

Into the Dark

Dark Age / Medieval Mass Combat Wargame Rules



Introduction

Exactly who decided wargame rules needed introductions?

I'm aware that there are plenty of rule sets on the market for the medieval period. However, many of those rules are actually designed for skirmish fighting. Even some of the better known rules for mass combat are really just skirmish rules done on a giant scale. Into The Dark is designed for battles between armies, similar to those found in history or heroic literature. Large scale battles 'look' like large scale battles, and yet can still be fought to a conclusion in a reasonable amount of time.

These rules were originally designed for 25mm/30mm figures, although they can easily be used for 15mm by dividing all ranges in half, or by using centimetres instead of inches. Don't be put off by the size of the rules, they actually play very fast and easy. Try only the basic rules until you are comfortable with play, then add whatever optional rules you like. The section on game preparation takes up a lot of room, but is only needed when first creating your army. In fact you could skip it if you're just checking out how the rules work. Come back to it only if you decide to give them a try.

PART I - GAME PREPARATION

The Troops

Choosing Your Army
Basing
Unit Organisation
Troop Quality
Troop Types
Point Costs

PART II - BASIC RULES

Setup

Gaming Area
Deployment
Formations
Zone of Control

Terrain

Disordering Terrain
Restrictive Terrain
Roads

Turn Sequence

Rallys
Initiative
Movement
Combat
Morale

Combat

Armour
Missile Fire
Melee
Combat Results
Pursuits & Rallys

Movement

Distances
Turns & Wheels
Charges & Evades
Disorder
Miscellaneous

Morale

Morale Levels
Morale States
Morale Tests
Control Tests

PART III - OPTIONAL RULES

Special Troops

Champions
Warbands
Skirmishers
Peasants
Chariots

SWAT

Longbow
Polearm
Crossbow
Pike
Shieldwall
Wedge
Hedgehog

Misc

Command & Control
Difficult Maneuvers
Concealed Deployment
Scouting
Army Lists

PART I - GAME PREPARATION

THE TROOPS

Before you can begin, you'll need a wargame army from the Dark Age or Medieval periods. The army you choose should be one you're interested in (after all - that's half the fun), and should be modelled after a historical one - troop types not found in the original army should not appear in yours. For ease of reference, your army can be picked from any respectable set of army lists, or your own research, or you can use those (soon) found at the end of these rules.

This historical army acts as a both an example, and a natural restriction, and forces the player to make realistic troop decisions. This army list or 'Order of Battle' can be a detailed description of the army the player intends to use, along with descriptions of each unit and its capabilities, or a simple list of the units, their statistics, sizes and costs on a sheet of paper. Sample sheets will be included at the end of these rules.

Choosing Your Army

Unless your game is part of a campaign, or a prepared scenario, which pre-determines the forces involved, you'll need to agree upon the size of the opposing armies. This will depend on how many figures you have, the size of your table, and how much time you wish to spend. The bigger the armies, the longer the game will take. For an 'encounter' battle the easiest way to ensure a fair game is to use a pointing system, and decide on the maximum points each player may use to create his army. Using 1000 point armies is good for quick games between two players, while 2000 point armies are much larger and will require an entire evening, or multiple players. How to calculate the points of your army is described later in these rules.

Basing

Although not necessary, there are two reasons for placing multiple figures on standardized bases.

1. to make sure both sides get equal numbers of equal troop types into a melee, so that an opponent that unrealistically packs figures onto tiny bases doesn't gain an unfair combat advantage.
2. to make moving the figures easier.

Two common and popular basing systems are the WRG system (60 or 75mm wide – 3 or 4 figures per base) and the GW system (20 or 25mm per figure).

As long as the principle of equal troop types taking up the same amount of room is kept, any convenient base size can be used. There is no need to rebase figures.

Unit Organization

All the figures in an army must be grouped together into units. The figures that make up a unit must be in base to base contact at all times, no unit may be split into smaller pieces. When creating your Order of Battle, several unit characteristics need to be defined. These characteristics represent the abilities of the troops in the unit, such as: quality, type, armour, and density.

If different troop types are mixed in a unit, it moves at the speed of the slowest. When in melee, the figures in contact with the enemy determine the attack/defence values, or when giving or receiving missile fire the values of the majority troop type are used. It is simpler to keep all troops in a unit the same type.

Troop Quality

Armies of the middle ages had a real mix of troop quality levels. Some units were very good, others very poor.

The Quality of the troops refers to their experience and training as soldiers, and their willingness and ability to fight as a cohesive unit. This Quality could vary greatly. Battle hardened veterans are a much harder foe to defeat than newly raised levies. The quality of your troops is defined by their Troop Quality Level. This is a figure's fighting ability or battle experience, and its morale level.

Quality:	Level	Morale	Description
	5	fanatic	Fanatics represent any units from history given to mindless bloodlust. These could be religious knights, or the berserker infantry of the vikings. These units were dangerous to an enemy because of their reckless assault, but this same ferocity made them unpredictable and uncontrollable for their own commanders. Steady fanatics receive a +1 modifier in melee.
	4	elite	Elite units represent the best of an armies regular fighting forces. These were level headed knights, or personal bodyguards who had trained since youth, or troops with a great many years of military service. They had good equipment and faith in their own abilities.
	3	average	Average troops represent the backbone of most armies. They were troops with some effective military training and battle experience and were properly armed and equipped.
	2	levy	Levy were troops with minimal training and equipment, not particularly motivated or couragous.

When calculating an army's point value for encounter battles, the Troop Quality Level is the basic cost of each figure. ie: levies = 2 pts each, elites = 4 pts each

Troop Types

The figures in a unit either have melee weapons and are considered **Melee Troops**, or missile weapons and are considered **Missile Troops**, or have both and are considered **Cross Trained**. These are very important classifications as they determine how a unit fights in combat.

The units in the army are further characterised by a three letter code. This describes;

1st - how close the warriors stand to each other when formed up in their units, (formation density)

2nd - what type of protection the average warrior in the unit has, (armour average)

3rd - if they are considered infantry or cavalry, (foot/mounted)

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Density :
- (C) Close order tightly packed
 - (L) Loose order loosely packed
 - (O) Open order lots of room

Close order - troops that move and fight shoulder to shoulder. This gives them a powerful, compact mass while sacrificing a little speed and flexibility. Figures mounted 4 figs per base (WRG) or individually mounted on 20mm bases (GW) are close order troops.

Loose order - troops that like to have a little more elbow room to move and swing weapons. This gives infantry a little more movement flexibility, and mounted the room for impetuous charges. They sacrifice some of their offensive punch while gaining a bit more manoeuvrability. Figures mounted 3 figs per base (WRG) or individually mounted on 25mm bases (GW) are loose order troops.

Open order - troops that operate in a spread out, dispersed formation to occupy space and screen the rest of the troops. They are normally intended to harass the enemy instead of directly charging him. They are usually unarmoured and missile armed. Figures mounted 2 figs per base (WRG) or mounted on 40mm bases (GW) are open order troops.

There is no point cost associated with the unit density.

2) Armour:	(U) Unarmoured	Clothes only
	(P) Protected	Leather or quilted armour
	(A) Armoured	Chainmail, or plate cuirass
	(M) Mailed	Plate mail
	(E) Encased	Complete plate armour

Note - all troops are assumed to be carrying shields unless otherwise stated.

The amount and quality of armour worn by troops will effect the unit's longevity in battle. However, good armour will add significantly to the cost of the unit. The following list outlines the various forms of armour and any additional cost.

Unarmoured - troops dressed in ordinary clothes or uniforms who must depend on their shields alone for protection. Barbarian warriors would be a good example of this type. In combat they're hit by a 3-6 on a d6. There is no extra cost involved, their basic Quality level is their cost.

Protected - troops with some minimal armour made of leather or quilted material. Lightly armoured retainers or men-at-arms would be dressed in this fashion. In combat they're hit on a 4-6. They cost an extra 1 point per figure.

Armoured - troops with chainmail armour or a steel breastplate, and normally helmets. This is the standard for armoured troops such as Normans or medieval sergeants. In combat they're hit on a 5-6. They cost an extra 2 points per figure.

Mailed - troops protected by steel plates & chainmail armour, or unusually complete cuirass, and full helmet. Cavalry would have some barding. Early medieval knights would be armoured like this. They're hit on a 6 only, costing 3 extra points per figure.

Encased - troops completely encased in full plate armour, and full helmet. Cavalry would have complete barding. Later period medieval knights would wear this armour. They're hit on a '7', costing 4 extra points per figure. This type of armour wasn't really cost effective, slowing down the troops, while giving extra protection only against the weapons it was developed to combat, such as crossbows and polearms. Troops armoured like this have their maximum move distance decreased because of the weight of their armour, (and are still hit in combat on a natural die roll of 6).

3) Category:	(F) Foot	troops are infantry
	(M) Mounted	troops are cavalry

Foot troops must walk in order to move. When calculating the cost of a unit, they are simply the basic quality cost plus any armour additions.

Mounted troops ride when they move and are normally cavalry, but may also be special troop types such as chariots. When calculating their cost, double the normal cost for their quality and armour.

Point Cost of Troops

The purpose of a troop cost is to allow armies of different troop types to be given a value, so different armies of equal value can fight each other on an even basis, with the determining factors being skill (and luck) and not how big or how good your chosen army is (or in one company's outrageous example, how much money you paid for the figures). It allows for a fair start to battles that are not part of a campaign or a pre-designed scenario (where anything can happen).

Troop Cost - A figure's basic cost is calculated by adding its Troop Quality level to its Armour cost. If the figure is mounted, the basic cost is doubled.

Most troops are assumed to be armed with one basic weapon. This may be a melee or a missile weapon, and in most cases there is no cost for this first weapon. However, if a player wishes to have a unit cross-trained, with both missile and melee weapons, the troop cost per figure is doubled.

Unit Cost - An army's value is the total cost of all its units. To get the unit cost, multiply the final troop cost by the number of figures in the unit. Then, to represent the command structure of the unit, necessary to ensure the unit's cohesiveness, add the troop quality level x 10. (actually this is just an additional cost per unit to balance the greater value of a large number of small units over a small number of large units)

Examples:

Town Militia (CUF):	Quality	levy	2 pts
	Armour	none	0 pts
	Category	infantry	-
		Troop Cost	2 pts

Unit Cost: (if a) 12 figure unit = $12 \times 2 = 24$, plus command (2×10) = 44 points

Knight (LMM):	Quality	fanatic	5 pts
	Armour	plate mail	3 pts
	Category	cavalry	x2
		Troop Cost	16 pts

Unit Cost: (if a) 12 figure unit = $12 \times 16 = 192$, plus command (5×10) = 242 points

Combat Archer (LPF):	Quality	elite	4 pts
	Armour	leather	1 pt

Category	infantry	-
	cross trained	x2
	Troop Cost	10 pts

Unit Cost: (if a) 12 figure unit = 12 x 10 = 120, plus command (4 x 10) = 160 points

PART II - BASIC RULES

SETUP

These rules are designed to be played with standard six sided dice (d6), the more the better. You will also need a measuring device such as a ruler or measuring tape, and markers of some sort, such as bingo chips of two different colours, or cut sections of pipe cleaners. And two armies of course.

Gaming Area

First, you'll need some kind of playing surface. This area will depend on the size of your figures, the size of the armies involved, and what you have available. If the battle is being fought with 25 or 30mm figures, a dining room table should be sufficient for small battles, but a playing surface of at least 4 feet by 8 feet will be needed for larger ones. If 15mm figures are used, a dining room table should be more than enough.

Unless you're recreating a battle from history, you'll need some method of placing terrain. Care should be taken when setting up the battlefield, too much rough terrain will limit manoeuvre. Medieval armies, because of their limited mobility preferred to engage on open fields. There are several methods of randomly determining terrain, use whatever system both players agree on. A common method is - one player places terrain, the other player picks his side.

Deployment

The method of deployment will depend on whether a equal point 'meeting engagement' battle or a campaign / scenario battle is being fought. If the battle is part of a campaign or scenario, the method of deployment will be determined by the conditions of that campaign or scenario.

If it's a meeting engagement, any type of hidden deployment may be used, a blocking screen down the center of the table, quick sketch maps, etc, or use the following system. Each side alternates setting up units, one at a time, first all the foot troops, then all the mounted. To begin, each side rolls a die. The side with the lower score starts by placing one foot unit, then the other side does, and they alternate until all the foot units are placed. If one player has more foot units than his opponent, he places the leftover units now. Next place the mounted units, using the same procedure as for the foot.

You may deploy no further in than 1/4 of the table width, and less if agreed upon, and no closer than 12" from the side edges (unless you have a small table).

Formations

The most effective troop formation is a two rank deep line, as many figures wide as you feel effective, with the back rank the same size as the front, all facing the same direction. A rectangle, 12 figures wide by 2 deep is a common formation.

Zone of Control

All units have a 'Zone of Control', which extends straight forward of the unit's front. This space is considered to be the area where a unit can react to an enemy units movement. For melee troops this zone is equal to half of its own normal movement distance, and they may 'opportunity charge' any enemy unit moving in this ZOC. For missile troops this zone is equal to their weapons' close range, and they may 'opportunity fire' at any enemy moving in this ZOC.

TURN SEQUENCE

Now the scene is set to engage each other in battle. The troops are organized into their units, and the units are lined up in their rows, ready and waiting for the first turn. Then, the die is cast.

These rules follow a move - countermove alternating sequence of play.

Sequence of Play

1. Rallys - Any attempt at rallying troops is now done at the beginning of the turn and any routing troops that fail to rally are moved immediately.
2. Dice for initiative. - At the beginning of each turn both sides roll dice, the winner decides if he wishes to keep or pass the initiative to his opponent. The side with the initiative moves first. The winner of last turn's initiative roll receives a -1 to his roll for each consecutive turn he won the initiative. For example - if he won the last two rolls in a row, he would receive a -2.
3. Movement
 - a. The side with initiative moves first.
 - b. The other side moves.
 - c. Counter-charges, evades, and opportunity charges are moved, out of sequence, as they occur.
4. Combat
 - a. Missile fire
 - b. Melee
5. Morale Tests

Movement is not considered completely simultaneous, although firing and combat is.

MOVEMENT

During each turn, the side with the initiative moves all their troops first, then the other side moves theirs. Troops that rallied or moved during the rally phase may not move during the movement phase. Some movement may occur out of phase (ie; evades, counter-charges, opportunity charges). All movement must be straight forward moves and/or forward wheels, up to a units maximum move distance, or a unit may turn completely around (about face), reversing direction. A unit cannot move unless all its figures are facing the same direction.

Distances

The below distances are for use with 25mm to 30mm figures, for 15mm half the distances or use centimetres instead of inches.

Maximum movement allowance by troop type:

Type	Move	Rout/Evade
Close order Foot	6"	3d6"
Loose order Foot	8"	3d6"
Open order Foot	8"	3d6"
Close order Mounted	8"	4d6"
Loose order Mounted	12"	4d6"
Open order Mounted	16"	5d6"

SPECIAL : Limit to maximum move distance because of armour weight:

Encased Foot	4"	2d6"
Encased Mounted	8"	3d6"

Turning

Turning a unit completely around so that it faces the opposite direction normally uses up half of the unit's turn, (unless disordered when it takes the whole turn). Turning a unit to the left or right is not normally permitted, this movement must be done as a forward wheel.

Wheeling

Wheels are a way of changing the direction a unit is facing, and are measured along the outside edge. They are conducted by leaving the inside figure in place, and moving the rest of the front rank forward along a curved arc without breaking contact, until either the outside figure's maximum movement is reached, or the unit is facing in the desired direction. Back ranks now fill in behind the front one and any left over movement may be taken. No slanted movement, or

backward wheels are permitted. Units are definitely not permitted to wheel from the center, with half the unit moving forward, and half backwards.

Charging

Any move that intends to contact the enemy, whether straight ahead or not, is a charge, and is the same distance as a normal move. If the unit being charged, runs away before contact, the chargers may stop upon reaching the target's original position, or continue the charge until they've used up their maximum move.

Counter-Charges

Melee troops that are charged from the front may immediately charge back, known as counter-charging. Counter-charges are treated exactly the same as charges. The two units meet at about the halfway point, unless one side moves significantly faster than the other. Counter charges may allow a unit to move more than once in a turn.

Impetuous Charges

These are meant to represent wild, powerful charges and are normally permitted only to cavalry. Units that charge impetuous hit their targets harder, doubling the amount of dice they're allowed in melee and sometimes causing an extra morale test for the target unit. These advantages are only good for the first round of combat however, the unit returns to normal for subsequent turns. To be eligible, cavalry must be at least 4 inches from their target and these last 4 inches of movement must be in a straight line without any wheels or turns. Any unit charging or counter-charging an impetuous unit becomes disordered upon contact unless they're impetuous also. Impetuous charges are not permitted in or through disordering terrain.

Opportunity Charges

Opportunity charges are moved out of sequence (see ZOC), but are otherwise exactly the same as ordinary charges, and they may be impetuous if they could normally be so. Opportunity charges may allow a unit to move more than once in a turn.

Evading

Open order troops and troops armed with missile weapons may attempt to avoid an enemy charge by evading. This is an intentional quick retreat which includes a free turn at the start, but must be directly away from the charger, and ends up facing away from them. Missile troops that are not cross trained may be forced to evade. Each type of unit has a number of dice to be rolled when evading, the result being how far the unit moves. The entire distance rolled must be moved, and during the rally phase next turn, you must turn back (rally) to face the way you came. If the unit does not move far enough to get beyond reach of the chargers, they are caught and attacked in the back and may not fight back during melee this turn. Evading may possibly allow a unit to move multiple times during a turn, being allowed to evade each new charge. An

evading missile unit is not allowed to fire, then move. Fire is done during fire phase, if the unit is still eligible (very rare) it may fire then.

Disorder

This is the disruption of a unit's normal organized formation, affecting both its combat ability and its morale. This is usually caused by a unit moving in disordering terrain, by routing or chasing a routing enemy, by failing a control test, or turning to face more than one direction at a time. A unit may also become disordered if it interpenetrates another unit. A disordered unit should be marked in some manner such as with a coloured counter.

A disordered unit wheels at half normal speed, takes twice as long to perform frontage changes, and takes a full turn to turn around. A disordered unit counts only its front rank figures while in melee and receives a -1 modifier during morale and control tests. A unit may reform its order by rallying.

Frontage Changes

A unit may normally expand or contract its frontage by up to 8 figures per turn (4 figures per 1/2 turn) if it's not moving or in melee. A disordered unit or one in melee may only change frontage at half this rate. While in melee, a unit may expand its frontage (plus fill in any back ranks) using unengaged figures only.

Interpenetration

This is the movement of one unit through another. No unit may pass through an enemy unit, or pass through a friendly one that is in melee or routing. Otherwise they may, but some cases will have unfortunate results depending upon their formations. Open formation foot units may pass through other friendly units at any time, without penalty to the open unit. In all other cases, if one unit is stationary while the other passes through it, the stationary unit is treated as if it were disordering terrain for the moving unit. The stationary unit is not effected. If both interpenetrating units move this turn, their maximum moves are halved, and both units become disordered.

TERRAIN

One of the enjoyable aspects of miniature wargaming is making the scene as realistic as possible. Good terrain pieces add to this visual effect. Open fields, woods, rivers, hills, farms and roads are all common terrain features, which can be purchased from any hobby store, or made using inexpensive materials.

Disordering Terrain

Close order foot and all mounted consider the following to be disordering terrain; steep slopes, open woods, brush, rough ground, buildings, shallow streams, linear obstacles such as fences or ditches, and friendly troops. Moving in this type of terrain disorders the moving unit. The

maximum movement allowance for mounted troops in disordering terrain decreases to half their normal movement.

Restrictive Terrain

Dense woods and swamps - disorder all foot and maximum movement is halved. May not be entered by mounted.

Deep streams - disorder all troops, all foot movement is halved, all mounted movement quartered.

Deep water - may not be entered at all under normal circumstances. If troops are forced into it the following occurs; unarmoured or protected cavalry may swim at quarter speed, unarmoured infantry and armoured cavalry lose 50% of their numbers to drowning and the rest swim at quarter speed. All other troops drown.

Roads

Roads are considered to be 2 inches wide, and cancel the effects of any disordering terrain while a unit is completely on it. To move along a road a unit must be in column, and (depending on basing) 1 multi-base or 2 figures wide.

COMBAT

All combat, missile and melee, is calculated in exactly the same way. The first two ranks of a unit are normally the only ones eligible to participate in combat, and only those figures that are directly facing an enemy. For each four figures fighting (rounded down) one 6 sided die is thrown. Calculations are done per unit attacking, you do not carry over fractions from unit to unit. Each die that equals or beats the target's armour level with modifiers, results in one casualty. Rolling a natural '1' is always a miss, a '6' always a hit, regardless of the final 'to hit' number needed.

Armour

The defending unit's armour determines the minimum number needed per die to cause casualties. The below chart gives this minimum number (before modifiers) for each type of armour.

Defenders Armour:	(U) Unarmoured	hit on a 3+
	(P) Protected	hit on a 4+
	(A) Armoured	hit on a 5+
	(M) Mailed	hit on a 6+
	(E) Encased	hit on a 7+ (or a natural 6)

Missile Fire

Shooting occurs after all movement is completed, but before melee combat. Foot troops may move up to half their maximum movement allowance and still shoot without penalty, although moving more than half means they cannot fire at all. Mounted may move full and still fire normally. Units may not shoot if charging, in melee, pursuing, interpenetrating, or being interpenetrated. Ammunition supply is assumed to be sufficient for the entire game. Missile range is measured from the front rank.

At long range the number of dice thrown is halved (ie: 1 d6 per 8 figs firing, rounded DOWN). It is possible for a unit to fire partly at long range, and partly at short because of its position. If needed, measure the figures straight towards the target unit to discover where the range changes. Figures in a second rank use the range of the figure in front.

If possible, a unit must shoot first at any enemies charging it. If not being charged it may shoot at any target in its range and arc of fire this turn. A unit must normally concentrate its fire onto one target. If there are figures which cannot hit the first target, they may shoot at another one in arc, concentrating as much as possible. A unit that is being charged must split its fire as evenly as possible among all the units charging it.

Even if done out of sequence, all firing is considered simultaneous.

Target Eligibilities

Line of sight from the firing unit to the target is required. No firing over other units is permitted unless the firer or the target is on elevated terrain.

Foot armed with missile weapons may only fire directly to their front, with NO arc of fire. Mounted may fire in any one direction, forward, back, left or right. However, if any troops in a unit are eligible to fire at an enemy unit, then all the troops in the unit are eligible to fire on them (if in range). This represents the arc of fire instead.

Troops involved in melee are not eligible targets, although those not involved (a third rank, an extended line, etc) are.

Opportunity Fire

Missile troops also have a ZOC, equal to their close range, and may opportunity fire on any enemy unit moving in it. However, this does not mean missile units can fire twice in one turn. The opportunity fire merely represents their regular fire done out of sequence. If missile troops are the target of a charge, they may be eligible to opportunity fire at the chargers, who then must take a morale test (before contact).

Missile Weapons

Foot Bow - This includes all bows used by infantry, other than longbows or heavy crossbows. These troops do not have shields unless cross trained, and even then can not use them while firing. For convenience sake, this category includes light crossbows.

Mounted Bow - Any bow used by mounted troops. Shields are restricted the same as for foot.

Sling - Leather thongs used by foot troops to hurl either stones or specially cast lead bullets. These troops have shields, and can use them even while firing.

Javelins, Thrown Axes, etc - These very short range weapons are not very useful as missiles. These troops have shields, and can use them even while firing.

Ranges :	Close	Long
Foot Bow	6"	18"
Mounted Bow	6"	12"
Sling	6"	12"
Javelin	6"	-

Modifiers - These are added to or subtracted from the dice rolled in combat. They are cumulative.

Target unit is:	Open order foot	-2
	Loose order foot or open order mounted	-1
	Shieldless, or being hit from the rear	+1
	In light cover (woods, fences)	-1
	In heavy cover (buildings, walls)	-2

For example, a 16 figure unit firing at close range would roll 4 dice, or 2 dice at long range. If they were firing at a loose order foot target unit in leather armour they would need a 5 or 6 on the dice to get hits (protected unit 4+ to hit, each die modified by -1 for target's loose order).

Melee

All melee combat is considered simultaneous. A figure must be facing and its base in contact with the enemy, or be in the second rank directly behind such a figure, to be counted in melee. NO extra overlapping figures are counted. Only melee troops are meant to fight hand to hand, missile troops in melee are penalized.

Flanks & Rear

The flanks of a unit are its left and right sides, the rear is its back edge. To be flanked, a unit must be attacked by at least 4 enemy figures on a side that has no figures turned to face these enemies. A unit can get flanked by an enemy charging into their flank, or by a larger enemy unit already in melee and overlapping, wheeling the overlapping figures into flank contact. The flanking unit receives a melee advantage, and the flanked unit receives a severe morale penalty.

If a unit manages to attack an enemy unit in the flank or rear, it increases the number of dice it may roll in melee. The figures in contact with the rear or flank of the enemy unit double the number of dice they roll, (or more simply - the number of figures normally needed per melee dice is halved - ie: 1 d6 for every 2 figures).

If attacked in the flank or rear, the attacked unit is pinned, and must wait until the next turn before turning to face its attackers. If attacked in the flank only, when the attacked unit turns, it forms a column facing the enemy, or it may turn only the figures being attacked, and now face two directions (and become disordered).

Melee Weapons

There is no practical difference in the basic hand to hand weapons used in these rules, it is assumed that most weapons have an equivalent effect and the only important factor is the quality of the warrior. Exceptions that require a modification to the basic rules are found in the optional rules section.

Shields - All melee troops have shields. Shields are considered to be large enough to cover most of the body, or light enough to be moved quickly to block an opponent's attack. Shields are not counted when attacked from the rear.

Modifiers - These are added to or subtracted from the dice rolled in combat. They are cumulative.

Attacking unit is:		Enemy unit is:	
charging or counter-charging	+1	without shields or unable to use them	+1
steady fanatics (quality 5)	+1	uphill of attacking unit	-1
peasants or missile troops *	-1	defending an obstacle (fence, ditch)	-1

* unless the missile troops are cross trained

Remember to double the number of dice rolled (1 d6 per 2 figures) if your unit charged impetuously or if it's attacking an enemy unit's flank or rear. These two causes ARE cumulative, so if you charge impetuously into a target units flank or rear you receive 1 d6 per figure in contact.

Combat Results

Both sides take morale tests for being in combat (see morale) with possible results being; passed, shaken, driven back, or routed. If neither unit is driven back or routed, then combat continues next turn.

Driven Back

When a unit is driven back, it immediately moves directly back 4 inches, away from its melee opponent(s) but still facing them. Its opponents will normally move up to stay in contact. A unit that is driven back into a friendly unit pushes it back also. Close order troops (unless disordered) may refuse to be pushed back by friendly units, routing them instead. A unit that cannot move back the full 4 inches, routs instead.

Rout

When a unit routs, it runs away from the enemy. Roll the number of dice appropriate to their troop type (see movement distances), and immediately move that total away, finishing with their backs to the enemy. They are shaken and disordered. During their first rout move they move straight away from the enemy(s) that broke them. On subsequent turns, they move towards their own base edge by the shortest route. Surrounded units surrender.

Routers are considered loose order troops for all purposes. If they meet friendly troops they will attempt to pass through any existing gaps at least 3 figures wide. If there are none, they will attempt to interpenetrate the friendly unit. All rules for interpenetration are in force, and if passed through, the friendly unit must immediately take a morale test. Only close order troops may refuse to be passed through. If a unit routs off the table, it is considered gone for the rest of the game.

Pursuit

If all of a unit's melee opponents are driven back or rout, the unit (if not driven back or routed themselves) will immediately follow them. This is known as a follow-up if their opponents fell back or a pursuit if they routed. A follow-up move is the 4 inches needed to stay in contact. A pursuit move is the same distance as a normal move. A unit that pursues becomes disordered at the end of its movement. If it pursues off the table, the unit is gone for the rest of the game.

If your opponent's unit routs, but you manage to keep up with them during your pursuit move, you gain a bonus round of melee taken immediately. You get 1 d6 for every figure eligible to fight (before becoming disordered).

If, while chasing routers, another enemy unit gets in your way, you may convert your pursuit into a charge on this unit. The charge may be declared impetuous if you're allowed impetuous charges. The target unit gets no opportunity to fire, evade or counter-charge, (it's taken by surprise), but it also doesn't take any morale tests for being charged. Your unit is not disordered since you technically didn't finish movement.

A fanatic unit must successfully rally during rally phase to stop chasing after a routed unit.

Normally a unit must follow-up or pursue. Units which held their position without charging or counter-charging before combat may attempt a control test to resist this. If the unit passes this test they remain where they are and do not become disordered.

Rallying

During the Rally phase, a unit may attempt to - stop routing, recover from shaken, re-order, or stop evading. Fanatics may attempt to stop pursuing. Normally, a unit attempting to rally may take no other actions for the current turn. A unit in melee may not attempt to rally.

To recover from shaken the unit must pass a control test. Failing this test, however, is an exception to the control test rules, as it does NOT cause the unit to become disordered. Rallying from shaken may be combined with rallying from disorder on the same turn.

A disordered unit will rally automatically (remove disorder marker). However, this requires the entire turn. If the unit is forced to move, fire or fight in melee during the current turn, the attempt to rally from disorder fails. Rallying from disorder may be combined with rallying from shaken on the same turn.

A routed unit may attempt to rally by passing a morale test. If it succeeds, it stops and faces back the way it came during the previous turn's movement. Morale state is dependant on the dice roll. It is still disordered. If it fails, it must immediately make another rout move.

An evading unit will rally automatically, and face back the way it came. Since turning around normally only takes a half turn, the unit may still fire if it has any targets during the firing phase. Even if rallying, an evading unit may evade again if needed.

Fanatics that wish to stop pursuing must pass a control test. If they succeed, then they may also attempt to rally from disorder.

MORALE

The morale of each unit is defined by their Troop Quality Level and their current status. The Quality level of the lowest quality troops in the unit determines its morale level, and their current status is determined by circumstance. The different morale states possible are: steady, shaken, or routed. A unit can also be 'driven back', but this is more of a combat result than a morale status.

Morale Levels

The below chart shows the different morale levels dependant on quality.

Morale: Level Quality

5	fanatic
4	elite
3	average
2	levy
1	peasant

Morale States

There are 3 different morale states possible: steady, shaken, or routed. A unit can also be disordered in addition to these 3 states.

Steady - this is the normal morale state, and the state all units start with. Steady units receive no special consideration

Shaken - a unit can only become shaken by failing a morale test, and the unit should be marked in some fashion. Units receive a -1 modifier for any morale or control tests taken while shaken. Units can become steady again by rallying, or by driving back and/or routing all their melee opponents (without being driven back themselves). Shaken fanatics loose their combat modifier of +1.

Routed - if a unit fails a morale test by a large enough margin, the unit routs (runs away from the enemy). Units can only recover from rout by rallying.

Morale Tests

These are normally taken after combat at the end of the turn, but can occur at different times during the turn and should be taken in the order shown below. To pass, the units morale level (quality) or less, with adjustments, must be rolled on a six sided die. If you fail the test by rolling higher than the required number, how badly you failed determines the severity of the result. A unit must take a separate test for each event applicable.

These tests are made necessary by the following:

- being interpenetrated by routing friendly unit *
- receiving an impetuous charge unless counter-charging impetuously themselves *
- receiving missile fire during charge * or during normal firing, or being in melee**, whether casualties resulted or not
- each friendly unit routed this turn, that began its rout within 6" of testing unit (except routing open order troops)
- each friendly unit destroyed this turn, or friendly fanatic (quality 5) unit routing, within 12"

Some tests may be required out of sequence (*) as they happen, with the results taken immediately, even before movement if applicable. Routed units do not take morale tests except when they're attempting to rally.

** Morale tests due to melee are no longer done simultaneously. The loser(s) of the melee (the unit(s) that received the most casualties) take their morale tests first, and apply the results immediately. Then, the winners take their tests only if there are still enemy units in contact with them (that haven't fallen back or routed due to their failed morale test). In cases of tied melee results, the tests are done simultaneously. When there are multiple units involved in the same melee, each unit is judged separately as to whether it won or lost the melee.

Modifiers - These are added to or subtracted from the morale level of the testing unit. They are cumulative.

unit shaken	-1	unit is currently shaken
unit disordered	-1	unit is currently disordered
casualties	-1	for each 25% casualties accumulated from original strength
unit flanked	-3*	unit has been flanked by enemy in melee
numbers	+1	if you outnumber your melee opponents by double or more
	+1	receiving long range missile fire only
	+1	receiving missile fire from less enemy than your own numbers
deeper ranks	-1	opposing unit in melee has more complete ranks than your unit
unit supported	+1	unit has unrouted friendly units within 3" of both flanks, or 6" of rear and facing same direction and behind unit's center
friends routing	-1	each friendly unit routing within 12"
unit unsupported	-2	no unrouted friendly troops in sight within 12"
unit is uphill	+1	unit is uphill of all enemy within sight
unit in cover	+1	unit is completely in or behind cover for missile fire, or defending an obstacle in melee, or behind the front lines and cannot see the enemy

Result:	Die Roll	Morale
	equal or less	passed
	over by 1	shaken
	over by 2 or 3	driven back
	over by 4 or more	routed

Passed - If you roll the units morale level or lower (with modifiers), on a d6, you have passed the morale test. If the unit is not already 'steady' it becomes 'steady'. If you're attempting to rally from rout, the unit ceases rout and becomes 'steady'. It turns around and faces the way it came. It is still disordered.

Shaken - If you fail the test by going over its morale level (with modifiers) by 1, the unit becomes shaken. If it is already shaken, there is no additional penalty. If you're attempting to rally from rout, the unit ceases rout but remains shaken. It turns around and faces the way it came. It is still disordered.

Driven Back - If you fail the test by going over its morale level (with modifiers) by 2 or 3, the unit becomes shaken and is driven back 4 inches. If it is already shaken there is no additional penalty other than the movement. If you're attempting to rally from rout, you retreat 4 more inches, then turn about and rally. The unit remains shaken and disordered.

Routed - if you fail the test by 4 or more (with modifiers) the unit's nerve has cracked and it must flee the number of inches equal to their rout/evade dice roll (see movement distances). The unit becomes shaken and disordered. If attempting to rally from rout, you have failed and must make another rout move.

Control Tests

These are taken as needed, and are done exactly the same as morale tests (using only relevant modifiers), but with different results. A passed control test means the unit performs as desired, a failed one means it doesn't and becomes disordered. Severity of failure doesn't matter and morale is not effected.

These tests are made necessary by the following:

- missile troops, that are not cross-trained, trying to resist evading when charged
- attempting not to pursue or follow up retreating melee opponents
- rallying from shaken
- attempting a Difficult Maneuver (optional rules)

PART III - OPTIONAL RULES

SPECIAL TROOPS

Troop types that do not fit well within the standard rules are described here. These troops require a slight change or expansion of the basic rules to allow for their special abilities.

Champions

Represented by a single figure, Champions are single individuals of heroic proportions. His (her) effect on the battlefield is far in excess of the abilities of a normal warrior. When creating them during Game Preparation, treat them in the same way as a normal warrior. They are always considered Open Order regardless of what size base they are on. Their point cost is 10 times that of a normal warrior outfitted identically. For example, an elite champion (quality 4) in chainmail (armour 2) would cost 60 points. There is no command cost for champions.

Foot Champions can take a total of 2 hits before being removed. Mounted Champions can take 3 hits, the first one removing the mount. Champions attack with 2 d6's until wounded (1 hit left) when they use only 1. Champions cannot pin or flank units or be flanked themselves, and they may always strike back no matter which side they're contacted on. Champions may join units and are treated as if mixed in with the front rank. While in the front rank, up to 2 of their opponent's dice may be declared as targeting the champion.

Warbands

A foot unit may be declared a Warband at the beginning of a game at no cost.

Warbands function only slightly different from normal units. Warbands may attempt to charge Impetuously in the same way as cavalry whenever they charge. They must pass a control test, and if successful, the charge becomes an impetuous one (failure has no effect). If successful, the warband becomes disordered at the end of the turn (assuming melee combat occurred).

Skirmishers

Open order missile units may be declared to be skirmishers at the beginning of the game at no cost.

Skirmishers are treated only slightly differently from other open order missile troops. They're the only troops allowed to 'back up'. Skirmishers may move backwards at half speed without turning and may still fire. They must always choose to evade if charged.

Peasants

Quality - Level : 1, **Morale** : Peasant

Peasants represent the various reluctant peasant or slave troops that were sometimes scraped up before a battle to enlarge numbers. These units were untrained, and armed with whatever was handy. In melee, peasants always receive a -1 modifier.

SWAT

Special weapons and tactics. These units or weapons have different or additional effects (and costs) from similar units in the basic rules. Peasant class units may not use SWAT.

Longbow

Troops armed with longbows require extra 'training'. During Game Preparation, troops armed with longbow cost 1.5 the normal cost. This cost is calculated in the same way as cross-training or mounted troops, and is used to balance the greater effectiveness of this weapon. Units with longbows may not be cross trained.

Longbows have longer ranges than normal bows, having a maximum range of 24 inches and a close range of 8 inches. They also have greater penetration at close range where they would use armour piercing arrows, gaining a +1 to hit modifier.

Polearm

Any troops armed with large bladed weapons requiring both hands to wield can be declared to be polearms at no extra cost. Troops with polearms gain a +1 modifier in all melee combat. However, since shields cannot be used in melee when wielding a weapon that requires the use of both hands, their opponents receive the +1 'opponent shieldless' modifier. When not in melee they may use their shields normally.

Crossbow

There is no extra cost to arm missile troops with crossbows. Troops armed with light crossbows use the basic bow rules. Large or heavy crossbows have increased range and penetration but decreased manoeuvrability. Maximum range for heavy crossbows is 24 inches and close range is 6 inches. Heavy crossbows receive a +1 to hit modifier at close range when they fire. Troops armed with large or heavy crossbows may not move and fire.

Pike

Troops armed with pikes require extra 'training'. During Game Preparation, troops armed with pike cost 1.5 the normal cost. This cost is calculated in the same way as cross-training or mounted troops, and is used to balance the greater effectiveness of this weapon. Units with pikes may not be cross trained.

Units armed with pikes can fight in a deeper formation than normal. Instead of only the first 2 ranks being eligible to fight, up to four ranks of a pike armed unit are eligible. Pikemen carry shields, and although pikes require both hands to wield in melee, the only troops that receive the +1 'opponent shieldless' modifier are other pike units, and troops that contact the pike unit on the flanks or rear.

Shieldwall

Close order foot troops with large shields may pay 1 extra point during Game Preparation to be able to use Shieldwall. During their movement phase, any unit able to form shieldwall may declare they're doing so instead of moving. While in shieldwall, units may only move 4 inches per turn. Opponents in frontal contact receive a -1 melee modifier, and the unit receives a +1 morale modifier. Disordered units may not be in shieldwall.

COMMAND & CONTROL

During the Dark Ages and throughout most of the Medieval times the control of western armies was very limited, consisting mostly of a general deploying his troops and announcing when to begin advancing. The rest of the tactics depended upon low-level captains seizing local advantages. When armies grew in numbers multiple generals were required, each in charge of a portion of the army. At this point, more complex battle plans could be employed.

Combat Preferences

These rules assume a basic difference in the way mounted and foot troops view combat, a difference in how they prefer to fight. Mounted troops depend upon their momentum to assist them and prefer to fight by charging. Foot troops, wanting the security of a solid line, prefer to stand and wait for the enemy to make the first move. Missile troops within close range will stop advancing and open fire, and will always want to evade when charged (unless cross trained).

All troops will ALWAYS follow their combat preferences unless ordered to act counter to these preferences by the general commanding them.

Generals

The General is a very important person. It's he that controls and maneuvers the troops under his command, and boosts their morale when personally leading them. Each army must have at least one general, known as the commanding general, who is the commander in chief of the entire army. If the army is large enough, it may also include additional subordinate generals. Every general has a rating which represents his command ability. This rating determines the maximum number of command 'actions' he may take per turn.

General's:	Ability	Rating
	poor	1
	average	2
	good	3

A general figure on the battlefield is treated as if he were LMM (or LMF) and costs 25 points per rating level. A general is removed after taking a single hit, and has no value in combat. They may join units however, and are treated as if mixed in with the front rank.

A general that has joined and is personally leading a unit may override its combat preferences, and negates negative morale modifiers equal to his rating. For example, an average general (2) leading a unit that is currently shaken (-1) and disordered (-1) would negate this -2 modifier in any morale tests the unit needed to take. This does not allow the general to use his full rating however, unless there are sufficient negative modifiers. While in the front rank, up to 2 of his opponent's combat dice (identified before rolling) may be declared as targeting the general.

A general that has not joined a unit may instead use command 'actions'. He may receive new orders (costing 1 action). He may also 'order' the units under his command to act counter to their combat preferences, for example causing mounted to hold or foot to charge. These units must be within 12 inches, and he may not order more units per turn than the number of command actions he has.

Generals may be champions (see special troops). To make a champion a general, simply create a champion, and then add the points for his rating.

Divisions

Also known as 'wings' or 'battles' large armies were often divided into groups, each commanded by a general. This general was responsible for the movement of the troops under his command, and obeyed the orders of the commanding general, who often had his own division as well as command of the entire army.

All units in the army are grouped together into divisions and put under the command of a specific general. These divisions should average about 4 or 5 units each.

Orders

The orders permitted to Darkage / Medieval armies are rather limited. Basically they are attack and defend. The timing and target are usually the only things under the general's control. All generals begin the game with orders chosen by the controlling player. At all times each general must have an order, which tells him what he's supposed to do (small counters can work for this). He may use his command actions to override orders (per unit) in the same way as overriding combat preferences.

Attack - Advance towards the enemy at 1/2 speed or greater until within charge range then follow combat preferences. Both mounted and foot will counter charge if charged unless ordered not to (foot will hold if charged by mounted). Missile troops may evade.

Hold - Defend the unit's current position. No movement is allowed except wheeling (or turning) to face approaching enemy. Follow combat preferences once the enemy is within charge range. Foot will not counter charge unless ordered to. Missile troops may evade.

Fall Back - Move away from all enemy at 1/2 speed or greater until reaching your own table edge. Units may halt and turn to face any enemy who approach close enough to charge. Mounted will not counter charge unless ordered to, infantry may not. Missile troops must evade.

New Orders

New orders may be issued by the controlling general to any subordinate general within 24 inches, subtracting 1 command action from both generals for the current turn. This is done at the start of the Initiative Phase. Add both general's ratings together and roll a d6. If the roll is equal to or less than this total, the orders are replaced immediately. If not then the orders take effect next turn. The commanding general may automatically change his own orders of course (still costing 1 action).

DIFFICULT MANEUVERS

This rule is pretty much what it sounds like, maneuvers difficult to accomplish, but not impossible. To succeed in a Difficult Maneuver the unit attempting it must pass a control test. If they do, they may perform the maneuver, if not then they may not and become disordered. The following is a list of permitted Difficult Maneuvers.

Turning - this is simply the ability to turn left or right. If successful, the unit may face left or right, forming a column facing the correct direction. This requires the entire turn. If the unit fails, it does not move and becomes disordered.

Falling Back - otherwise known as backing up. If a unit passes its control test, it may move backwards while still facing the enemy at half their normal speed.

This actually represents the unit turning away from the enemy, moving away for several dozen paces, and then suddenly turning back to face them again before that enemy has a chance to react and charge them in the rear. Doing this several times over the length of the turn makes it appear as if the unit is backing up.

A unit may not counter charge if opportunity charged while Falling Back.

Careful Movement - this is an attempt by a unit to move carefully through Disordering Terrain (but not Restrictive Terrain) so that it doesn't become disordered. The unit moves at half its usual permitted speed (this results in 1/4 speed for mounted) and after moving must pass a control test. If the unit fails this test it becomes disordered anyway.

Break Off - a movement permitted to cavalry, missile troops, and open order troops if they pass a control test. This is an intentional quick retreat from melee which may be declared when the unit would normally move, but only if a round of melee was fought on the previous turn. It includes a free turn at the start, but must be directly away from their melee opponents, and ends up facing away from them. Each type of unit has a number of dice to be rolled when breaking off (the same as evading) the result being how far the unit moves. The entire distance rolled must be moved, and during the rally phase next turn, the unit must turn back (rally) to face the way it came. The enemy unit(s) pursues as if the unit routed. If the unit does not move far enough to get beyond reach of these pursuers, they are caught and attacked in the back and may not fight back during melee this turn.

CONCEALED DEPLOYMENT

This is just a simple way of concealing what your troops are when first deploying them. This adds a little uncertainty into the deployment process, since your opponent may know where you are deploying troops, but not what those troops are.

Playing Cards - the heart of this simple system is the use of a deck of ordinary playing cards. Try to find a deck where the size of the cards are about the same as the width of your multi-figure bases. Choose one suite from the four available. That suite becomes your unit identifier.

Make a list of your units, the cards of the suite chosen will represent these units when first deployed, face down, onto the tabletop. For example the 'ace' represents the position of unit 1, the 'two' represents the position of unit 2, etc. Use the Jack, Queen and King for numbers 11 -13 (if you have more than 13 units you will need more cards). The suite card chosen is placed at the upper left hand corner of where the unit will be placed on the table. Use cards from the other suites to fill out the width of the unit. This will prevent the problem of not having enough room when the cards are replaced by their represented units.

Deploy the cards in exactly the same way you would have placed the units, using the sequence in the basic deployment rules. Once both armies are deployed, flip over the cards so your opponent can see them, and replace them with the corresponding units from your army list.

For a better representation of concealed deployment, agree upon using a number of 'dummy' cards that represent no unit at all.