

## ...& Blenheim Palace



Amendments to Black Powder  
For battles with model soldiers  
In the Age of Marlborough

# Black Powder

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<http://lasthussar.wordpress.com/2011/02/01/war-of-spanish-succession-for-black-powder>

Cover Image – Prussian Grenadier of the Bayreuth Regiment, 1701.

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*Rules modifications for fighting the War of Spanish Succession with the 'Black Powder' wargames rules.*

### Turn Sequence

The sequence given in the rules is modified to this.

- **INITIATIVE PHASE:** Declare Initiative movements – there is no change to the basic rules for this.
  - Any units charged may deliver 'Closing Fire' at the end of initiative.
- **FIRING PHASE:** Moving player declares firing. Firing carried out as per the rules. All firing units to be marked as having fired this turn (see modified Command Penalties).
  - A unit that fires in this phase is unable to give fire for the rest of its turn – i.e. until after the melee phase.
- **COMMAND PHASE:** Give orders as per the Command phase of the rules.
- **MELEE PHASE:** Conduct Melees

**IMPORTANT** - Because the Fire Phase is now before Command Phase, units that must retire due to being part of a Broken Brigade, now do so during **INITIATIVE**, not during the Command Phase

### Command.

There is an additional command penalty:

*“-1 if fired this turn”*

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Any unit that fired in the Firing Phase suffers -1 to its command. If it is part of a group of units that have been ordered (i.e. a brigade order) then the entire group suffers the penalty. Note that this is NOT cumulative for each unit that has been fired- e.g. if all the units in a 4 battalion brigade gave fire, the penalty is still -1, NOT -4.

## Orders

No cavalry unit may charge the front of an infantry unit that is in good order, that is one that is neither shaken or disordered. This is the same as the restriction on charging a square.

### *New Order – Dismount*

Dragoon units may be ordered to dismount. The cavalry bases are replaced by the associated infantry line – this will usually be ‘Small’. A ‘Large’ cavalry unit will be replaced by a ‘Normal’ size infantry unit. From that point on it fights as a normal infantry unit. It may not remount during the battle.

## Movement

Infantry Units may only move straight forward. They may wheel and move straight forward on the new facing.

Any infantry unit crossing a linear terrain feature must stop immediately on reaching the other side to redress their lines. This ends that particular move; however, if it has any moves remaining it may use them

### *Allowed formations*

Only the following formations are allowed

- LINE
- MARCH COLUMN
- SQUARE
- **NEW FORMATION** – COLUMN OF PLATOONS.

This is a new formation. It takes an entire move to change to or from Column of Platoon. On forming the bases are separated slightly, so it resembles ‘Skirmish Formation’. However it is NOT skirmish. It is the only way that infantry can move through woods.

Once formed the unit may move through woods at half speed (unless designated otherwise in the set up of the game). It must form Column of Platoons before entering the woods, and may not reform while in woods.

If fired at while in this formation it counts as being in March Column. It must take

a break test any turn it is fired at, even if no casualties have been caused. Additionally it counts as being Disordered for Break Test purposes until it is reformed- It becomes ordered once it is reformed for this purpose, not at the end of the turn; however if disordered normally then it is treated as any other disordered unit.

It may not initiate any form of combat. It may not come into close range (6") of an enemy.

### **Artillery**

Artillery may make only one movement per turn. It may unlimber if it has a second move.

Once unlimbered, artillery may not limber.

Artillery may not be man-handled. It may pivot up to 45° at the start of the firing phase.

### **Cavalry**

Cavalry may not charge the front of ordered, unshaken infantry (this is the same as charging squares).

Two schools of thought dictated the cavalry of the period. The most common was that of firing from the saddle with pistols before closing, often with front ranks moving to the rear after shooting. This is called 'Caracole'. The second method was favoured by the British and Dutch, the use of 'Cold Steel' – not pausing to fire, but instead keeping the momentum. Caracole cavalry MAY NOT counter-charge. They may fire and charge, subject to the -1 penalty.

### **Firing**

Cavalry pistols DO NOT get the short range +1. They DO get +1 for closing fire.

### **Melee**

Only Cuirassiers may have the 'Heavy Cavalry' rule.

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## Troop Statistics

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
Line Infantry	Infantry	Musket (18")	6	3	4	3	First Fire
Cold Steel Cuirassier	Cavalry	Sword	9	-	3	3	Ferocious Charge
Caracole Cuirassier	Cavalry	Sword/ Pistols (6")	9	1	3	3	Caracole
Cold Steel Cavalry	Cavalry	Sword	8	-	4	3	Ferocious Charge
Caracole Cavalry	Cavalry	Sword/ Pistols (6")	8	1	4	3	Caracole
Dragoons	Cavalry	Sword/ Carbine (12")	7	1	4	3	Caracole
Dismounted Dragoons	Infantry	Carbine (12")	5	2	4	2	Small
Artillery	Artillery	Smooth-Bore (48")	1	3-2-1	4	2	

First Fire: +1 die on first shot of the game  
 Platoon Fire: +1 die on first shot of game. This may be combined with "first fire" for a total of +2 dice. (Infantry only).  
 Caracole: Cavalry may deliver closing fire (if eligible), they may not countercharge. They may charge as normal during their turn.  
 Ferocious Charge: Reroll misses on charge.

## **National Characteristics**

Non-dragon cavalry for a nation are either 'caracole' or 'Cold steel', reflecting whether they tended to shoot from the saddle, like the French, or rely on 'cold steel' like the British.

### ***All Nations***

First Fire

Grenadiers – Elite and/or Tough Fighters.

Guards may be Elite.

### ***French***

A Prest: French generals ordering French infantry (at least half of ordered brigade) to charge into melee receive +1 Command

Guard units – Superbly drilled

All Cavalry are 'Caracole'

### ***Imperial (Austrian)***

Caracole cavalry

### ***British***

Superbly Drilled

Platoon Fire.

Cold Steel Cavalry.

Dragoons may not dismount

### ***Dutch***

Platoon Fire.

Guard units – Superbly drilled

Cold Steel Cavalry

### ***Early war Prussian***

Superbly Drilled

Caracole Cavalry

### ***Late War Prussians***

Superbly Drilled

Cold Steel Cavalry

Might have Platoon Fire

### ***Minor German States***

May be any combination of Untested, Freshly Raised, Unreliable and/or Wavering.

Caracole Cavalry

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## Writers Notes.

Despite War of Spanish Succession being arguably the genesis of the Horse and Musket period (the near contemporary Great Northern War still had infantry using pikes), and the basis of warfare for the next couple of centuries, there is remarkably little information. Even respected historians such as Chandler appear to regard it as the thing you have to get through so you can do Frederick the Great and the Seven Years War. I've posted a number of questions on various internet fora, and early draughts on my blog ([www.lasthussar.wordpress.com](http://www.lasthussar.wordpress.com)) as well as couple of battle reports. I've used all these discussions to inform my reading, and tried to steer a middle way, though sometimes it's a case of just biting the bullet and saying "hell with it – I think it should be like this".

*Infantry.* It was obvious from the outset that we had to slow down infantry and make their movement difficult. This is why the rather freewheeling movement of Black Powder has been restricted so much. Additionally the formations are restricted, as battle was almost always given in lines. Those of you conducting sieges may wish to add scenario specific rules allowing assault columns for storming breaches .

*Firing.* There is an ongoing discussion in the online Black Powder community about the Move then Fire sequence, with many preferring the Fire then Move, so as not to have a defender rendered insensible while the foe marches into close range and blasts away. Though I have no quibble with the rules as written, I feel that for our period, with its slow rate of fire, and difficulty manoeuvring the lines, adopting Fire first, and then adding the command penalty helps represent both the slow rate of fire, and the difficulties faced by leaders in this new, much smokier, type of warfare. This leads us to...

*Platoon Firing.* A matter of some contention. However, after considering all the angles, I feel restricting it to just the first turn is fair. My view is one turn of Black Powder represents approximately 10 minutes, and this is long enough for a units fire discipline to become ragged as men reloaded at different speeds, and coordination is lost in the smoke and noise – if all around is gunfire, and you can see a few feet, how do you know when the platoon 100 yards has fired?

*Caracole vs Cold Steel.* Again a problematic decision. I wanted them to be different, so as to avoid the feeling of two identical armies meeting, when the sources quite explicitly note the difference. These rules have been revised at least twice, and I am now happy with a result that does tip the balance in favour of the Anglo-Dutch philosophy, while giving the older system some advantages (such as the ability to disorder infantry, allowing a charge) and a different flavour.

There are always exceptions to the rules. Points raised on line have been what about... (The charge of the Gendarmes at *This* battle, or the British dragoons dismounting at *That* battle), however my aim has been to produce amendments and additions that reflect the wider period, so as to avoid two generic, identical armies making it a dice rolling competition. Such exceptions can be admirably dealt with by scenario specific rules.

May your troops be brave, and your dice blessed.

Ian Hopping, January 2011

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