

“ARQUEBUSIER!”
Quick-play 16th and 17th Century Rules
by Rob Stening

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REPRESENTATION

The smallest unit included in the rules is the “Element”, which represents around 6-12 troops or 1 large feature (e.g. Artillery piece). You can use as many figures as you want, and/or use multiple bases within an element, but I base my 20-28mm in pairs (with 3 bases being 1 element), and my 6mm in 2 ranks of 6. I recommend keeping large (28mm+) figures individually based and using small movement trays (of 3-6 spaces for bases) as elements.

CLASSIFICATION

Troops are classed into foot (infantry) and mounted (cavalry), and also change between Regular and Irregular in-game (though some are always Irregular). There are also artillery pieces but these work a little differently. The types of soldier are: Sword, Mob, Bill, Pike, Firearm (all on foot), Pistolier, Lancer, Harquebusier and Dragoon (all mounted), Gun, and finally Mortar.

Swords are armed with short, bladed weapons and are good against polearms but very weak against mounted, Mobs are armed peasants or fanatics who are deadly when they have the advantage (e.g. a flank attack) but useless in even combat (Irregular being completely improvised, Regular having some form of discipline), Bills are short polearms or other weapons used in line formation, but not in deep masses, Pikes are long spears or pikes which are extremely effective in deep ranks, and Firearm should be handguns but may include some obsolescent crossbows in early armies.

Pistoliers are cavalry with firearms, cross/bows, or even javelins trained to caracole or circle and shoot at close range, Lancers are early period cavalry armed mostly with melee weaponry and used to charge the enemy, Harquebusiers are late period ranged cavalry primarily used to shoot from horseback at some distance with firearms or cross/bows, and Dragoons are late period cavalry who normally dismount to fight with missiles, almost always firearms. Guns are artillery pieces used to fire horizontally (flatter than 45 degrees) into men, horses, buildings or walls, whereas Mortars are used for firing at a 45 degree angle upwards over walls or troops.

MANOEUVRE COMMANDS

Firstly manoeuvre commands are given. Choose a unit (Regulars first) and Roll a dice, add one to the score if the formation is Regular, add one if the General is within 12”, add one if it is the first turn, but take away one if they are a Mob, take away two if they are in close combat and/or take away one if they are under fire, and a further one if any casualties were inflicted (from any source) last turn. If the score is 3 or more, the manoeuvre is executed. Otherwise, the unit must remain stationary.

Do not actually move the unit yet but place a marker, ruler or rod to indicate the intended direction (and distance if not moving at maximum). Maximum movement is 6” for foot and 12” if mounted.

Example:

Ludwig's Infantry (Regular) within 12” of Lord Huss (the General) on the 3rd turn. They have come under fire last turn but did not lose any elements. Their roll is 2 (normally a fail), +1+1-1 = 3 (pass).

SHOOTING

Every formation (not in melee combat) shoots at the nearest enemy formation automatically. You can choose instead for the formation to fire at the 2nd closest enemy as long as the 1st is more than 12" away and did not move towards them in the previous turn. If you wish to order to hold fire or shoot at another target, then you must command this in the same way as manoeuvre commands.

However you cannot make more than one command to the same formation in a turn, so you cannot both move and change target in the same turn – the exception to this is when the unit is joined by a General – it is assumed that the General gives one order and the formation's natural commander gives the other.

Each formation, rolls a number of dice equivalent to the number of elements firing (first rank only, unless late Swedish or longbow volleys) with the following modifiers (if not in list, can't shoot) :

Regular Mob, Max. 6", -2
Regular Firearm, Max. 24", +1
Irregular Firearm, Max. 18", +0
Regular Pistolier, Max. 6", +0
Irregular Pistolier, Max. 3", -1
Regular Harquebusier, Max. 18", +0
Irregular Harqubusier, Max. 12", -1
Regular Dragoon (foot), Max. 18", +1
Irregular Dragoon (foot), Max. 12" +0
Regular Dragoon (mounted), Max. 12", +0
Gun (if stationary last turn and this), Max. 60", -1
Mortar (if stationary last turn and this), Max. 48", -1

(Any of the above shooting at Irregular troops, +1)

Now add up the total (e.g. 6x Regular Firearm against Regulars roll 8 dice). The dice must score equal to or better than the values shown below. For every dice that equals or betters the value, the enemy formation loses an element. For every element a formation loses, their maximum movement is reduced by 1" until they are no longer being shot at (to a minimum of immobilised!)

Target:	Sword	Mob	Bill	Pike	Firearm	Pistolier	Lancer	Harqu'B	Dragoon
Regular	6	5	5	5	3	6	5	5	6
Irreg.	5	4	5	4	3	5	4	5	5

Note that some formations have mixed types, typically pike and shotte formations. Allocate each shot to an element in the front rank as if they were separate formations, as proportionately as possible. e.g. 5 shots at 4+4 elements would work out as 2 against one half and 3 against the other. If numbers are odd then still allocate proportionately but use odd shots to tilt the balance more evenly, e.g. 7 shots against 8+4 would go 4 against the 8 and 3 against the 4 – you cannot put all your firepower into only one of the types (unless you're only firing one shot of course)

If a formation takes more than one casualty due to shooting this turn they become Irregular. Note that also, if a formation has enemies in contact with their rear (or side if Pike) they all immediately become Irregular. Also, Cavalry under fire from within 6" become disordered, as do foot within 3".

Whenever a formation loses an element from shooting, roll a die. On the roll of a 6, that element was the commander, and the unit suffers a -2 for all commands from now on.

Example:

The 4th Company of the Earl of Essex comprises of 8 Firearms and 6 Pikes. They are shooting at a group of Royalist Dragoons who are in the process of dismounting (becoming Irregular). 8 Regular Firearms roll 9 dice, each die needing to score a 5 or more to inflict a casualty.

MELEE COMBAT

Every element targets ONE element in contact with it (any form of contact) and rolls against the following chart. For each type, the (highlighted) column on the left is Regular, the right is Irregular. A dash means that you can't harm the enemies' element. Successes kill the enemy element.

	Sword		Mobs		Bills		Pikes		Fire'A		Pistol		Lancers		Harq'b.		Drg'n	
Sw	5	4	3	2	4	3	4	2	3	2	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	4
M	6	3	5	4	6	3	6	2	5	2	-	6	-	5	-	5	-	4
Bll	5	4	3	2	5	4	5	4	4	3	6	4	5	4	5	5	5	4
Pk	5	5	4	3	4	4	5	5	4	3	5	3	4	3	4	4	5	4
FA	6	5	5	4	6	5	6	4	4	3	5	4	6	5	5	4	5	3
Pst	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	3	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4
Ln	3	2	3	2	4	2	5	2	3	2	5	3	5	4	4	3	4	2
Hq	5	5	4	3	5	4	5	4	3	2	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	4
Dr	6	5	4	3	6	5	6	5	4	3	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	3

Bill elements in the second rank in direct contact (flat along the edge) with their first rank, and Pikes in the 2nd or 3rd rank (all flat along their edges) are also eligible to attack any target the 1st rank element is in contact with.

Dragoons mount and dismount by command instead of normal manoeuvres, but if attacked in melee or by shooting during that time become automatically Irregular until they are out of combat. Once they are eligible to move or shoot, pass a command (instead of moving or shooting) to restore them.

Cavalry who get into melee combat but did not move last turn automatically becomes Irregular until they are out of combat, and then they must pass a command (instead of moving or shooting) to restore them. Any formation whose general is killed while within 12" of them automatically becomes Irregular until they pass a command (instead of moving or shooting) to restore them.

If at any point all of your formations on the table become Irregular (whether temporarily or they already were) then your force routs and you lose the game!

Formations who are naturally Irregular automatically lose one element (weakest first) at the very end of every turn for as long as they become temporarily Irregular (i.e. before passing a Command)

Note that formations in combat can (without need of command) move their elements up to the maximum distance in order to try and get more into combat.

RESULTS

Work out who kills who in the me lee and then remove casualties simultaneously. Note that one element can inflict a kill and be killed by their opponent at the same time. The combat resolution is all included in the rules for troops becoming Irregular – becoming Irregular represents loss of morale or cohesion and makes troops vulnerable (especially to Mobs!). For simplicity's sake, troops in melee combat can and never will run away, the effects of any panic attacks are assumed into the above.

ARMY LISTS

Note that most periods won't have access to all troop types, Swords only go up to 1600, Bills a couple of decades in, and Pikes and Lancers till the late quarter of the century. The Cavalry represented in "Arquebusier!" by Harquebusiers are most associated with the 1620-1660 part of the period, and Dragoons start from the 1630's. Pistoliers, representing light cavalry with bows die out around 1570 but firearm equivalents emerge for the ECW. Mobs & Firearm remain throughout.