

Solo Wargaming in the French and Indian War

By Michael Gray

The following rules are designed to get a logical reaction from an enemy force in a solo game without involving any other player. At first sight it might seem impossible to fight a wargame without an opponent, but this is not the case. The rules are based on five basic orders a field commander might issue in a battle.

- CHARGE
- ADVANCE AND FIRE
- STAND AND FIRE
- FIRE AND WITHDRAW
- WITHDRAW

These five orders are basic instructions for troops within musket range. If they are not in sight or contact with the enemy, they will react to alternative orders under the same heading. For example, it would be inappropriate to give an "Advance and Fire" order to a unit that is out of sight and range of the enemy. The unit will instead march in column at normal speed towards the front-line. A unit given an order to stand and fire under the same circumstances will not fire, as they cannot see the enemy, so will stand their ground. In other words - do nothing. A full list of options is shown below giving reactions to the same order. Players will have to use their discretion as to their use.

CHARGE

Move forward at full speed without discharging their weapons, regardless of their formation or cover. If out of sight of the enemy, then they march double-time in column to the sound of the action.

ADVANCE AND FIRE

Move half distance and fire if deployed into line. Troops out of musket range, march at normal speed if in line. Troops in sight of the enemy that are in column, deploy into line without firing, (light troops move into skirmish order). Disordered troops reform. Dismounted cavalry will remount. Units behind hard cover stand fast and fire. Light infantry in open ground seeing cavalry; attempt to form into close order. Units approaching the rear of a friendly unit that is deployed to fire at the enemy will support that unit 6" to its rear. If the forward unit is in contact with the enemy fighting a melee, then it will move into contact and take part in the melee.

STAND AND FIRE

Troops will stand and fire. Units in column will deploy. Artillery will unlimber. Cavalry dismount and deploy into skirmish line. Troops out of sight of the enemy, stand fast. Disordered troops reform.

FIRE AND WITHDRAW

Troops will fire a single volley, (-1), and withdraw at half normal speed to the nearest cover. Troops in close order are disordered and do not fire. Cavalry remount. Gunners, lay-down by their guns and do not fire. Troops out of sight of the enemy, stand fast.

WITHDRAW

All foot troops move to the rear without firing. Mounted troops remount if dismounted and move back at half speed. Gunners will limber their guns and retreat. Any troops withdrawing in the last bound rout. Gunners, if routing, abandon their cannon.

Troops reaction to local events

As different types of troops react quite differently in the same terrain, the reaction chart has been divided into four columns. OPEN GROUND, NATURAL COVER, HARD COVER, and troops in RETREAT. To give an example, Red Indians did not generally fight in the open, so they have a -1, on the dice score. In natural cover, when they hide they are +2 on the dice. European line infantry are the opposite; they were trained to fight in open ground, but became confused under enemy fire in woodland. So in open ground they are +2 and in natural cover nil. It may also be noted that under certain conditions, troops behind hard cover receive a minus factor. This is intended to prevent troops making wild charges when fighting defensive actions. It is also true that troops in defensive positions are reluctant to leave a safe place.

At the beginning of each bound, each unit on the table will take a reaction test regardless of being under fire. This will generally mean that units will march to the scene of battle and deploy when in sight of the enemy. Then advance or stand and fire, depending on the dice score. Select one of the four columns that is appropriate to the unit's condition. (The cover is disregarded if troops withdrew in the last bound). The troops are divided into eight classes. Select the appropriate class of troops, reading down the list of local conditions, adding and subtracting from a normal dice (1D6) score. With the final score the unit will react.

One point is subtracted for each figure lost in the last bound.
Units under half strength subtract 6 from the dice.

- +9 Charge at full speed without firing
- +6 to +8 Advance and fire. Troops in hard cover stand fast and fire.
- +3 to +5 Stand and fire. Troops in close order fire double volley if target within 6 inches
- +1 to +2 Stand and fire a single volley at any range
- 0 Troops fire and retire to nearest cover
- 1 or less Units withdraw without firing. Routs if withdrew in previous bound



Example:

	A unit of rangers are encamped in open ground off the table.
1 st Bound	Rangers in open
Rangers in open	0
Out of sight of enemy	+3
Enemy 15 inches away	+1
Die roll	+4
Total	+8 unit advances in column at normal speed
2 nd Bound	Enemy come into sight
Rangers in open	0
Enemy over 15 inches away	+1
Die roll	+4
Total	+5 unit deploys into skirmish line
3 rd Bound	Enemy advance to within six inches and rangers receive two casualties
Rangers in open	0
Enemy within 6 inches	-1
Two casualties	-2
Die roll	+3
Total	0 Rangers fire and withdraw to cover
4 th Bound	Rangers are now in woodland without casualties this bound and the enemy are within six inches
Rangers in natural cover	+2
Enemy within six inches	-1
Die roll	+4
Total	+5 Rangers stand and fire

Unit Character Factors

To give the reaction test a bit more variation, the militia and provincial troops can be given a character rating the same way as the Generals. (See General Officers). This score factor is included on all dice scores in a reaction test. Regular troops are considered to be better disciplined under fire, so have no character rating.

Learning the system

To get an understanding of the rules, just use two opposing units, one each end of the table, working on the principle that both are encamped. On the first reaction check to see if you can get them to advance towards each other, marching in column. Then deploying them once they come in sight of each other. They then should advance and start firing. You will probably find they will stand and fire for some time before one of them breaks and runs, but this to my mind is quite realistic. Remember that you only have to select the type of troops under one of the three terrain headings, then go immediately to the second half of the chart that begins “no enemy in sight”, in the same column, for the eight local factors. Subtract any casualties received during the last bound.

I have not used a lot of factors, as I wanted to keep it quick and simple. One of the factors that is not included is seeing own troops routing, which could be used at -2, but I personally found it not necessary.

Unit reaction Charts

	Open Ground	Natural Cover	Hard Cover	Routing or Withdrawing
British Regulars	+2	0	+2	0
Troupes de la Marine	0	+2	+2	0
Rangers	0	+2	+2	+2
Canadian Militia and Indians	-1	+2	+2	-2
Provincial Militia	+1	0	+2	-2
Light Infantry	+1	+2	+2	+2
Local Militia	-2	0	+2	-2
Light Cavalry	+4	0	+2	-2
No enemy in sight	+3	+3	+3	+3
General within 3"	+2	+1	0	+2
Enemy within 6"	-1	-2	-2	-2
Enemy over 15"	+1	+1	0	+1
Line infantry in skirmish order	-1	0	0	0
See enemy in retreat	+5	+2	+1	+3
Supporting troops within 6"	0	0	0	+2
Lost melee in last bound	-2	-2	-1	-3

Types of Troops

The fighting qualities of the troops involved in the war are divided into eight main types.

British Regular Infantry

These are veteran trained troops experienced in close order drill and volley fire. They would take heavy casualties in pitched battles but were unaccustomed to forest fighting. They would get completely lost in the forest without local guides, as they had no knowledge of woodcraft.

The Troupes de la Marine

These were composed largely from Canadian stock who had close knowledge of the country and Iroquois warfare. They were far more useful than regular troops and had some skill at close order drill.

Regular Light Infantry

These were highly trained and disciplined troops in forest warfare. They could also fight in close order if necessary.

Rangers

The rangers were recruited from men experienced in the ways of the woods. Most of these units seem to have been well disciplined when going into action. Their favorite weapon was the smoothbore musket loaded with large buckshot, which could be changed for ball ammunition if

needed. This was an ideal weapon for the close quarters fighting they were involved in. Rifled-muskets do not seem to have found favor as it was hard to load and the longer range would have been of little use in thick woodland. Besides, the smoothbore musket could be fitted with a bayonet, which was more than a match for a Red Indian armed with only a tomahawk. They were accustomed to make fighting withdrawals, firing from tree to tree unlike line troops who would just run away.

Indians and Canadian Militia

Indians and Canadian militia, such as the *coureurs de bois*, lived and fought in a similar manner. Both were undisciplined for the formal type of European warfare, but had few equals when fighting in the forest due to their background of hunting and trapping. They always tried to fight at an advantage, avoiding pitched battles in open ground and only advanced if there was little danger of being fired on. Honorable conduct was considered pure folly as it could lead to needless risks. Treachery to gain an advantage was considered good tactics. It was common practice to offer the enemy the chance to surrender and then kill and torture their prisoners. They usually made war when the trees were in full leaf, as they could then fire from ambush and make swift retreats. They never stood their ground if attacked, but would vanish into the woodland only to reappear when the danger had passed. To make a concentrated attack on such an enemy was no easy task and it was impossible for normal line infantry to pursue them into the forest. The only troops who could come to grips with them were experienced forest fighters, such as Roger's Rangers.

Provincial Militia

These troops were somewhat different than the Canadian militia as their background was different. They were drawn from farming communities and seem to have been something between line infantry and forest fighters. They were a pretty mixed bag from being very good to bad. Discipline was generally poor as the men elected their own officers. In this group you find units armed with rifled muskets.

Local Militia

These were settlers who would move into their local fort for protection during Indian raids. They would be formed into companies by the fort commander to undertake garrison duties, going home as soon as the danger had passed. Their fighting quality would have been as good as any behind a stockade, as the Indians would have no mercy if they were taken.

Light Cavalry

Both French and British had small units of light cavalry, composed of local militia. The few times they are mentioned during the war they were used as mounted infantry. They were used very little in operations, but this is no reason why they should not be used in a wargame.

General Officer

In a solo wargame the figure of the opposing general will have to react on the battlefield according to his character rating and situation. There is little they can do to change events, apart from rally troops and order-up reinforcements. General reaction will not have to be checked each bound; they will only be taken for the following reasons:

Own troops routing or withdrawing.
 Enemy attacking within six inches.
 Enemy routing or withdrawing.

To assess the general's character rating use the percentage dice:

Percentage	Rating
1 – 5	Rash
6 – 30	Brave
31 – 70	Average
71-95	Cautious
96 –100	Timid

The general will react in one of five ways depending on the percentage dice score. All can react to all five, but there is some variation in their chances.

	Rash	Brave	Average	Cautious	Timid
A	1 – 35	1 – 30	1 – 20	1 – 15	1 – 10
B	36 – 60	31 – 55	21 – 40	16 – 30	11 – 25
C	61 – 80	56 – 75	41 – 60	31 – 50	26 – 45
D	81 –95	76 – 90	61 – 80	51 – 75	46 – 70
E	96 – 100	91 – 100	81 – 100	76 – 100	71 – 100

GENERALS REACTIONS

- A Moves to the most stricken unit. (This will probably mean one that is nearest to the enemy, attacking or retreating. His presence will either rally them or give them impetus to make a charge).
- B Advance to the center of the front-line. (if the figure is already in that position, then there's no change).
- C Stand and do nothing.
- D Orders up a unit of reinforcements. (See Reinforcements)
- E Rides to the rear. Should this bring the figure off the table, then it will not return.

Reinforcements

In the solo game it is a matter of chance how many units are called to the table. The list shown below gives the classes of both French and British Armies, with the preference for the most common troops. When reinforcements are called for, throw the percentage dice for one unit only. Then give the unit its reaction test to local events. All reserve troops are considered encamped in open ground off the table. With an order to "Stand and Fire", the unit will not move on to the table. Units with an "Advance" or "Charge" order will enter from the center rear of the table.

Selection of Troops

French		British
1 – 5	Grenadiers	1 – 5
6 – 15	Troupes de la Marine	None
None	British line Troops	6 – 25
None	Light Infantry	26 – 30
16 – 18	Rangers	31 – 40
19 – 44	Red Indians	41 – 48
45 – 75	Canadian Militia	None
76 – 80	Provincial Militia	49 – 78
81 – 90	Local Militia	79 – 90
91 – 95	Light Artillery	91 – 95
96 - 100	Field Artillery	96 – 100

General's Battlefield Position

To find the position of the general at the beginning of the game use the General's Reaction Chart.

- A Center front in the main battle line exposed to enemy fire.
- B Just behind the rear of the frontline.
- C In the best position that is safe to observe the battle, (on a hill etc.)
- D 10" behind the center of the frontline.
- E Standing center, on the baseline at the rear of the table.



Melee

When two opposing sides come into contact a melee will take place using the following method. Both sides count the number of figures within 1¼ inch of each other. Then add the following to the total, and throw a 1D6 to find the number of casualties in figures in the table.

+4	Light Cavalry. Attacking in the Flank or Rear.
+3	Grenadiers. Light Infantry. Rangers.
+2	Line Infantry. Troupes de la Marine. Indians. Canadian Militia. Provincial Militia. Defending Hard Cover. Charging Troops (first round only).
0	Riflemen. Local Militia.
-2	Routing or Withdrawing Troops.

See table below:

	6	5	4	3	2	1
21	4	3	3	2	1	
20	3	3	3	2	1	
19	3	3	3	2	1	
18	3	3	3	2	1	
17	3	3	3	2	1	
16	3	3	2	2	1	
15	3	3	2	1	1	
14	3	3	2	1	1	
13	3	3	2	1	1	
12	3	3	2	1	1	
11	2	2	2	1		
10	2	2	1	1		
9	2	2	1	1		
8	2	2	1	1		
7	2	2	1	1		
6	2	1	1	1		
5	1	1	1	1		
4	1	1	1			
3	1	1	1			
2	1	1	1			
1	1	1				

After each melee, both sides check morale. If both hold, they fight again.

