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Printable Rules

largins =A4
+R=3.39 T=16.93
=12.7

Sample Tabletop

Fire in the Fern!

Semi-Skirmish rules for the New Zealand Wars of the 19th century by Peter Clarke

The table is divided into a series of squares, for movement purposes, as laid out in the guide-table below.

1. Organization.

Figure scale is 1:5.



Figures are organized into units (variously companies, divisions, detachments, warbands or hapu) with a single leader (officer or chief). Units should be of the order of 6-12 figures, though there is no actual minimum or maximum size. The leader of a unit may have a maximum of three activation attempts, but never more than one for every three figures (round up - you would get two motivation attempts if there were four figures left in a group).

A number or groups may have a senior officer; there may be in addition a C in C for the force. These senior officers have a maximum of two activation attempts per turn.

'British' is a catch all term to include Regulars, Naval Brigade, Militia and Armed Constabulary, but excluding kaupapa. The term 'Maori' refers to those fighting against the British, while 'kaupapa' are natives who fought with the British.

When measuring distance - whether for range, motivation or movement - the one diagonal is allowed. All remaining squares should be orthogonal. Line of sight may never pass between two closed squares connected on the diagonal.

2. Motivation



A leader may attempt to motivate a single figure or a group of figures per motivation attempt. For a group of figures to be motivated, they must all be in the chain of command for that leader, and must all be in the same square. Once motivated, they must all perform the same actions.

To determine whether the motivation was successful, roll a D6 and get equal to or over the motivation number (1 is always a failure). The motivation number is equal to sum of the following modifiers:

- +1 for every square from the officer to the target, inclusive of both
- +1 for every square of bush
- +1 if target is pinned
- +1 if group includes British, and any square is bush
- +1 senior officer
- +1 more than one unit in group
- +1 if leader is pinned
- +1 if group includes Kupapa

No figure may move or fire in its own turn unless they are motivated. No figure



may be motivated more than once in its own turn, but motivation may be attempted several times. Any leader within the chain of command for a figure or group may attempt to motivate it.

3. Activation

Once a figure or group has been motivated, roll for activation points. This represents the amount of activity that the group can carry out. The roll is modified as follows:

- -2 if pinned
- -1 British, and in bush
- -1 Kupapa in the open
- +1 leader in group

Activation points may be used as follows:

- Move the group - see section 4
- Fire at a single target - see section 5
- Rescue casualties - see section 8
- Rally a group - see section 9

A group must use all activation points before another motivation is attempted.

4. Moving

Basic movement cost is one point per square. The following cumulative modifiers apply:

- add 1 point if moving into a bush square
- add 1 point for colonial troops moving out of a bush square
- add 1 point for crossing a stream edge
- add 3 points if moving into a square occupied by the enemy

5. Firing

Firing cost is as follows:

- Muzzle loader/Tupara: 3 points per volley
- Breech loader: 2 points per volley

So with 4 activation points a Muzzle-loader armed section can fire one volley; Breech-loaders could fire two volleys.

A maximum of 12 figures can fire from an open square; or 8 in a bush square or from behind a palisade. For each figure firing, roll 1D6 per volley. For Maoris firing at close range (tupara) add 1 dice per 2 figures. A 6 is a hit.

For every hit, roll a saving dice. A 5-6 saves the figure. The die roll is modified below:

- +1 Stationary OR Pinned (not cumulative)
- +1 Bush
- +2 Rifle pit
- +3 Behind palisade
- +1 Long range
- -1 Short range
- -1 Dense Target (8+ figures in square)
- -1 Ambush

A figure is removed, and replaced with a casualty, for every hit not saved. 1 always fails to save. Hits are allocated randomly.

Close range is 1 Square; Long range is 4 squares.

6. Reaction Firing

Reaction fire is carried out during the opponent's move. If an enemy unit moves to an adjacent square, or attempts to close assault the square, the defenders may attempt to fire. Roll a D6: on a 4-6 one volley may be fired. A square may only fire reaction fire once per turn, but may attempt reaction fire as many times as necessary. Reaction firing is not permitted if there are enemy figures in the square.

Subtract 2 from the die roll if unit is pinned. If the troops in the square neither moved nor fired in their last turn, add 2 to the reaction-fire dice. If the troops were hidden until firing, it is considered an ambush. Add 2, and if the total is 6 or greater, two volleys are fired.

7. Close Combat

Roll 1D6 for each figure in combat. Add one for every two figures for attackers. A 6 counts as a casualty. The side with the higher number of casualties (or the attackers, in the case of a draw) retreats one square and is pinned. Attackers retreat to the square(s) they moved in from; defenders move away from the direction of attack, as far as possible. They may not retreat into a square occupied by the enemy. If unable to retreat, double the casualties lost.

8. Casualties

Casualties which remain on the field may cause unit morale checks (section 9). In addition, at the start of any turn in which casualties and live figures co-exist in the same square, roll a D6 for every casualty. On a 1-2 the casualty is removed, along with a live figure.

Officers may use motivation attempts to remove casualties. Motivate the square as normal, and roll for activation. For every activation point allocated to casualty removal, roll a D6. Casualty removal is successful on 4-6. NB: Only as many points may be allocated as there are live figures in the square.

9. Pinning

After a square has been fired on, roll a D6. If the result is equal to, or less than, the number of hits scored on the square, then the square has been pinned.

Pinned units may only move in such a way as to move away from any enemy-occupied squares. They may fire. Pinned units receive a -2 on their roll for Activation points.

To un-pin a square requires an officer within the chain of command of at least some figures in the square to be motivated, and spend a number of activation points. The activation points required to un-pin a square is the sum of the following:

- +1 for every square from the officer to the target, inclusive of both
- +1 if pinned square is Bush, and British are present
- To un-pin your own square still costs 1 point.

Note that this does not count as an activation for the square - that has to be done separately.

10. Unit morale

Units have to test morale at the start of a turn in which either half the figures of the unit have been lost, or one third are currently on table as casualties. A kupapa unit will test if one third of the unit has been lost, or one sixth are currently on the table as casualties.

To test, roll a D6: 4-6 unit stands; otherwise all figures from the unit are removed from the table. Subtract one for every leader in the group's chain of command that has been killed.

11. Game end and victory conditions

The game ends when one side retires from the table, or has all its units broken. Both sides then claim victory total victory points. Add one point per casualty inflicted, and for the side holding the field, one point per enemy casualty on table. Add 1D6 for each enemy unit broken, and 1D6 for each enemy leader killed. The highest total has the best claim to victory (but the British write the history books).

12. Set-up and hidden movement.

Typically, British set up in any clear square on the base edge. Maoris set up in any square outwith rows one and two. If they are not in open squares, they are set up hidden, and, provided they do not move into an open square, may move hidden as well. If rifle pits have been dug in the open, Maoris occupying the square will be hidden until they move; if Maoris move into the square, they will not be hidden. If any figures in a square are revealed, all are revealed.

British spot Maoris when they fire (NOT on failed attempts at reaction fire), when they attempt to move into an occupied square (attempt fails, but British may fire if they have sufficient points left); or by using activation points to observe. Any square with line of sight may be observed. The cost is one point to observe a clear square, and two to observe a bush square. Roll a D6; any Maoris present are revealed on a roll of 4-6.

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