is a relatively easy matter; since range only incurs penalties to hit, then the average number of casualties is a step less on the probability chart for each penalty. The first two ranks of archers is eligible to shoot, so a unit of sixty bowmen in open order on the small scale would constitute twenty attacks. If they were drawn up in close order they would be able to shoot forty times, but be unable to retreat through foot in close order. The number of hits caused by a stand is equal to its fighting ability plus the armour class of its enemy, adjusted by any modifiers. For close ordered troops using a second rank of attackers, this is doubled and a minus two applied (though this cannot take the total lower than the original number). This is then modified by rolling the damage die for each stand and comparing to the following chart:

Result	Modifier
0-1	-2
2-3	-1
4-5	+0
6-7	+1
8-9	+2
10-11	+3
12-13	+4
14-15	+5
16-17	+6
18-19	+7

A battalion or regiment that suffers a number of shooting hits equal to 10% of its strength in a single round or cumulatively without having had to test, must test morale as described hereafter. For example, a battalion of spearmen formed of six stands of one hundred hit dice worth of men would have to test after every sixty shooting hits or whenever it took sixty shooting hits in a single turn. A battalion of six stands of close ordered long bowmen at short range (fighting ability 1) would inflict 60 unmodified hits per round (10 per stand) versus an enemy with ring armour and a large shield (armour class 5). The following table lists the ranges in inches for most conventional missile weapons in *War & Battle*:

Weapon Type	Range
Dagger, Dart, Club	1/2/3
Hand Axe, Light Hammer, Spear	1/2/3
Javelin	2/4/6
Sling (Stone)	5/10/15
Short Bow	5/10/15
Sling (Bullet)	6/12/18
Composite Short Bow	6/12/18
Light Crossbow	6/12/18
Long Bow	7/14/21
Composite Long Bow	7/14/21
Heavy Crossbow	8/16/24

Fighting

For the purposes of *War & Battle*, the man to man table has been converted into a matrix that shows the average number of hits a stand will achieve per twenty combatants engaged with the enemy, which is to say per rank of twenty able to fight. For convenience, each unit has its own average number of hits provided versus the most common armour class values likely to be encountered. Various factors can affect the overall fighting ability of a stand during the course of play. Ignoring the potential effects of magic for the moment, the most common modifiers are the result of the changing circumstances of battle.

		Armour Class										
		10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Fighting Ability	0	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
	1	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	2	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
	3	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
	4	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
	5	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5
	6	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6
	7	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7
	8	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8
	9	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9
10	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	

Charging: A stand that is declared to be charging into combat receives a +2 bonus to hit, but the reckless nature of the attack means that their opponents also gain a +1 to hit them (alternatively, their dexterity bonuses are negated, whichever is worse). Charging horse can deliver double damage with lances, whilst spear armed foot can achieve the same by setting their weapons against a charge.

Mounted: When attacking foot, horse men gain a +1 bonus to hit and their opponents suffer a -1 penalty when making their own attacks. This does not apply to hobilar or other mounted foot whose steeds are not trained for war, but it does apply to mounted bowmen and crossbowmen who are accustomed to fighting from the saddle when required.

Flank Attack: A stand that charges another in the flank negates all benefits the target might otherwise get from shields and no return attacks are possible in the first round of combat. Furthermore, regardless of the number of hits scored, the flanked unit drops a morale level.

Rear Attack: The same rules for a flank attack apply to a rear charge, but the attacking stand also gains a +2 bonus to hit. A charge by heavy cavalry into the rear of heavy foot is clearly a devastating proposition. A retreating or routing stand is treated as though attacked from the rear, but morale levels cannot drop below 0 in any event.

Weapons: Although the old school reference and index compilation does not provide bonuses to hit for weapons types versus armour types there is no reason that such numbers could not be applied to individual unit statistics; it would simply be a matter of adding or subtracting from the number of hits versus respective armour classes. It is suggested that even if those tables are not used that a +1 bonus to hit should be given to two handed weapons, long bows, and heavy crossbows. This is noted, for instance, in the above unit description for the 200 Level 0 (Halberdiers) as “0(1)”.

The number of attacks that a stand may make in a round is critical to its combat effectiveness. Whilst most conventional units make 20 attacks whilst in close order and 10 attacks in open order, it is possible for rear ranks to engage the enemy if the unit is properly armed, and units composed of large creatures, such as trolls or ogres will only make 10 attacks per stand. Equipping heavy foot with long pole arms, spears, and pikes is the primary means by which additional ranks can engage the enemy in melee. Each additional rank fights as the first, but with a cumulative -2 penalty to hit. Rear ranks cannot attack as part of a charge, but they can fight when receiving a charge. Foot in open array cannot benefit in this way. Stands equipped with these weapons have their average hits noted by rank, which is to say the number caused when two ranks attack, when three ranks attack, and so on:

Stands equipped with ranged weapons, such as bows and crossbows, may also shoot in multiple ranks in the same manner and with the same penalties, but in a maximum of two ranks and without penalty whilst arrayed in open order. Furthermore, a stand cannot employ slings in close order. Range penalties also reduce effectiveness.

Morale

Every stand has a morale level and an associated number of hits it can endure before testing to drop a morale level. When a unit drops a morale level it must fall back 3” unless it passes a discipline check, and when a stand reaches 0 morale, it is routed. Stands within 3” of friendly routers must pass a morale test or drop a level of morale themselves.

Morale Level: Every stand or group of stands has a morale score expressed as a percentage. As with the Old School Reference & Index Compilation the base score is equal to 50% + 5%/per hit die or 1% per hit point (whichever is more appropriate). This may be modified by the usual factors to take into account leaders, discipline, quality, alignment, treatment and so on. The morale level is the number of failures a stand can endure before routing; it can be restored by rallying or bolstering.

Morale Test: Every time a stand or group of stands takes a number of hits equal to ten percent of its total hit dice strength, loses its commander, or witnesses a friendly stand routing within 3" it must test morale. This requires the player to roll percentage dice under the morale score of the unit. Every level of morale dropped imposes a ten percent penalty on the morale score for this purpose. A failure by one to twenty-five percent indicates that the unit has dropped one morale level, a failure of twenty-six to fifty percent indicates that the unit has dropped two morale levels, and a failure of fifty-one percent or more indicates that a unit has dropped three morale levels.

Rallying: A routing stand may attempt to rally during any turn it is no longer being pursued or in danger of being charged. A successful morale test restores one morale level, and causes it to halt its rout at the end of the round. From that point on the stand is considered disordered.

Discipline

When units become disordered they must pass a discipline test to reform. Similarly, if a stand does not wish to fall back 3" after dropping a morale level it must pass a discipline test. If the enemy routs or retreats from combat, a unit able to pursue must pass a discipline test not to. Additionally, some types of unit are compelled to attack the enemy when they come within a certain distance, and can only be restrained by means of a successful discipline test.

Discipline Test: A discipline test uses the morale score of the unit.

Disordered: A disordered stand cannot advance towards the enemy and must pass a discipline test in order to reform. A unit can only reform if it is out of combat and does not take any losses in the same round.

Reordering: A stand may attempt to reorder its ranks after suffering losses. A unit that has lost no morale levels need not test, but any other may take a discipline check to regain a lost morale level. A unit can only reorder if it is out of combat and does not take any losses in the same round.

Destruction

A stand or group of stands reduced to 50% strength is considered to be destroyed and removed from the tabletop.

Appendices

Appendix One: Example Stands

120 Level 0 Heavy Foot (Spearmen): M 9; AC 8(7); HD 1-1; #A 1; FA 0; D 1-6.

Equipment: Padded Armour, Large Shield, Short Spear.

Note: Armour Class 6 versus missile weapons.

Morale: 50 (3)

60 Level 0 Light Foot (Bowmen): M 9; AC 8(7); HD 1-1; #A 1 or 2; FA 0; D 1-6.

Equipment: Padded Armour, Short Bow, Small Shield, Hand Axe.

Morale: 50 (3)

120 Level 0 Heavy Foot (Halberdiers): M 9; AC 5; HD 1-1; #A 1; FA 0(1); D 1-10.

Equipment: Halberd, Mail Armour.

Morale: 50 (4)

120 Level 0 Heavy Foot (Pikemen): M 9; AC 8; HD 1-1; #A 1; FA 0(1); D 1-6.

Equipment: Pike, Small Shield, Short Sword.

Morale: 50 (3)

120 Goblin Heavy Foot (Spearmen): M 9(6); AC 7(6); HD 1-1; #A 1; FA 1; D 1-6.

Equipment: Large Shield, Short Spear, Ring Armour.

Note: Armour Class 6 versus missile weapons. Damage 2d6 when set to receive a charge. -1 hits in bright daylight.

Morale: 50 (3)

120 Orc Heavy Foot (Spearmen): M 12(9); AC 7(6); HD 1; #A 1; FA 2; D 1-6 or 1-8.

Equipment: Large Shield, Short Spear, Ring Armour.

Note: Armour Class 6 versus missile weapons. Damage 2d6 when set to receive a charge. -1 hits in bright daylight.

Morale: 50 (3)

120 Hobgoblin Heavy Foot (Spearmen): M 12(9); AC 6(5); HD 1+1; #A 1; FA 3; D 1-6 or 1-8.

Equipment: Large Shield, Short Spear, Ring Armour.

Note: Armour Class 6 versus missile weapons. Damage 2d6 when set to receive a charge. Good Discipline +1.

Morale: 51 (4)

120 Gnoll Heavy Foot (Spearmen): M 12(9); AC 6(5); HD 2; #A 1; FA 5; D 1-6 or 1-8.

Equipment: Large Shield, Short Spear, Ring Armour.

Note: Armour Class 6 versus missile weapons. Damage 2d6 when set to receive a charge. Poor Discipline -1.

Morale: 55 (4).

30 Ogre Heavy Foot: M 9; AC 5; HD 4+1; #A 1; FA 5; D 3-12.

Equipment: Short Bow, Small Shield, Padded Armour.

Note: Armour Class 6 versus missile weapons.

Morale: 66 (4)