

# Sword & Spear

SECOND EDITION



WARGAMES RULES FOR ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL BATTLES  
BY MARK LEWIS  
POLKOVNIK PRODUCTIONS

**GREAT  
ESCAPE  
GAMES**

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## SECTION 2

# UNITS & COMMANDERS

“OUT OF EVERY ONE HUNDRED MEN, TEN SHOULDN'T EVEN BE THERE, EIGHTY ARE JUST TARGETS, NINE ARE THE REAL FIGHTERS, AND WE ARE LUCKY TO HAVE THEM, FOR THEY MAKE THE BATTLE. AH, BUT THE ONE, ONE IS A WARRIOR, AND HE WILL BRING THE OTHERS BACK.” - HERACLITUS

### Units

Except for commanders, all figures are organised into units. A unit consists of a number of figures grouped together in a rectangular formation. All units must have the same frontage.

### Unit size

There are two sizes of units: normal and large.

All units have the same frontage but a large unit should be deeper to indicate that it is a large unit.

Large units are for troops which fought in deep formations such as pike phalanxes and some warbands and spearmen.

### Unit profiles

Each unit has a profile, with various ratings and characteristics. Some typical unit profiles are shown below.

### Type

Troops can be any of the following types :  
Heavy foot, medium foot, light foot, cavalry, camels, light horse, elephants, chariots, war wagons, artillery.

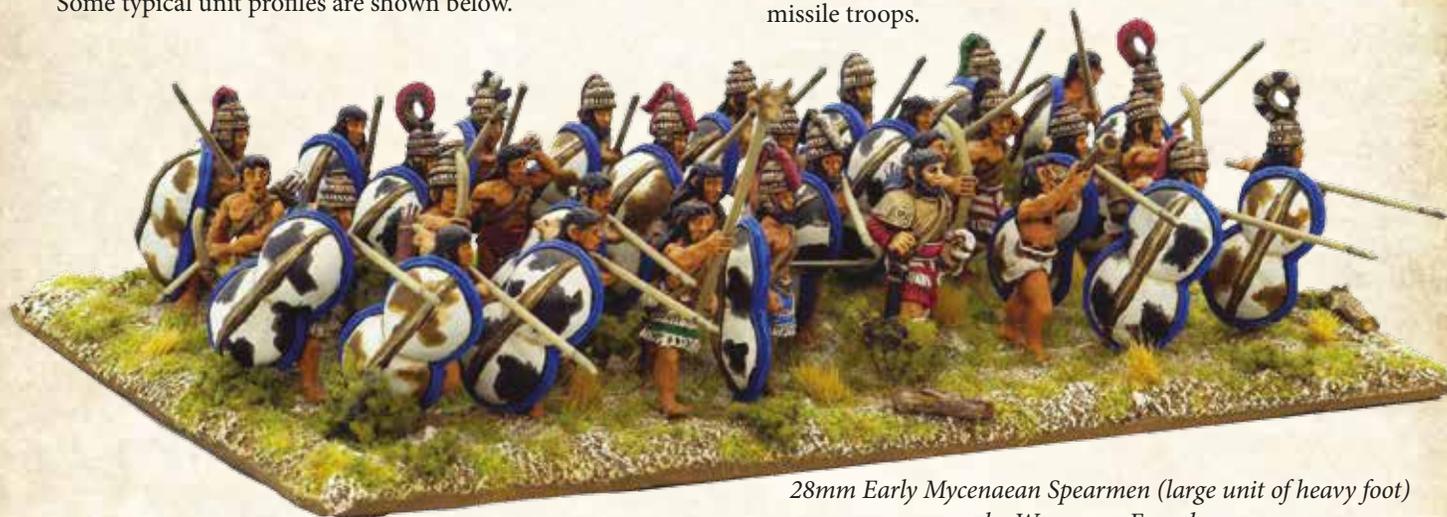
An army may optionally have a baggage camp.

Heavy foot, medium foot and light foot are collectively known as foot.

Cavalry, light horse, elephants, camels and chariots are collectively known as mounted.

Light foot and light horse are collectively known as skirmishers. Artillery, war wagons and baggage camps are collectively known as train.

Any troops with a missile weapon capability are known as missile troops.



*28mm Early Mycenaean Spearmen (large unit of heavy foot)  
by Wargames Foundry*

NAME	TYPE	DISCIPLINE	STRENGTH	CHARACTERISTICS
Gallic Warriors	Heavy foot (L)	4	4	Impact, Undrilled
Greek Hoplites	Heavy foot	4	4	Shieldwall, Spears, Undrilled
Spartan Hoplites	Heavy foot	3	4	Armoured (ARM), Spears, Steadfast
Roman Legionaries	Heavy foot	3	4	Armoured (ARM), Thrown Weapons
Viking Huscarls	Heavy foot	3	4	Armoured (ARM), Two Handed Weapons, Undrilled
Slingers	Light foot	4	2	Sling
Horse Archers	Light horse	4	2	Bow
Archers	Medium foot	4	3	Lacking protection (LP), Bow
Thracian Warriors	Medium foot	4	3	Undrilled
Longbowmen	Medium foot	4	3	Longbow
Peasants	Medium foot	5	3	Lacking protection (LP)
Persian Cavalry	Cavalry	3	3	
Medieval Knights	Cavalry	3	3	Heavily armoured (HA), Impact, Undrilled
Elephants	Elephants	4	3	Armoured (ARM), Impact, Undrilled

# SECTION 5

## THE GAME TURN

“FORTUNE, WHICH HAS A GREAT DEAL OF POWER IN OTHER MATTERS BUT ESPECIALLY IN WAR, CAN BRING ABOUT GREAT CHANGES IN A SITUATION THROUGH VERY SLIGHT FORCES.”  
- JULIUS CAESAR

### Overview

Each player has a number of dice of a particular colour (so for example one army has blue dice and the other has red). These are placed in a bag. In each phase dice are drawn randomly from this bag and allocated to units. Then units are activated one at a time in the order of the action dice.

Each unit carries out its complete action for the turn (including moving, shooting and close combat) before the next unit is activated. Each unit may only be activated once each turn.

At the end of each turn is the End phase, where commanders may move and attempt to rally units.

### Turn sequence

1. Prepare action dice bag
2. Action phases
3. End phase

### Preparing the action dice bag

At the start of each turn each player totals the number of units he has and puts this number of his coloured dice into a bag. This is the action dice bag, and in the action phases these dice are drawn randomly from this bag, to determine which side's units can activate.

### Action phases

The main part of the turn consists of a series of action phases. These continue until all action dice have been drawn from the bag. Each phase consists of four parts:

1. Draw action dice
2. Allocate action dice
3. Activate units
4. Clean-up

### Draw action dice

One player (it doesn't matter who, but players can take turns) draws seven\* dice from the action dice bag. These are given to each player according to their colour. The player with the most dice is known as the active player for the phase, the other player is the reactive player.

In the last phase of the turn there will often be less than seven dice drawn, and each player may have the same number of action dice, in which case the player who was the reactive player in the previous phase becomes the active player in this phase.

\*The number of action dice drawn each phase is increased for multi-player games. See Section 17.

### Allocate action dice

The active player rolls his action dice and allocates them to units by placing them behind the unit. The reactive player then rolls his action dice and allocates them to units. Not all action dice will be usable, depending on the numbers shown on them. A unit can only be given an action dice which is equal to or higher than the discipline rating of the unit. If any action dice are not used they are put aside, to be put back into the bag in the end phase.

Normally a single action dice is allocated to each unit. However, multiple action dice showing the same number may be allocated to a unit, and this will give combat or movement bonuses to the unit when it is activated.

A unit cannot be allocated an action dice if it has already been activated this turn. In this case the unit would already have an action dice showing a 1 beside it.



*Saxon shieldwall (28mm figures by Gripping Beast)*

# SECTION 6

## COMMANDERS

“TEN SOLDIERS WISELY LED WILL BEAT A HUNDRED WITHOUT A HEAD.” - EURIPIDES

Generals and captains are known collectively as commanders.

### Command distance

Each commander has a command distance. Any unit within the command distance of a commander is in command. A unit that is not within the command distance of a commander is out of command.

A commander in contact with a friendly unit is attached to it. A commander may only be attached to a single friendly unit.

A unit's discipline value is improved by one (i.e. One lower) when it has a commander attached, and it is one worse (i.e. One higher) if it is out of command.

When a commander is attached to a unit, command range is measured from any part of the unit he is with, rather than the commander's base.

### Command distance

Captain	4 DU
General	8 DU

### Commander movement

If a commander is with a unit when it is activated, he must move with the unit.

Commanders may move separately (whether or not they have already moved with a unit this turn) in the End Phase at the end of each turn.

Commanders moving on their own use the light horse movement rates, and can move freely in any direction. Measure the furthest moving corner of the commanders base. A commander may freely interpenetrate other friendly units in any direction when moving.

If a commander reaches a friendly unit with any part of its base, it is considered to be attached to the unit. It does not matter where the commander's base is placed in relation to the unit, and it can be freely moved to another position in contact with the unit at any time. When a commander leaves a unit, its move is measured from any part of the unit it is leaving.

### Rallying

At the end of the End Phase (after commanders have been moved), each commander may attempt to rally the unit it is in contact with to remove a hit. To rally a unit, roll one dice. If this exceeds the discipline rating of the unit by the number of hits the unit currently has then the unit is rallied and one hit is removed. This is the only way a unit in contact with an enemy unit can rally. See also Section 12.

### Risk to commanders

If a commander is with a unit which is shot at or involved in melee combat, there is a chance that the commander will be killed. If the unit he is with loses all of the combat dice (not including any unopposed dice), or if it was routed in melee combat, then roll another dice to see whether the commander is killed. The commander is killed on a 5+ if the unit he was attached to was routed in melee combat by an enemy mounted unit which pursues, otherwise on a 6.

If a commander is killed, immediately remove the base. If the unit the commander was attached to did not rout, it must immediately take a discipline test, and all units that were within command range of the commander and are now out of command must also immediately take a discipline test.

If the unit routs and the commander is not killed, the commander must immediately move, up to a full normal move, either to join a friendly unit, or to get to a position as far away from the enemy unit which shot at it or contacted it as possible.

### Contacting or shooting at lone commanders

If a commander is shot at or contacted by a moving enemy unit a roll is made immediately as above to see if the commander is killed.

The commander is killed on a 4+ if testing as a result of contact by an enemy mounted unit, or otherwise on a 5+.

If the commander is not killed, the commander must immediately move, up to a full normal move, either to join a friendly unit, or to get to a position as far away from the enemy unit which shot at it or contacted it as possible.

The contact by a moving enemy does not have to be a charge, and the enemy unit may continue moving after the commander is killed or moves away.



*Think carefully about where you want your commanders to be for the following turn. It is important to ensure that units stay in command and you also want your commanders to be with the units that most need to be activated next turn.*

*If you have an undrilled unit that could be charged in the flank, you might need the commander there so that it is more likely to be able to turn to face the threat. Or you might have a unit in a position to charge an enemy in the flank, and the presence of a commander will allow it to activate on a lower action dice, hopefully charging before the enemy can react.*

*Placing a commander with a discipline 3 unit will allow it to use an action dice showing a 2, with is otherwise unusable. You may also need your commanders to rally units that have suffered hits, but bear in mind that it can be risky to have a commander with a unit that is close to breaking, and the more hits a unit has suffered the harder it is to rally.*

# SECTION 13

## VICTORY AND DEFEAT

“ONLY THE DEAD HAVE SEEN THE END OF THE WAR.” - PLATO

### Game end

The game ends when one army is demoralised. The other army is the winner.

### Army demoralisation

At the start of the game, calculate the total army value for each army. This is the total of the army value of each unit. The army value of a unit is its strength, modified as follows:

Mounted	+1
Large unit	+2

Calculate one third of this number and half of this number, both rounded up. These are the number of casualties required for army morale test and army demoralisation respectively.

During the game, whenever a unit is routed, an action dice is lost. This dice is put aside, showing the army value of the lost unit.

When the total army value of the routed units reaches one third of the total army value for the army, an army morale test is required. This is carried out at the end of the turn, in the End Phase. Every unit in the army takes a discipline test. This can be done in any order the player chooses. If this results in any units routing, then subsequent discipline tests on nearby units are taken immediately.

When the total army value of the routed units reaches half of the total army value for the army, the army is demoralised and withdraws from the battle. This is carried out at the end of the turn, in the End Phase. Unless both armies reach this point in the same turn, the game is over and the other player is the victor.



*Above: Henry V and Codrington lead the English against the French! Facing page: French camp life.  
Donington Miniatures painted and photographed by A&M Painting Service - Ancient & Modern Army Supplies*

# APPENDIX 3: ARMY LISTS

Army lists can be used to create typical armies for use in pick-up type games, and to assist in developing orders of battle for refights of historic battles. They should be treated as guidelines, and you should also use your own knowledge and research to guide you as to what troops should be available for each army in a given place and time.

For example, if you are building an army to represent Hannibal's campaign in Italy, there will be different troop types available compared to Carthaginian armies in Spain or Africa. There are over 100 army lists available to download online (in both pdf and excel spreadsheet formats) and a selection is included here. The online army lists also have points allocated to each unit, so armies can be built to a predetermined points total if desired.

## Using the army lists

At the top of each army list is the name of the army and approximate dates (in centuries) for which the army existed (or for which the particular list applies, if there are more than list for an army over different time periods).

The main part of the army list specifies the troop types that are available to the army. These are split into two sections: Core Troops and Support Troops.

Core troops are the main troops making up the army. At least half of the units in the army (rounding up) must come from the core troops section.

Support troops are the less common troops that were not always present. No more than two of each type of unit from this section may be present in the army.

Some particular troops were always present and others were less common. Thus some troops are designated as compulsory or restricted (indicated by "Compulsory" or "Yes" for restricted on the line for this troop type). If a troop type is compulsory, then at least two units must be included in the army. If a Core troop type is restricted, then no more than two of this type of unit may be present in the army. If a Support troop type is restricted, then no more than one of this type of unit may be present in the army.

Camps are included as core troops, but there can obviously only be one camp present.

Some troop types have different options. There may be different discipline levels, indicating differing qualities of troops. Or there may be different characteristics, which might represent different types of troop coming under the same general heading, or it might represent alternative opinions as to how the troop type was equipped or operated.

The following general rules apply when there are options for a troop type:

- Where the discipline rating differs, a combination of different types may be used in the army.
- For medium and heavy foot, if anything varies other than the discipline rating, only one type may be used in the army.
- For all other troop types, a combination of different types may be used in the army.

The restriction on medium and heavy foot is because variations here are normally due to alternative opinions as to how the troop type was equipped or operated, so one interpretation should be chosen.

At the bottom of the army list are any notes relating to extra restrictions on particular troop types (for example exceptions to the general rule above, or restrictions by date). The following army lists are included over the next few pages. This is a sample of the army lists that are available on the Sword & Spear website.

*Macedonian*

*Skythian or Saka*

*Early Achaemenid Persian*

*Early Imperial Roman*

*Later Sarmatian*

*Dacian*

*Feudal English*

*Feudal Scots*

*Medieval Welsh*

