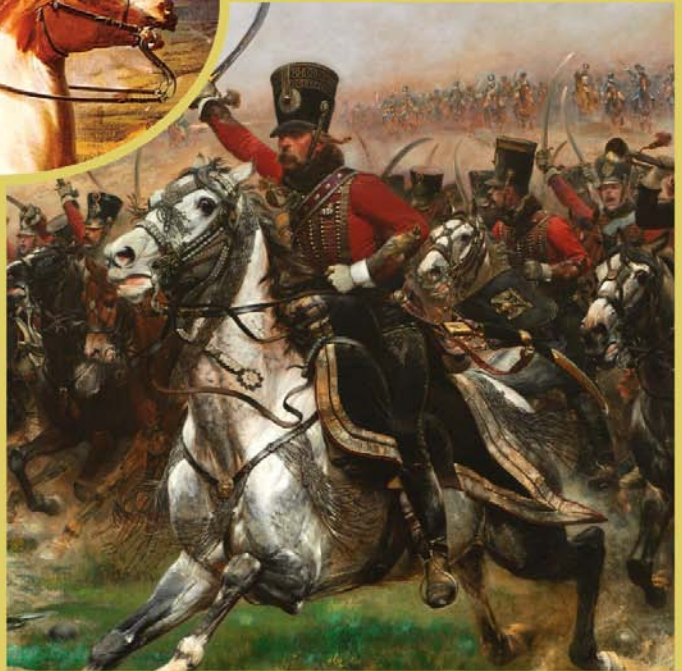
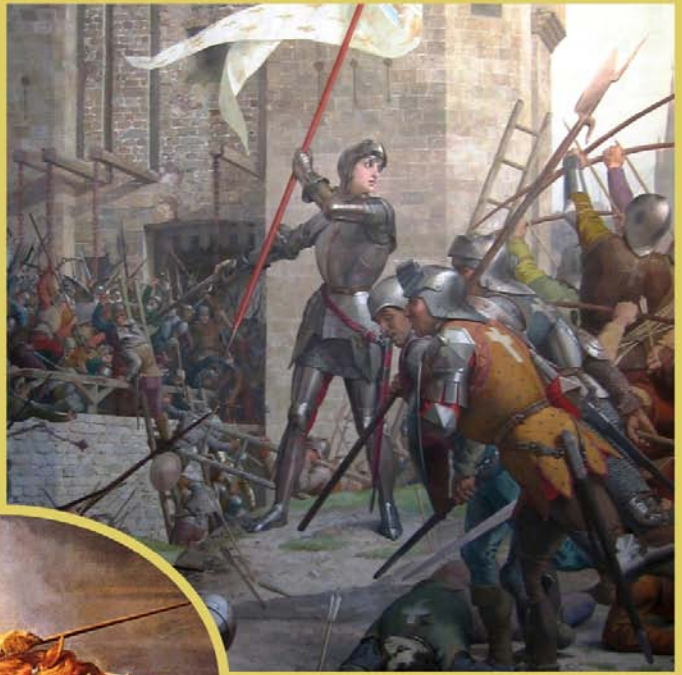


Table Battles



~ Designed by Tom Russell ~

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of **Table Battles** is to provide light but crunchy two-player gaming experiences out of land battles fought throughout human history. These aren't detailed simulations, but quick fillers that should play out in about fifteen or twenty minutes. Many of these battles are difficult to game in a more conventional hex-and-counter format because they are largely static. Indeed, the game has no maneuver element at all. Instead, the decision space is dominated by feints and counter-feints, the threat of force, its application, and its neutralization. Good play is about leverage and tempo, about forcing the other guy to deal with what you're doing, instead of advancing his own aims.

COMPONENTS

Your copy of the game should come with twelve dice (six for each player), a deck of 50 cards, eighty wooden Units (20 sticks each in four colors), and ten wooden cubes.

The *dice* are used to commit to, and execute, actions.

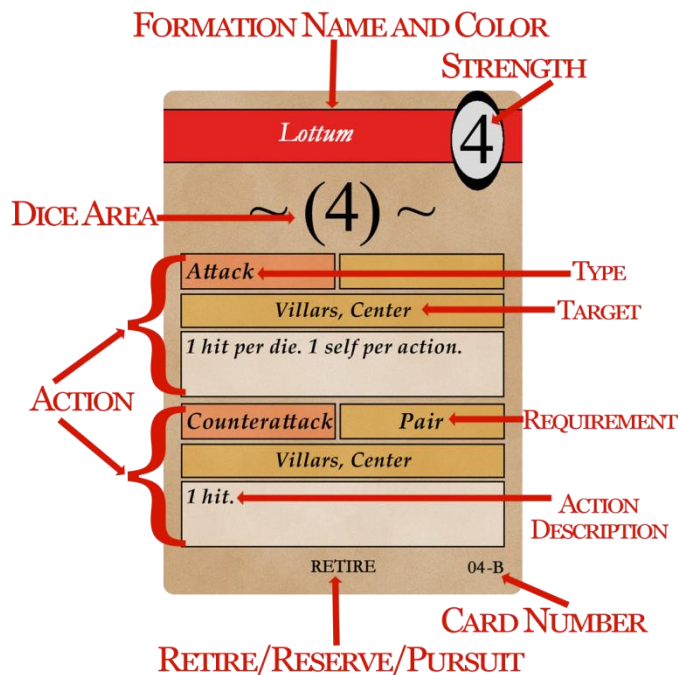
The *cards* represent Formations, and dictate what those Formations can do.

The *Units* represent the strength of those Formations.

The *cubes* are used to represent Morale, and also the capabilities of Special Formations.

READING A FORMATION CARD

The Formation Cards are really the core of the game. Let's look at one, shall we?



FORMATION NAME: The color band behind the name indicates the Wing to which it belongs; for example, this Formation belongs to the Red Wing.

STRENGTH: This is the number of wooden Units that the Formation has assigned to it at the beginning of the battle.

- ◆ If the Strength is represented by a roman numeral (I, II, or III), it is a *Special Formation*. Special Formations function differently than normal ones, and use wooden Cubes instead of wooden Unit pieces.
- ◆ A star symbol below the Strength indicates that the Formation counts double for Morale purposes if it Routs.

DICE AREA: This indicates the type of dice that can be placed on a card.

- ◆ Numbers indicate that dice of matching numbers may be placed there. For example, "6" means that any sixes rolled may be placed on the card.
- ◆ Sometimes multiple numbers, or a range of numbers, will be indicated. Any of those results may be used, but only dice of a single type may be placed on a given card on a turn. For example, "5/6" means that you can place fives or sixes; you can place multiple fives or multiple sixes in a single turn, but you can't place some of both. "4-6" means fours, fives, or sixes; "Any" means ones, twos, threes, fours, fives, or sixes, and so on, and the same rule applies: you can place only dice of one type.
- ◆ If the number is (bracketed), only one die may be placed on the card per turn.
- ◆ The word "Doubles" means two identical dice (total) may be placed on that card each turn. You cannot place two sets of Doubles in a single turn.
- ◆ The word "Triples" means three identical dice (total) may be placed on that card each turn. You cannot place two sets of Triples in a single turn.
- ◆ The word "Straight" means that dice following a numerical sequence may be placed on the card. "Straight-3" means three dice, "Straight-4" means four dice, and so on. For example, "Straight-4" would require that you roll 1-2-3-4, 2-3-4-5, or 3-4-5-6.

ACTIONS: This indicates what the Formation can do when there are dice on the card.

- ◆ Each Action has a *Type*. We'll cover the Types of Actions in detail in the later ACTIONS section.
- ◆ Some, but not all, Actions have a *Requirement*:
 - ◆ **PAIR** means that the card must have at least two identical dice on it to take the Action.
 - ◆ **TWO PAIRS** means the card must have at least two different sets of two identical dice on it to take the Action. For example, 2 fours and 2 fives would qualify, but 4 fours or 4 fives would not.
 - ◆ **TRIPLET** means the card must have at least three identical dice on it to take the Action. (Don't confuse the Requirement "Triplet" with the Dice Area designation "Triples".)
 - ◆ **TWO TRIPLETS**, naturally, means two different sets of three identical dice are required to take the Action, and just as with Two Pairs, 3 fours and 3 fives would work, but not 6 fours or 6 fives.
 - ◆ **FULL HOUSE** means the card must have at least one Pair and one Triplet to take the Action, and these must be different; 2 fours and 3 fives would work, but 5 fours or 5 fives would not.
 - ◆ **FIVE DICE** means the card must have at least five dice on it to take the Action.

- ◆ Many Actions have a *Target*. If multiple Targets are listed, the second Target only becomes available after the first has been removed from play, and the third after the second has been removed from play (ignore this for a Screen action). The use of the word "Any", usually regarding a Screen action, means that any triggering enemy Formation is the Target.

RESERVE/RETIRE/PURSUIT: This indicates if the Formation begins the game in Reserve, is able to Retire, or is required to perform Pursuit.

CARD NUMBER: Indicates the card number information, which is used in set-up. Each card has an "A" and a "B" side.

SET-UP

Each scenario has a set-up card.

The set-up card will list the sides and who goes first. The Formation Cards for each side will be indicated; each player should place his cards in front of him.

For all normal Formations, place wooden Units of its Wing's color, equal to the Strength of the Formation, in front of the Formation Card. Single-wing armies may need to use pieces of a second color (e.g., the White Mountain scenario).

For all Special Formations, place one wooden cube near the Formation Card (regardless of the Strength indicated).

The set-up card will indicate the starting Morale for each side. Each player should take that many cubes, designated as Morale Cubes, and place them to the side of his army.

Finally, each player takes six dice, forming their own Dice Pool, and play begins with the first player's turn.

The set-up card or one or more of the Formation Cards may have a special rule. As is usually the case with these sorts of things, when the special rule contradicts these rules, follow the special rule.

HOW TO WIN

You can win the game in one of two ways:

- ◆ By reducing your opponent's Morale, measured in Morale Cubes, to zero.
- ◆ By Routing sufficient enemy Formations that, at the beginning of your opponent's turn, it is impossible for any of his remaining Formations to ever Attack any of your Formations. It doesn't matter if you also can't Attack any of his - the check is made at the beginning of a player's own turn, and the first player to fail this check loses the game.

FLOW OF PLAY

The game is played in alternating Player Turns until one side wins. A Player Turn consists of two phases, always performed in this order: an Action Phase, and a Roll Phase. When a player has finished his Roll Phase, proceed to his opponent's Action Phase. A player's Action Phase is skipped if he performed a Reaction during his opponent's Action Phase. This is a crucial rule, so we'll say it again, and heck, we'll even bold it for emphasis: **A player's Action Phase is skipped if he performed a Reaction during his opponent's Action Phase.**

ACTION PHASE

During the Action Phase, the acting player may (but is not required to) take **one** Action with **one** Formation. If this Action triggers a Reaction from an opponent's formation, then that **one** Reaction takes place during that same Action Phase.

To take an Action (or a Reaction) with a normal Formation, you must remove *all* dice currently on the Formation Card, and you must meet the stated Requirement for the Action (if any).

- ◆ You must remove at least one die to take an Action.
- ◆ You must remove all dice even if only some of the dice are needed to meet the Requirement.
- ◆ You may "take" an Action whose Requirement you don't meet; if you do so, the dice are removed and returned to your Dice Pool, but the Action is not performed. Note that you can't do this "null" Action if you *do* meet the Requirement.
- ◆ You can only take a Reaction during your opponent's Action Phase, and unless indicated otherwise on the card, Reactions are always mandatory - if you can React, you *must* React. (But if you have multiple ways to React, you get to choose which one to use.)

ACTIONS

The Actions are as follows:

ATTACK. The core Action of the game. This allows you to attack the stated enemy Formation, inflicting Hits.

- ◆ "# hit(s)" means the enemy Formation loses that number of Units; remove those wooden Unit pieces from the game.
- ◆ "1 hit per die" means the enemy Formation suffers one hit for each die that was on the acting Formation's card.
- ◆ "1 self" means the acting Formation loses one Unit while making this attack.
- ◆ When multiple enemy Formations are listed, the first Formation must be targeted until it has been removed from play, then the second, then the third.

BOMBARD. This Action is usually restricted to a Special Formation. It causes the removal of one Morale Cube from your opponent. It *cannot* be used to remove your opponent's *last* Morale Cube, and cannot be Screened.

COMMAND. This Action causes a named Formation that is in Reserve to become active.

REACTIONS

The Reactions are as follows:

SCREEN. This cancels an Attack from an enemy Formation which is listed as a target of the Screen. (Unlike with an Attack, all listed Targets may be Screened regardless of their status.) While both sides expend their dice, neither side suffers any losses.

COUNTERATTACK. When the Formation is Attacked, a Counterattack causes the enemy Formation to sustain Hits as indicated in the Action text. Hits are applied simultaneously to both sides.

ABSORB. When a friendly Formation listed as a Target suffers Hits, this Formation may suffer the Hits instead. Note that as this is a Reaction, it may only be performed during your opponent's Turn.

Again, **Reactions are mandatory** unless the Action text specifically indicates that it is Voluntary. If you take a Reaction during your opponent's Action Phase, you get no Action Phase on your own subsequent Player Turn.

RETIRE/RESERVE

During the Action Phase, instead of taking a standard Action, a Formation that has "RETIRE" on its card may Retire, leaving the game.

- ◆ The Formation must have at least one die on its card.
- ◆ Retiring is not the same as Routing (which we'll get to in a minute), and so does not affect Morale.
- ◆ A Formation may only Retire during your Action Phase, as your Action.

Some Formations begin in Reserve, and have another friendly Formation's name listed in the Reserve section.

- ◆ Formations that are in Reserve cannot take Actions and cannot have dice assigned to them.
- ◆ When the other Formation Retires, Routs, or performs Pursuit, the Formation in Reserve comes out of Reserve, enabling them to take Actions and to have dice assigned to them. Formations come out of Reserve automatically when the triggering Formation leaves play.
- ◆ Some Formations must be Commanded to come out of Reserve.

ROUTING

When a Formation takes Hits, its wooden Unit pieces are removed. When it has no Unit pieces left, the Formation *Routs*. Formations that Rout are removed from the game. When a Formation Routs, that side gives one of its Morale Cubes to the other player; if the Formation was marked with a star, it gives two Morale Cubes to the other player.

If friendly and enemy Formations Rout simultaneously, **no Morale Cubes are given to either player**, even if one of those Formations was marked with a star.

If a Routing Formation had dice on its Formation Card, the dice are returned to the owning player's Dice Pool.

PURSUIT

Some Formations must perform Pursuit when an enemy Formation that is the Target of their Attacks is Routed. Pursuit is performed automatically at the instance of the Routing, and results in the Pursuing Formation being removed from play. This is not considered Routing and does not alter Morale for the Pursuing side. If the Pursuing Formation had dice on its Formation Card, the dice are returned to the owning player's Dice Pool.

ROLL PHASE

During a player's Roll Phase, he takes *all* the dice from his Dice Pool and rolls them. Dice that are currently on a Formation Card are *not* in the Dice Pool.

After making his roll, the player may (but is not required to) place dice on **one** Formation Card **per Wing**. For example, if a player has only Red Wing Formations, he may place dice on only one Formation Card, total. If a player has both Red Wing and Pink Wing Formations, he may place dice on one Red Formation and on one Pink Formation, for a total of two Formation Cards. Placing dice of a type on one Wing's Card does not preclude you from placing dice of the same type on your second Wing's Card. For example, if Tom's Division (Red Wing) and Mary's Division (Pink Wing) can only accept sixes, you can place some sixes on Tom's Division and some on Mary's, provided of course that you rolled them.

Dice may only be placed according to the information on the Formation Card's Dice Area. Dice remain on the Card until the Formation takes an Action, or until it Routs or performs Pursuit.

SPECIAL FORMATIONS

Special Formations act somewhat differently from normal Formations. They cannot be Attacked, and if removed from play, they do not alter Morale.

When dice are "placed" on a Special Formation Card, a wooden cube is placed on or near the card instead, and the dice immediately returned to the Dice Pool.

When a Special Formation takes an Action or Reaction, it expends one (and only one) of the wooden cubes assigned to its card.

Special Formations always begin the battle with one cube assigned to them. The Strength on the Special Formation's card indicates the *maximum* number of cubes that can be assigned to the card.

Edge case: If all ten cubes are in play, either as Morale Cubes or on Special Formations, a cube cannot be placed; Morale Cubes removed from the game become available for use for Special Formations upon doing so.

Special Formations generally represent massed artillery or inspired leadership.

CREDITS

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The designer wishes to gratefully acknowledge his intellectual debt to Hanno Uusitalo, Kim Paqualin, and Edwin S. Lowe.