

Hambone Barca vs. Miles Gloriousus

GAME RULES

By George Sivess

Two of my favorite Ancient Generals, Hambone Barca (the illegitimate and slightly less capable son of Hamilcar), and Miles, the star of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* are the opposing generals. By the way if you have never seen *Funny Thing* (the movie) go out and rent it. Phil Silvers and Zero Mostell in the same flick is a riot.

The situation is that a Roman army under Miles is advancing against a Carthaginian city in Spain. Miles must get his army to the city with enough troops left to assault it. Hambone's job is to prevent that. This is interesting because the Carthaginians can lose the battle but still win the campaign.

Hambone selected terrain that covered both his flanks with woods on the left and marsh on the right. A low row of hills afforded good defensive positions. While the position provided for a better defense, it did reduce the effectiveness of his light cavalry. However, in the context of the campaign he was willing to take that reduction. He placed his Libyan Spearmen in the center with his Carthaginian spearmen on the hill behind them. The Gauls were on his left and his Spanish javelins and medium infantry on the right. A small reserve of Spanish and Libyans were behind the center hill. The Numidian and Spanish cavalry were on the right, the Carthaginian cavalry in the center, and a small contingent on Gallic cavalry on the left. Slingers and Gallic archers were across the front. While somewhat concerned about Gallic War Band #2 [they had taken off their clothes and started painting themselves blue], Hambone was satisfied with his positions so he had a cup of wine and settled back to await Miles.

Miles approached the Carthaginians with one Roman Legion and one Allied Legion. [See map 1]. In the Allied Legion only 1 unit has Pila. The woods on his right were a serious concern as they covered his un-shielded flank. Since his Romans had one more unit of light infantry, they took the right flank and the Allies the left. Archers covered the front, Allied cavalry on the left, and the Roman heavy cavalry in the right rear. He placed his artillery on the right of his two hills. Moving his archers forward, Miles started the battle.

Key to the Units on the Map

Carthaginian

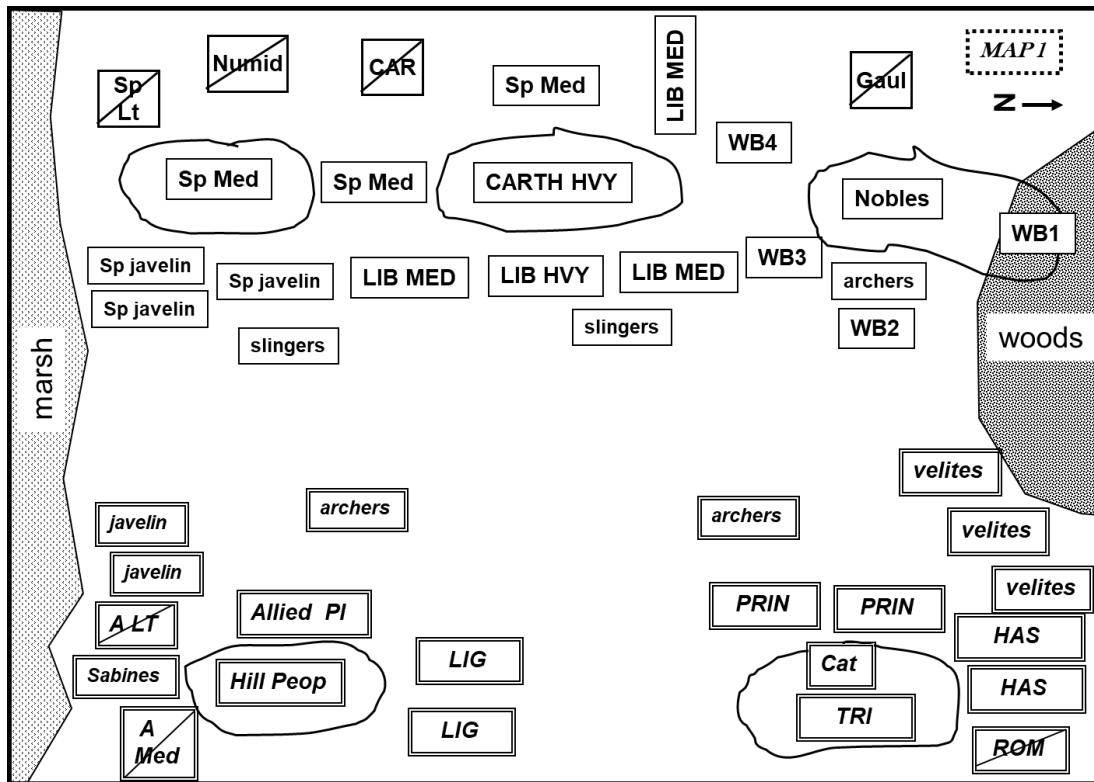
Abbreviation	Troop Type	Number of Figures
Carth Hvy	Carthaginian Heavy Infantry	40
LIB HVY	Libyan Heavy Infantry	30
LIB MED	Libyan Medium Infantry	30
Sp Med	Spanish Medium Infantry (pilum)	20
Sp Javelin	Spanish Light Infantry (javelin)	20

WB1-4	War Band Gauls (javelin)	20
Nobles	Gaul Heavy Infantry	20
Sp Lt	Spanish Light Cavalry (javelin)	17
Numid	Numidian Light Cav. (javelin)	18
CAR	Carthaginian Heavy Cavalry	12
Gaul	Gallic Medium Cavalry	10

Roman

PRIN	Principes (pilum)	30
HAS	Hastati (pilum)	30
TRI	Triarii	30
ROM	Roman Heavy Cavalry	15
Cat	Catapults	2
Allied Pi	Allied Heavy Infantry (pilum)	30
Sabines	Sabine Heavy Infantry	30
Hill Peop	Hill People Heavy Infantry	30
LIG	Ligurian Heavy Infantry	30
A LT	Allied Light Cavalry (javelin)	14
A Med	Allied Medium Cavalry	12

Both : Archers and Slingers 20



Rome vs. Carthage in Spain



Every now and then I get the overwhelming urge to see masses of brightly colored troops with spears and shields in position, advancing across the table. Ancients - the name conjures up thoughts of Brad Pitt leaping through...or maybe not. Anyway, ancients were my first love in miniature gaming, and when I have a solo ancient game I fall back on the old Jack Scruby rules which are heavy on dice and light on complexity. These simple rules make for an enjoyable and very playable game.

The Rules

The basic theory behind these rules is that all troops have an equal opportunity to create damage to their opponent but, depending on armor, not everyone has an equal opportunity to be hurt.

Light Troops have neither armor nor shields

Medium Troops have either breastplate or shield

Heavy Troops have both

Archers	Medium or Light (depends on figure)	
Slingers	Medium or Light (depends on figure)	
Javelin Troops	Medium	
Regular Phalanx	Medium or Heavy	fight in 2 ranks
Macedonian Phalanx	Medium or Heavy	fight in 3 ranks
Roman Pilum	Heavy	throw in 2, fight in 1 rank
Roman Triarii	Heavy	fight as Regular Phalanx

Movement

Light Infantry, 8 inches; Medium Infantry, 7 inches; Heavy Infantry, 6 inches

Light Cav, 16 inches; Medium Cav, 14 inches; Heavy Cavalry, 12 inches

Every 3rd turn units can take a bonus of 3 inches to represent the ancients' habit of jogging into battle.

Ranges

Heavy Catapults: 48 inches

Light Catapults, Scorpions: 36 inches

Pole Slingers: 20 inches; Archers: 18 inches; Slingers: 14 inches

Javelins, Pilum, Throwing Axes: 4 inches

Combat

Javelin, Pilum, and Throwing Ax troops always get a throw prior to combat. Pilum troops only get one throw per game. Archers and Slingers get a shot as long as their opponent moves 3 inches to make contact.

Morale

Test morale whenever a unit gets below 75% and suffers a casualty. When two units need to take a test, the one losing the most figures in that turn must test first. If a unit routs in melee, the unit they are engaged with gets a free shot at them (a freebee). Routing units are only saved by a 6 no matter what their class. Cavalry gets a +2 when attacking routing infantry.

To test morale, roll one dice and subtract it from the modified base for each unit. Use the following table. As long as the final number is positive, the unit is good. If the final number is negative, then the unit routs. Routing troops cannot inflict hits and move at normal speed away from the enemy until rallied.

Unit	Base
Roman Infantry, Carthaginian Regulars, Maced. Phalanx	8
Libyans / Greek Phalanx, Barbarian Nobles	7
Missile troops	5
Medium Infantry (Libyan Med Phalanx)	6
Light / Medium Cavalry	5
Heavy Cavalry	6
Barbarians	5
City Levies	4

Modifiers

Full Strength, +2; <75%, -1; <50%, -2; <30%, -4
Attacked from shielded flank, -1
Attacked from un-shielded flank -3
Attacked from rear, -4
Higher ground, +1
General within 15 inches, +1
Standard or trumpeter within 8 inches, +1
Unit on either side routs, -1

Combat

Each stand (a stand is 5 figures) of missile troops throws 1 regular die (D6). A unit may add all of its dice together (light troop units cannot exceed 20 figures). The total is divided in half rounding down and that is the number of "Hits" scored on the target.

The target unit will then throw one regular die for each hit for "saving throws". A 4, 5, or 6 saves Heavy Troops, a 5 or 6 saves Medium Troops and a 6 saves Light Troops. In the case of a Pilum throw, a 6 is needed to save all classes of troops.

Melee Combat is handled the same way. The attacking unit throws dice for hits and the defending unit throws saving throws. Since melee happens simultaneously, casualties are not taken until both sides have thrown. Once figures are lost, a 1 is subtracted from the dice for each missing figure. In the case of Cavalry, 4 figures constitute a stand for Medium and Light Cavalry and 3 figures for Heavy Cavalry.

An Example

20 light archers are defending a hill. They are attacked by a unit (20) of medium javelin men. Turn one the archers throw 4 dice, [a5, a1, a3, a4] total 13 which rounded down becomes 6 hits. The attacking javelin men throw 6 dice for “saving throws”, [a5, a2, a4, a6, a2, a1]. The 5 and 6 are successful saves so four of the 6 hits are kills. So now there are 16 javelin men left.

Turn 2 the archers throw a total of 9, causing four more hits of which 3 are saved. There are now three stands of javelin men left. After a successful morale test the javelin men close on turn 3. The archers shoot first (longer range) scoring 12, or six hits, four are kills. The javelin men then throw 3 dice; a 4, a 3, and a 4. The last 4 has 4 subtracted from it because 4 figures are missing from the stand resulting in 0. So, the javelin men get a total of 7 resulting in 3 hits. The archers roll 3 saving throws and do not get any sixes so all three hits are kills.

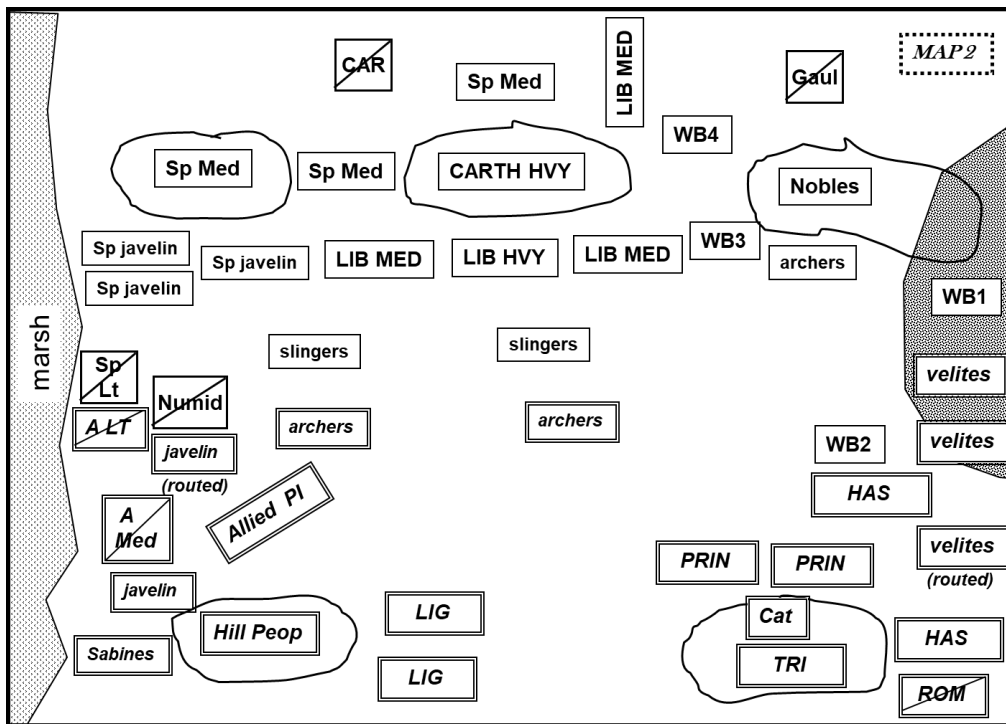
Now, for the melee there are 11 javelin men and 17 archers. The archers throw 3 regular dice +1 each for higher ground and -3 for lost figures. They throw a 1, a 4, a 3 and a 2 for a total of 10 or 5 hits. The javelin men save 2 so they are now down to 8 figures on 2 stands. The javelin men throw 3 dice and get a 5, a 6, and another 6 minus 4 for lost figures for a total of 13 or 6 hits. The archers only throw one 6 so they lose 5 figures, leaving them 12.

The javelin men lost a total of 7 on this turn, 3 to missile fire and 4 to melee. The archers lost 8. Since the archers lost the most they have to test morale first and fail the test. As they start to rout the javelin men get a “freebee” throwing a 2 and a 5 minus 2 for missing figures for 2 hits and the archers throw one 6 so they rout off the hill with 11 figures.

Like I said, heavy on dice.

The Battle

Miles Gloriosus, the Roman commander, opened the battle by sending his archers forward. [See map 2.] A unit of Velites on the right flank and a unit of Allied Javelin men on the left accompanied them. The archers soon opened a long range fire on the Carthaginian slingers. Hambone Barca countered with moving his slingers into range to engage the archers. Then as luck (the dice) would have, it War Band #2 suddenly went berserk and charged the Velites to their front. This caused Hambone two problems, the Gallic archers were now shielded and unable to fire at the Romans and his left flank was now weakened. While the slingers and archers traded volleys the War Band hurled themselves onto the Velites. (In the first round of combat with Berserkers both sides inflict double casualties and in following rounds only the Berserkers inflict double. The theory is based on the Berserkers not caring about defending themselves would open them to more hits in the beginning until the other unit’s morale starts to go.)

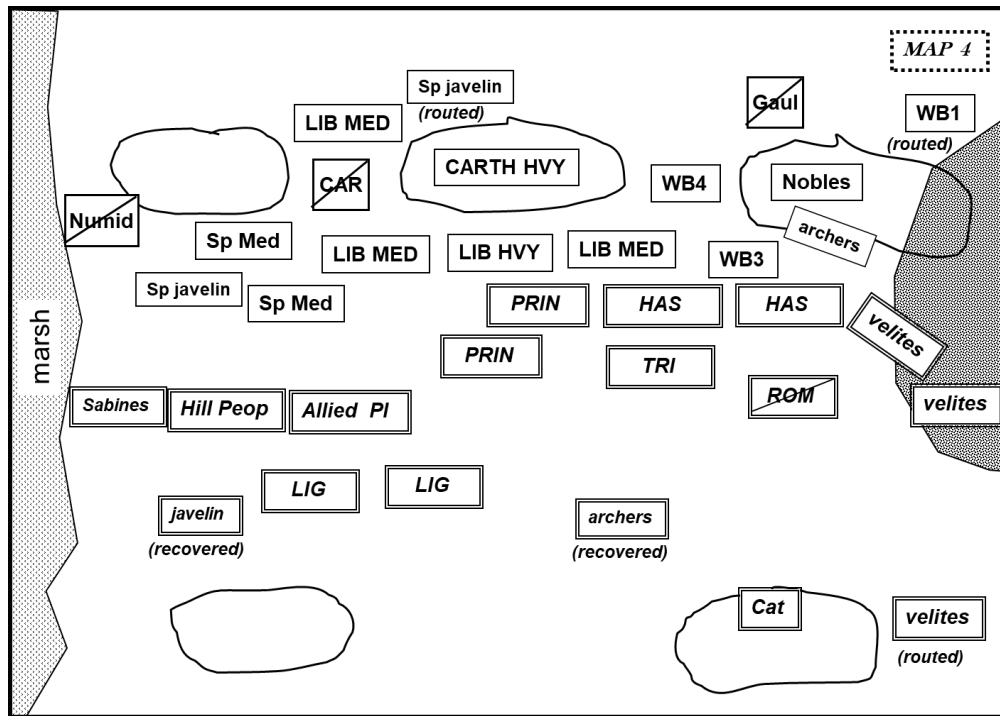


In two turns the shattered Velites were routed and War Band 2 was hurling themselves onto the lead unit of Hastati. As the Gauls were about to close, the Hastati hurled their Pila and the result was as crushing as the real thing must have been. Nine of the 15 Gauls surviving the fight with the velites now lay dead on the field. The remaining 6 were quickly cut down by the Romans who lost only 1 man in the very short fight.

Hambone had decided to see if he could break the Allied Legion. He ordered the Numidian and Spanish cavalry to attack the left flank of the enemy. Both units headed straight for the left flank javelin men. The commander of the Allied Legion responded with his own light and medium cavalry. The javelin men got in one throw inflicting a few casualties on the Numidians, but were all but annihilated in the ensuing fight. Surprisingly, the Allied light cavalry fought the Spanish light to a standstill, both units taking huge casualties, but neither one losing morale (I rolled three ones in a row for the Allied Cavalry). Just as the Numidians joined the fight, the Allied Medium came crashing in on the other side.

Hambone was not having a good day. His cavalry had not broken the Allied left like it should have and now his slingers were taking a pounding from the Roman archers. His own archers had been unable to accomplish anything and he could hear the sounds of a fight in the woods. The battle in the woods between War Band #1 and the unit of Velites was a strange one. [See map 3.] Apparently neither side was interested in a serious fight. In the first round the two stands of Velites rolled a pair of 1s equaling 1 hit and the Gauls rolled a 1 and a 2 also equaling 1 hit. Both hits were kills and in the next round each side managed to kill one more. After two turns of melee combat both units were at 18 figures.

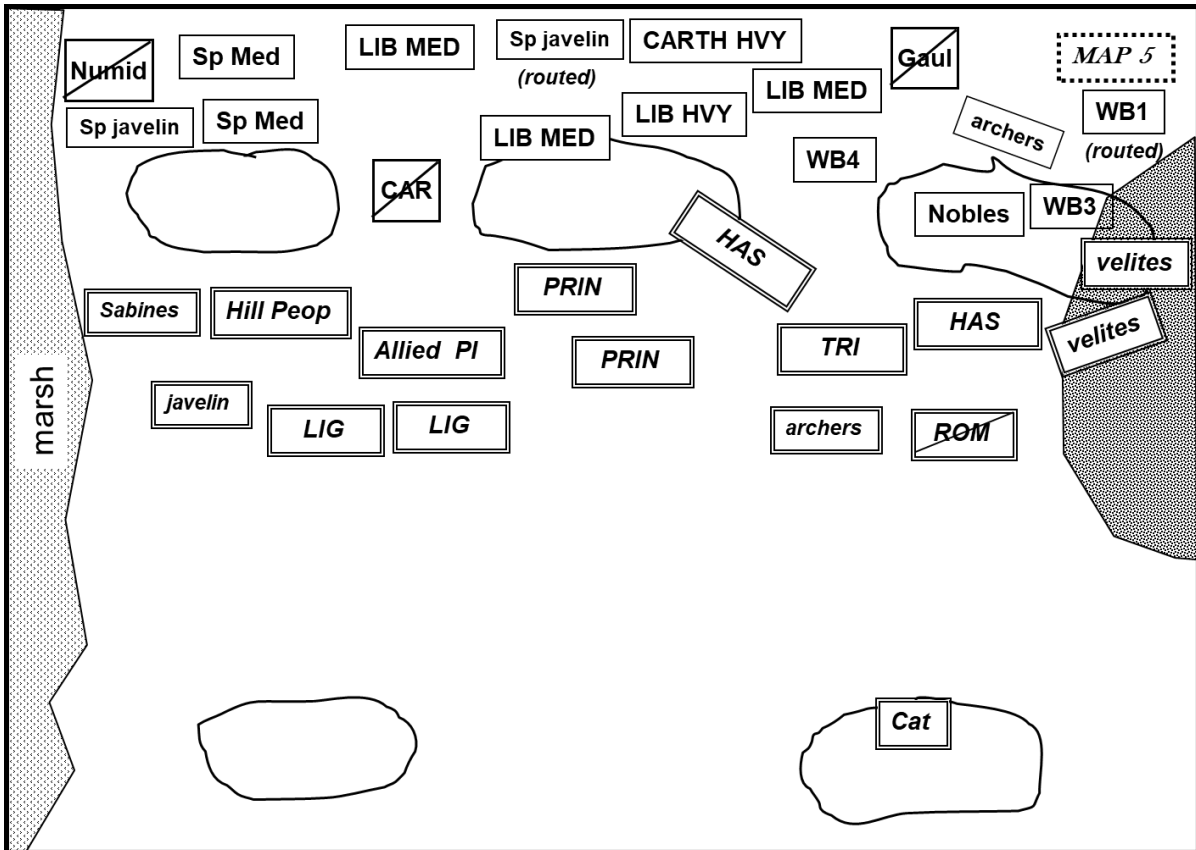
The next three turns decided the fight for the Romans. [See map 4.] The Romans advanced across the field and what few units fought them were easily destroyed. As the Romans advanced past the woods the recovered Velites surged into the forest hitting the Gauls in their un-shielded flank. Only the negative effect of combat in the forest saved the Gauls from being annihilated, although they did rout. On the left flank the Allied units continued to advance but were unable to catch the Spanish javelin troops and the constant shower of javelins was starting to take an unacceptable toll.



With the sure knowledge that his own un-shielded flank was now secure, Miles ordered the Roman units into melee. Hastatii and Principes smashed into the Libyans and War Band 3. The one unit of the three attacking that still had pila had a dismal pilum throw, but the Carthaginians were unable to take advantage of it as their extra rolls (regular phalanx rolls 2 ranks deep) were uniformly bad.

At this point, Hambone started withdrawing. [See map 5.] He still had a fairly effective army, but was now in danger of having his right flank turned. He still has a city to defend and will need troops to bolster the citizen militia. The lighter, hence faster Libyan medium spearmen were able to disengage from the Romans, but the Libyan heavies were stuck. Seeing the withdrawal starting and the sudden appearance of Velites from the woods, the remaining Gauls, except the nobles, routed. That left the Libyans holding the line against the entire Roman army. They soon routed, which was actually a good thing since there was still another battle to fight.

Miles sat on his horse on the hill recently occupied by his enemy. His casualties had been acceptable but the bulk of the Carthaginians had escaped and would have to be fought again....



Summary

I would have to rate this battle as a draw. I (the Romans) was unable to inflict the damage on the Carthaginians that I wanted to. My biggest disappointment was the performance of the catapults. I really expected more from them. I think I forgot them on a couple of turns though. The idea of the retreating javelins was an experiment that I wanted to try and it worked quite well. Sometime in the future some human opponent will feel the sting of that tactic. Part II of this article will be the battle for the city. In my campaign rules, the side that keeps the battlefield gets 1/3 of its casualties back. The side that retires gets 15% back. All routed troops return. So it is time to leave this field and prepare the armies for their next meeting.