

Easy Napoleonics

By George Knapp

1. Background. Lou Zocchi introduced me to miniature gaming in 1967. The rule set was *Column, Line, and Square*, second edition, by Fred Vietmeyer. That set and *CLS3*, which followed many years later, are the inspirations for these Napoleonic rules. As always I tried to keep my rules simple, but not simple-minded. For that reason, I have taken some ideas for my game from the remarkably simple rule set *Snappy Nappy*, by Russ Lockwood. I commend these rules to your attention.

I want to thank my wargaming buddies, John Gleason, Prisco Hernandez Mike Redelfs, Rich Barbuto and Dan Barbuto for spending many pleasant hours play testing. I could not have completed these rules without them.



The Napoleonic wars involved dozens of nations and hundreds of different unit types. It is impossible for me to replicate each and every one of the fascinating differences between so many nations and unit types. But, it is possible to design a game that people can enjoy playing and want to play again. That is my goal.

2. How to Play. Two to four players move armies of miniature soldiers on a table-top battlefield covered with a hexagonal grid. The grid defines how far units can move, shoot, and their orientation. Players do not use rulers to measure movement or shooting. Players use ten-sided dice (D10) to resolve firing, fighting, and morale checks. Games may last no more than ten turns or two hours whichever comes first.

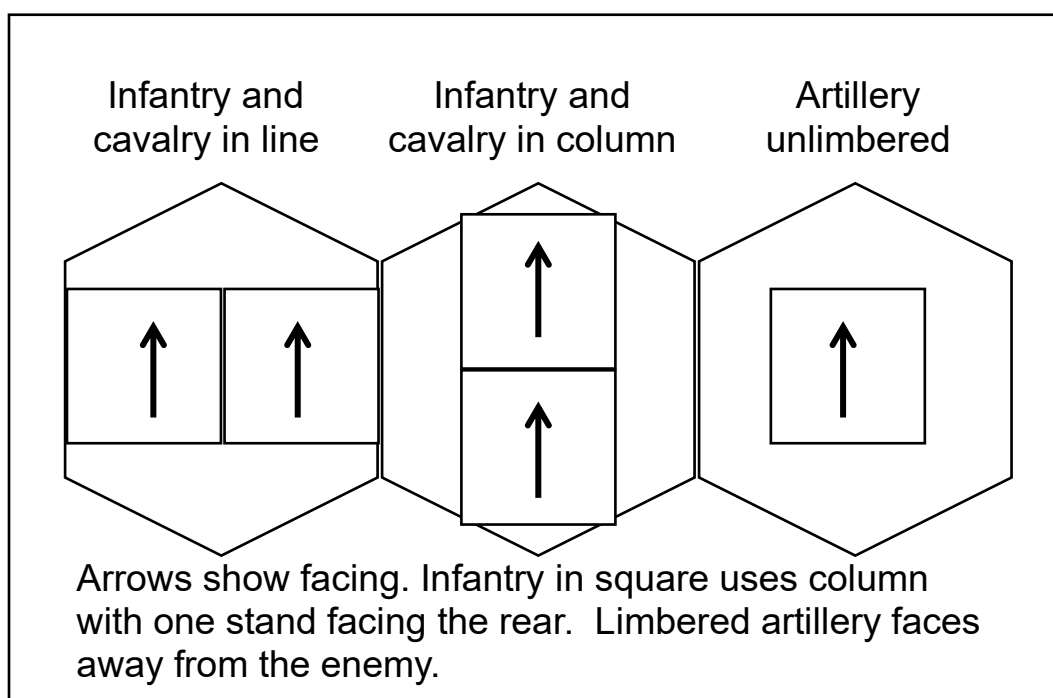
3. How to Win. Each basic army starts with units worth 33-41 victory points. Within ten turns or two hours, one side wins when it has destroyed enemy units worth 20 victory points. Players are free to change this arbitrary number to what pleases them.

In some games, players may wish to substitute objectives such as hills or villages or some other geographical features for victory points. If, at the end of ten turns, neither player has enough points to claim the victory, then both players must slink away from the table in disgrace.

4. The Units. Each army consists of infantry battalions, cavalry squadrons and artillery batteries commanded by a leader. Infantry and cavalry units each have two stands while artillery batteries each have one stand. Leaders are one stand each.

Infantry may be in column, line, or square. Cavalry may be in column or line. Artillery may be limbered or unlimbered. Columns move farther than line each turn. Artillery must be limbered to move and unlimbered to fire. Infantry in square may not move. Leaders may move freely without regard to facing but may not move into or through hexes containing enemy units.

See the following illustration.



5. Morale. Morale is the central element of this game. Each unit has a permanent morale grade (quality of the unit) and a temporary morale level (current unit status). Morale checks, firing and melee calculations begin with the unit's morale grade modified by its morale level and other conditions.

Morale Grades. All units have a morale grade representing two important elements in the game.

- First, the morale grade is the number that a unit must roll on 1D10 to pass a morale check. It may be modified by various conditions.
- Second, the morale grade is also the number the units must roll on 1D10 to hit a target with fire and in melee. It also may be modified by conditions.
- Players want to cause enemy units to take as many morale checks as possible. In this way, enemy units eventually wear down and are removed from the game. Players earn victory points for each enemy unit removed from play.

Morale grades go from "9+" (Worst - Militia) to "3+" (Best - Old Guard).

Unit Type	Morale Grade	
Militia	9+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It should be easy to see how important a unit's morale grade is to morale checks and to firing. • Militia units are poor shots and poor fighters. • Veteran units are much harder to defeat and are better shooters. • Elites and Guards are the best troops; good shots and good fighters.
Conscript	8+	
Seasoned	7+	
Veteran	6+	
Elite	5+	
Guard	4+	
Old Guard	3+	

Example: Two units must take morale checks. One is elite and the other is seasoned. The elite unit needs to roll a 5+ (5 or higher) to pass its check. The seasoned unit needs to roll a 7+ (7 or higher). The elite unit has a better chance of passing its morale check than the seasoned unit. This also applies to artillery and musketry.

Morale Levels. There are four morale levels. From highest to lowest they are: Good, Fair, Bad, and Broken.

Morale Level	Firing Modifier	Melee Modifier	Morale Check Modifier
Good	None	None	None
Fair	-1	-1	-1
Bad	-2	-2	-2
Broken	Remove from play		

All units begin the game with good morale unless a specific scenario dictates otherwise.

Players keep track of their units' current morale status using chits, rings, or roster system. For added realism, players may want to keep their units' morale status secret from each other. It will slow the game, but might be more fun for some players.

Morale Checks. A unit must take a morale check:

- When attempting to raise its morale during the rally phase of each turn.
- When attempting to form hasty square (see rules for hasty squares).
- For each and every hit it takes from artillery or musket fire. If a unit takes two hits then it must take two morale checks.
- As directed by melee results.

Morale Check Modifiers. These are cumulative.

- Leader attached +1
- Morale level good - None
- Morale level fair -1
- Morale level bad -2

A unit passes a morale check by rolling 1D10 and scoring a modified roll equal to or greater than its morale grade. If the roll is successful, then that morale check is over.

When taking two or more morale checks from a single event (artillery, musketry, or melee) the second and subsequent checks from that event are not modified by the first. A unit taking two morale checks should roll them simultaneously and not one after another.

For example: A unit receiving two artillery hits, even if from different batteries, would roll 2D10 simultaneously. All modifiers to the morale roll would apply to both dice. If that unit later received two hits from infantry units, even if from different enemy infantry units, it would roll 2D10 simultaneously. If the unit was fresh, then there are no modifiers.

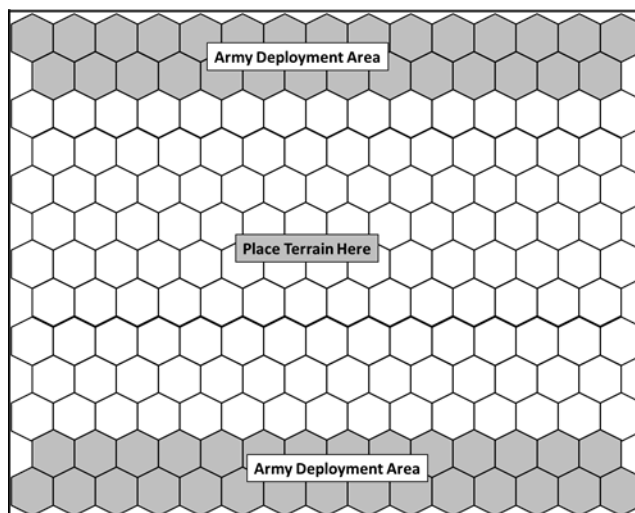
If the unit was fair, then both D10 would be minus one.

If a leader was present, then both D10 would be plus one."



Regardless of modifiers, you always pass a morale check on a natural die roll of ten. You always fail on a natural die roll of one (even the Old Guard).

6. How to Start. Both sides start the game with basic armies of equal point value. To this basic army, both sides add three units chosen randomly.



Next, players place terrain on the table. It can be done randomly or according to an agreed upon scenario.

I suggest players use woods, hills, farms/villages, streams, and ponds as they need.

I use a technique. I roll 1D6 for woods and put out that many randomly. I do the same for hills and farms/villages.

So, I could have as many as six hills, six woods, and six farms/villages. Or, I could as few as one of each.

Finally, both sides roll one die. The side with the low roll must deploy first. This step might not be necessary if the players have agreed beforehand to a scenario in which one side deploys first or if both sides deploy at the same time in pre-set positions. After all this is done, it is time for turn 1.

7. Turn Sequence. See details in sections 8 through 13.

- Roll for initiative. Side with initiative chooses to move first or second and chooses the order in which fires and melees are resolved. This is a significant advantage.
- Both sides conduct rallies simultaneously.
- Side A moves.
- Side B moves.
- Artillery fire. Side with initiative fires first. Apply effects immediately.
- Small arms fire. Side with the initiative fires first. Apply effects immediately.

- Melees – one at a time, side with initiative chooses the sequence.
- End of turn.

8. Initiative. Both sides roll 1D10. High roll has the initiative during this turn. Modify the die roll as follows: The side that won the initiative last turn subtracts two from its die roll. If that side wins again, subtract four, then six and so on until the other player wins. If the modified result is a tie, then roll again. The intent of this rule is for initiative to swing back and forth in the game.

The side with the initiative gets the following benefits during the turn.

- Choosing to move first or second.
- Choosing to fire its artillery first or second.
- Choosing to fire its small arms first or second.
- Choosing the order of melees.

Optional rule. Players may wish to give one side an advantage in the die rolls for initiative based on a historical scenario or a deep-rooted dislike for one side or the other. If so, I suggest a +2 to the die roll of the favored side each turn.

9. Conducting Rallies. At the start of each move, all units with fair or bad morale may attempt to rally by simply passing a modified morale check. If the unit has fair or poor morale then subtract 1 or 2 from the die roll. If a good leader is present, then add one to the die roll of each unit that he can reach within his movement range of five hexes (not a radius of five hexes). The leader moves to a unit and it takes a morale check with a +1 for the leader.



If the unit passes its morale check, even without the leader present, it raises its current morale one level. If it fails its morale check then nothing changes. If present, the leader may use any remaining movement to attempt rallies on other units. Any movement by the leader counts against his five-hex range for the turn.

10. Movement. The playing surface is covered with a hexagonal grid (hex or hexes). Units move from one hex to another based on the following rules:

a. Actions. Most units may do two actions per turn. Horse artillery may do three. These actions are:

- Change formation to line, column, or square or limber or unlimber.
- Change facing to any one of the six apexes of the hex it occupies. Includes unlimbered artillery.

Note: Changing formation or facing must be done before the unit moves.

- Move once. May not move and then move again.
- Fire once. May not fire and then fire again.
- Move one hex to flank or rear keeping the same facing and formation (infantry, cavalry and limbered artillery only).

Note: Units that change formation or facing may not charge enemy units during the current turn.

b. Move. Basic movement rules.

- Units control the two hexes they face. They do not control their flank or rear hexes.
- Units may move into either of the two hexes they face.
- Infantry, cavalry, and limbered artillery units may move one hex to their flank or rear keeping the same facing but may not move farther or unlimber that turn.
- Units must halt when they move into any of the six hexes surrounding an enemy unit – even flank or rear hexes.
- Units that begin their move facing one of the enemy's six surrounding hexes may not move, change formation, or change facing.
- Units may not move directly from one enemy controlled hex to another enemy controlled hex even if it is another enemy unit
- There is no extra cost to enter or pass through hill, woods, and villages.

Type Unit and Formation	Moves Each Turn in hexes
Infantry Line	1
Infantry Column	2
Infantry Square	May not move except Austrian "battalionmasse" may move 1.
Cavalry Line	2
Cavalry Column	3
Limbered Field Artillery	2
Limbered Horse Artillery	3
Unlimbered Artillery	May not move
Leader	5

c. Change Formation. The basic formations are column, line, square, limbered, and unlimbered.

- When a unit changes its formation, the resulting facing defines the unit's two new front hexes. Movement, if any, will take place through these two hexes.
- Units may change their formation only at the beginning of the movement phase. In other words, they cannot move and then change formation. Exception: artillery may move and then unlimber or limber and then move but, field artillery that moves and unlimbers may not fire that turn. Horse artillery may move, unlimber and fire in the same turn.
- Column. Infantry and cavalry. The unit is deployed for rapid movement over distance. Narrow front, great depth. Low firepower, high mass and impetus.
- Line. Infantry and cavalry. The unit is deployed for combat. Wide front, little depth, slow. High firepower, low mass and impetus.
- Square. Infantry only. The unit is deployed to fend off cavalry attacks. It has low firepower to each of its sides and presents a good target for artillery but is normally safe from cavalry attacks. It cannot move except as the result of a failed morale check. See also rules for forming a hasty square.
- Limber. Artillery only. Must be limbered to move. Gun crews and horses bring limbers to the guns in order to move. Horse artillery can do this faster than field artillery.
- Unlimber. Artillery only. Must be unlimbered to fire. Gun crews detach the guns from the limbers and move the limbers a short distance to the rear. The guns are now ready to fire.

Note: Units that change formation or facing may not charge enemy units that turn.

d. Change Facing. All units must face one of the six apexes of the hex – in other words, units may not face hexsides. When facing an apex, the unit has two front hexes, two flank hexes, and two rear hexes as shown in the diagram below.

Facing. Deployed units must always finish their movement facing as shown in this diagram.

This technique for facing also helps define a unit's front, flanks, and rear.

All units have two front, two flank, and two rear hex sides.

Units control only their two 'front' hexes!!!!

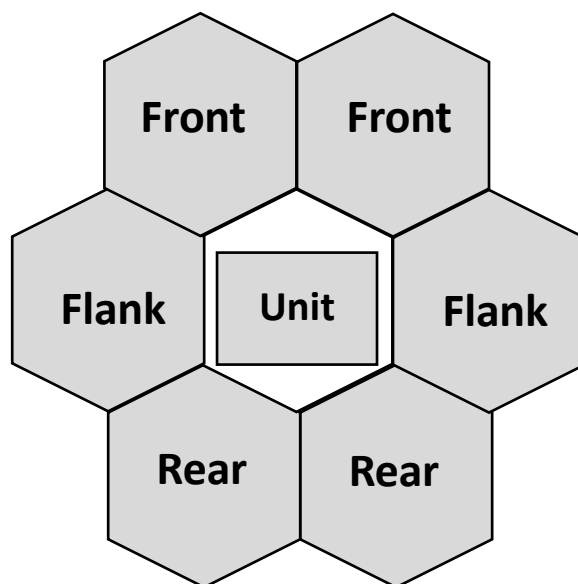
In melee, units may only attack enemies in their "Front" hexes.

Units may be attacked from their "Flank" and "Rear" hexes. Attackers get bonuses.

Units may not move directly from an enemy "front" hex to that enemy's "flank" hex.

Units that begin their movement in any of the six hexes surrounding an enemy may not move.

Units may move one hex to their flank or rear but must keep the same formation and facing.



Other movement rules:

- Only one cavalry squadron, artillery battery, or infantry battalion may ever occupy a single hex. (Optional: Allow two artillery units to form a grand battery and occupy the same hex.)
- Units may not move through hexes containing other units except hexes containing friendly unlimbered friendly artillery.
- Units must stop when they enter one of the six hexes surrounding an enemy unit.
- If a unit begins its turn inside any one of the enemy's six surrounding hexes, then it may not move, change its facing, or change its formation in that turn. This rule applies even if the enemy unit is in square.
- Hasty Squares. When an infantry unit in line or column formation is charged by cavalry, it has the option of trying to form a hasty square even if it has moved earlier in the turn. The unit must pass a morale check with modifiers. If the unit passes the morale check, then it has succeeded and the formation is changed to square. If the unit fails, then it remains in the formation it was already in. It loses its opportunity to fire small arms that turn. See the hasty square modifier to the melee table.

Note: Units that change formation or facing may not charge enemy units that turn. They may move adjacent to enemy units for the purpose of firing muskets.

11. Artillery Fire. Units hit their targets by rolling a 1D10 number equal to or greater than their modified morale grade.

Field artillery has a maximum range of nine (9) hexes. Horse artillery has a maximum range of six (6) hexes.

- Long range is 7-9 hexes (5-6 hexes for horse artillery). Batteries roll 1D10.
- Medium range is 3-6 hexes (3-4 for horse artillery). Batteries roll 2D10.
- Close range is 1-2 hexes. Batteries roll 3D10. This is canister range.
- A battery must be able to see its target to fire at it.
- A battery fires from its facing apex, through its two front hexes to the nearest apex of the target hex.
- That line of fire may not pass through any hex containing friendly or enemy units or blocking terrain.
- Use a string stretched from the firer's apex to the target's nearest apex to determine if line of sight is blocked or if the fire is through the target's flank or rear. If the string passes through the target's flank or rear hexes, then apply the flank or rear firing modifier.

Here are the modifiers to artillery and small arms fire die rolls. These effects are cumulative, but you always hit your target on a natural die roll of ten. You always miss on a natural roll of one.

- Firer's morale is fair -1
- Firer's morale is poor -2
- Target is unlimbered artillery -1
- Target is in woods or village -1
- Leader is present +1
- Target is column or limbered artillery +1
- Target is square or battalion-masse +2
- Firing at flank +2
- Firing at rear +3

Regardless of modifiers, you always hit your target with a natural die roll of ten. You always miss your target with a natural die roll of one.

12. Musketry. The side with initiative gets to fire all its units first and the results are in effect immediately. Musketry fire is not simultaneous.

Infantry musketry range is one hex and only into the firing unit's two front hexes. The firing unit rolls one die per stand and hits the target on a modified die roll equal to or greater than its morale grade.

If enemy units occupy both of an infantry unit's front hexes, then the firing unit may divide its fire between the two or concentrate its fire on one. Units may not fire into their flank or rear hexes. Columns may fire only their front stand. Squares may fire both stands if there are targets in two or more surrounding hexes.

13. Melee Combat. After all firing is done units that remain in contact through their front two hexes must resolve melee combat. Units in line get to count both stands. Units in column get to count only the leading stand (except see French National Difference modifier). Squares and hasty squares get to count only one stand. Both sides roll one die per and add to it all cumulative modifiers.



Melee Modifiers

Troop type per stand	Other Conditions (attacker modifiers)
Militia +1 per stand	Defender in woods, town, village, or on hill and attacker is not -2
Conscript +2 per stand	Attacker is armored cavalry +1 (applies to either side)
Seasoned +3 per stand	Heavy cavalry vs light cavalry +2 (applies to either side)
Veteran +4 per stand	Cavalry and infantry vs artillery +3
Elite +5 per stand	Cavalry vs infantry line or column +3
Guard +6 per stand	Attacking enemy flank +4
Old Guard +7 per stand	Attacking enemy rear +5
	Cavalry vs hasty square -3
	Cavalry vs solid square -5
Overall unit morale (not by stands)	Infantry vs. any square +4
Leader attached +1	
Good +- 0	Combat Results
Fair -1	Tie - Both units drop 1 morale level and take two morale checks
Bad -2	1-4 - Loser drops 2 morale levels and takes two morale checks
	5+ - Loser broken

Optional Rule: Breakthrough. The melee winner may occupy the loser's hex keeping its current facing and fight another melee against any enemy unit in its new two front hexes. This breakthrough melee is not mandatory. If it does want to continue against the new enemy, then that enemy gets to issue fire before the melee winner. A unit may conduct only one breakthrough each turn. As an alternative, the melee winner may choose to occupy the loser's hex, keep its current formation, and change its facing to any one of the hex's apexes. No further melee may result from this alternative.

Optional Rule: Melee Morale Bonus. If an enemy unit is broken and removed from play as the result of a melee, then the victorious unit may immediately raise its morale by one level (but not higher than good).

14. Leaders. At the level of play intended in this game, each side should have one good leader who gives a +1 benefit to any unit he is attached to. So, include a +1 when the unit fires, melees, and takes morale checks.

Attaching a leader to a unit carries risk. The risk is that the leader might get killed. So, whenever a unit takes hits (regardless of the number of hits) or is the loser in a melee, roll 1D10 for the leader. He is killed on a die roll of "one" and removed from play. Do not replace him.

In larger games, players may want to have more than one leader; perhaps one leader per player.

15. Optional National Differences. To give each army a national distinction, here are some suggestions for players to experiment with in their games. I'm sure there are many others. I encourage you to experiment with them.

- **England.** Infantry in line get firing bonus +1 per firing stand.



- **France.** Infantry charging in column get a +1 melee bonus and get to count both stands in the melee. Infantry moving in column are +1 for morale checks.
- **Prussian.** Infantry charging in column get a +1 melee bonus.
- **Austria.** Infantry May use “battalionmasse” – a solid square that moves at the rate of one hex per turn. Treated as a column in melee against infantry and artillery. Treated as a square against cavalry. Infantry units get a +1 to their musketry rolls and a +1 to each stand in melee to represent the relatively larger size of Austrian battalions.
- **Russia.** Infantry defending get a +1 per stand melee bonus.

16. Point System. Cost per stand!

Morale Grade	Infantry Stand	Light Cavalry Stand	Heavy Cavalry Stand	Foot Artillery Stand	Horse Artillery Stand
Militia 9+	1	2	3	4	5
Conscript 8+	2	3	4	5	6
Seasoned 7+	3	4	5	6	7
Veteran 6+	4	5	6	7	8
Elite 5+	5	6	7	8	9
Guard 4+	6	7	8	9	10
Old Guard 3+	7	8	9	10	11

Sample basic army for Easy Napoleonics. Infantry battalions and cavalry squadrons are two stands each. Artillery batteries are one stand each.

<u>Units</u>	<u>Cost in Points</u>	<u>Victory Points</u>
6 seasoned infantry battalions	36	1 each
2 veteran infantry battalions	16	2 each
1 elite infantry battalion	10	3 each
1 seasoned light cavalry squadron	8	3 each
1 seasoned heavy cavalry squadron	10	3 each
2 veteran field artillery batteries	14	3 each
1 good leader	10	5 each
Total	104	29

Random card mix

There should be one card for each of the units in the card mix. One of those cards should read “choice” allowing the player to choose one unit of his choice. Players draw three cards and add the units to the basic army.

Units in the card mix

3 seasoned infantry battalions
 2 veteran infantry battalions
 1 elite infantry battalion
 1 veteran light cavalry squadron
 1 veteran heavy cavalry squadron
 1 veteran field artillery battery
 1 veteran horse artillery battery

So, in victory points, these armies range from 32 to 38 victory points each.

17. Designer Notes.

a. This game design creates battles between almost equal armies. Since equal armies seldom exist in real war, this design may not appear very realistic. On the other hand, this design is for players who have two hours to play a simple game without much time lost in explaining the rules.

b. In the end, the game is about player skills, or lack of skills, and not about the greatness or lack of greatness of any armies. Luck plays a larger role in this game than in real war. Players can easily blame their poor performance on bad die rolls – a comforting thought for many gamers.

c. Units are not usually destroyed in battles. They lose their combat effectiveness and can't be used much for the rest of the battle. When units are destroyed in this game, they have lost their combat effectiveness so we remove them from the game and count them toward game victory.

d. Morale drives this game. Units don't have a combat strength. They have a morale status. Units lose their morale level as they move around the battlefield and fight. Units can regain some of their lost morale by trying. In the end, units lose their combat effectiveness through loss of morale.

e. The rule prohibiting units from changing facing or formation and then charging is my own prejudice against players who use that technique to attack the flanks and rear of enemy units that have just finished their move – units that could not have been reached if they had not moved. If, on the other hand, the player has properly faced his unit and has it in the right formation to counter-attack, then I endorse the move.

f. I apologize for the cheat sheet and all the modifiers. I had hoped to design a game that had none, but the Napoleonic warfare got the best of me. Still, I hope you find this a little easier to play than other rules you may have tried.

EASY NAPOLEONICS CHEAT SHEET

Movement in Hexes

Infantry Column: 2 hexes
 Infantry Line: 1
 Cavalry Column: 3
 Cavalry Line: 2
 Artillery Limbered: 2
 Horse Arty Limbered: 3

Squares and Unlimbered
 Artillery May Not Move

Firing

Musketry Range 1 Hex

Artillery Ranges:

Far 7-9 hexes, one die
 Middle 3-6 hexes, two dice
 Close 1-2 hexes, three dice

Firer's Morale

Leader +1 Good +/- 0
 Fair -1 Bad -2

Target

Woods/Village -1
 Unlimbered Artillery -1
 Limbered Artillery +1
 Column +1 Square +2
 Flank +2 Rear +3

Melee

Troop type (per stand)

Seasoned +3 Veterans +4
 Elites +5 Guards +6

Morale

Leader attached +1
 Good Morale +/- 0
 Fair Morale - 1
 Bad Morale - 2
 Other (apply mostly to Attacker)
 Defender in woods, town, village
 or on hill and attacker is not - 2
 Armored Cav + 1 (either side)
 Hvy Cav vs Lt Cav +2 (either side)
 Cav and Inf vs artillery +3
 Cav vs inf not in square +3
 Flank Attack +4 Rear Attack +5
 Cav vs hasty square - 3
 Infantry vs any square + 4

Melee Results

0 Both sides drop 1 morale level
 and take 2 morale checks
 1-4 Loser drops 2 morale levels
 and takes 2 morale checks
 5+ Loser broken. Remove from
 Play.

National Differences

Britain. Infantry in line get a +1 firing bonus
 for each firing stand.

France. Infantry moving in column are +1 for
 Morale checks. Infantry charging in column
 get to count both stands in the melee and
 get a +1 melee bonus (total).

Prussia. Infantry charging in column get a +1
 melee bonus.

Austria. Infantry use 'battalionmasse' - a solid
 square that moves at the rate of 1 hex per turn.
 Infantry battalions are +1 to musketry and melee
 per stand.

Russia. Infantry defending get a +1 per stand
 melee bonus.

Morale Check and Rally Modifiers

Leader +1 Good +/- 0
 Fair -1 Bad - 2