

The War Book

**Considerations of the Application of Melee Combat in the Society for
Creative Anachronism**

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Introduction**

To compile a guide to melee in the Society is a Herculean task, and somewhat redundant. There are many works to this regard already in print, and now here's another one. My work is based on two small unit classes I have taught, the melee knowledge I've gleaned from Syr Lars and other founders of the Calontir War College, and twenty years of

experience. I've also done research from many published articles, including military tactical guides from "The Art of War," to those of the US Army.

My goal is to have a body of work that is a comprehensive overview of how to fight melee – from the individual warrior to the commander of a kingdom based army. These are the basic considerations any "serious" melee warrior in the Society should be aware of, and be able to draw from to further their own melee experience, and command ability.

Over the past ten years, I had written three papers on the subject: The first on battlefield considerations (awareness, efficiency and movement), the second on the role of general melee tactics, and the third focusing on command of a large group army. After reviewing my third paper, I found that there was redundancy between the three on a number of different overlapping points. This latest work is an attempt to combine all three and eliminate that redundancy.

While much of the work is my own, probably an equal amount comes from my research of the topic from other sources. A bibliography is provided for credit of these authors and for further reading.

I hope that this work accomplishes what I set out to do – present a basic overview and sometimes in depth look at Society combat in one work. I have long wanted to be able to write and compile such a volume, and am proud to offer these concepts for all warriors.

-the Falcon Flies

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Warfare in the Society

In a military sense, Society warfare resembles that of both the ancient Greeks and the 14th Century Swiss – Armies were made up of citizens who could provide arms and manpower to wage war. Citizens formed groups, based on common arms and regions. In this way, battles were evenly matched in both skill and arms. Since regional groups formed the armies, there was a lack of consistency in training*. Each side would form up in sight of the other. Taking advantage of mass, commanders would form their troops up to ten ranks deep and charge into the enemy lines. Eventually one side would lose the will to fight, and then route. The Swiss one-upped the Greeks by superior cohesion between their individual militia groups.

Society combat is not much different. Kingdom (regional) armies are made up of fighters who can physically attend the war. There are a set number of weapon styles available, and since all Society combat has the same basis, battles are evenly matched in skill and arms. As the Society relies on a warrior based regional system (where members of a shire/household/etc. can train both together and as individual fighters), fighters/units can join up with the main kingdom army with minimal integration instruction (war maneuvers). At wars, each side forms up and charges (somewhat) into the enemy ranks. Eventually one side loses.

There are many factors that give one side the advantage over another. Some like the number of fighters an army fields and the skill of those individual fighters are inherent in the army structure, and cannot be changed by the commander. These traits require the individual fighters to improve at the base level. It is every warrior's duty to be 'melee-aware,' (i.e., know how SCA melee works before you get out in the field). New fighters are trained well above the level of training of their predecessors. This trend will continue to improve as long as we learn from new experiences. With the level of training constantly increasing, there is a base level of melee knowledge that needs to be ingrained in newer fighters. This is often done on a

** I define soldiers as "members of a regular standing army", while warriors are those who are "experienced in warfare." Since the Society has no way to maintain a full time army (i.e., solely training together for pay as a full time occupation), the model of a warrior based society similar to the Greeks or Swiss where common men would take up arms against a national enemy best suits our warfare style.*

semi-regular basis – spending a couple of hours at war maneuvers to teach basic shield wall tactics; how to use a pole in melee; etc., but many more basic concepts of melee can be introduced prior to these large group activities. It is the commander's duty to have an understanding of organization and teamwork to build the army, and a thorough knowledge of the principals of warfare, strategy, tactics and techniques, to focus the trained army on its objective*.

Command, like any form of management, is based on your level of responsibility. An overall commander will be reviewing strategic developments; a unit commander will focus more on tactical maneuvering; and a line sergeant will be concerned with implementing front-line techniques. Each command decision must have the overall commander's intent in mind to accomplish his strategic goals, and each warrior must have an understanding of tactics, and techniques involved with Society melee combat.

The commander can learn through tactical war gaming where each piece does not represent one soldier, but a whole company. That is how you can think about SCA combat when you are planning command decisions, OR how you can train the small number of fighters in our local group to fight melee.

The keys to the best achievements in battlefield scenarios are awareness of the surrounding environment, quick purposeful movement, and efficient combat skills (quick and 'proper' reaction to the situation). Know who to fight for the best possible outcome of the overall scenario. Only put your unit in a situation that you can control and that will fit a key piece to complete the strategic puzzle of the battle.

Strategy, Tactics, and Technique

Strategy is the planning of war, and the application of the plans of war.

Tactics are the detailed methods used to carry out the strategy - the military art of knowing the right technique for a given situation.

Techniques are the specific actions taken to carry out the tactics that fulfill the strategy.

Fighting in a Shieldwall from a clearing, instead of setting up to meet the enemy in the woods, is a tactical way to combat an enemy assault. The Shieldwall is the technique, and setting up in the clearing where you can swing freely, but the undergrowth and branches hinder the enemy's combat, is the tactical way of performing the strategic task of holding the enemy advance.

Tactics can be translated up to bigger units or down to individual combatants. Small units are microcosms of the bigger army. If everyone understands the techniques of melee combat, and tactical considerations, then everyone should know what will be expected of them in any sized combat environment.

Combative Techniques

The Role of Weapons in Society Warfare

Col. John Boyd, USAF (ret.), developed the concept of the "OODA Loop." This is a decision model where a commander must quickly Observe, Orient, Decide and Act. The commander who can complete this cycle at a faster tempo achieves victory. By constantly presenting an enemy commander with novel situations, you interrupt his OODA Loop and force him to either never act or to act without thinking the situation through. One of the purposes of studying warfare is to ensure that very few situations are completely novel to your own command.

The front-ranks of a line duty is to protect the artillery in the half rank behind them. The half-rank's duty is to protect the first rank, and kill the enemy. Shields cover poles, poles fend off presses and lay barrage/suppressing attack fire, and spears exploit targets of opportunity all around.

Shields

Shields (Heavy or Primary [scutum or war shields] and Light or Secondary [tournament heaters or rounds]) are the foundation of every unit. The primary job of a shieldman is to maintain the integrity of the unit by preventing the foe from penetrating the front ranks (i.e., stay alive and defend). By doing this, he impedes the enemy from advancing on the artillery. The shieldman should not ignore the chance to make a clean kill, but he should ignore anything less than a sure thing.

Discipline maintains the line while aggression kills the enemy. A front line engagement (assault or penetrate) makes it crucial to defend your ground by aggressively attacking. This is when shieldmen are most valuable. It is up to the shieldmen to stop the physical advance of the foe while the artillery does the actual killing and the back ranks mop up enemy fighters that break through the line.

Two types of offense maneuvers used in lines are to "assault" and "penetrate". "Assault" is a measured, general forward motion in which the primary goal of the shieldmen remains the defense and maintenance of the line. An assault can be at a slow pace, a full charge, step-by-step, or on your knees. It is used as a means to wear down the enemy, stall or force the enemy back.

"Penetration" is aimed at breaking through the enemy ranks. Shieldmen are critical in this maneuver as the first wave of the push. They are not trying to kill, but disrupt the opposing formation by pushing through it. A shieldman should be alive when he reaches the far side of the enemy to reform his wall. Many penetration charges end when the charge gets muddled in the third rank or so. This holds up the advance of the ranks behind them and kills the momentum of the entire charge.

Spears

The primary responsibility of spearmen is killing. A spear is an excellent offensive weapon and a poor defensive weapon. Spearmen who do nothing but assist other spearmen in killing foes are still as valuable as spearmen who do the actual killing. Spears should be the maximum length and have a sturdy protrusion for hooking shields. Spearmen should talk to each other and work in teams - One man hooks a shield; another takes advantage of the opening to get the kill; One targets the fighter high, and the other low; or one can push the corner of a shield, and the other can take advantage of the opening. If you can lure a target out where he thinks he's safe, by holding on to your buddy's belt, you can give him an extra three feet of range to lunge at him (use this technique with discretion). Spearmen should take advantage of the tunnel vision of the enemy fighters, and seek targets on the oblique (i.e., not directly in front of them, but off to either side).

When you get in a tug-of-war match, don't put yourself at risk of being a target. Have your buddies help you, or let your enemy have the spear. Stay alive, and have extra weapons in the backfield you can draw on.

Spearmen take an aggressive stance in the second rank when the lines are not heavily pressed. This allows them to make maximum use of their offensive range while offering them the protection of the shield wall. In some situations, spearmen move forward beyond the Shieldwall to duel with enemy spearmen. Frequently, shields and spears will fill the first and half rank and the artillery will not be able to bring their weapons to bear. During these times the poles can still contribute to the offense by defending the first two ranks from overhead blows. Do this by forming an umbrella of weapon shafts above the first two ranks; deflecting, and catching overhead swings from the foe.

Artillery (Great Weapons)

More than any other weapon style, artillery (i.e., pole arms and great swords) must be aggressive, ruthless, and fast. Like spears, their strength lies in their offense. When artillery is needed in a line, the fighting

goes from a medium range situation to a close range situation very quickly. In a crowded melee their movement is restricted (and movement is their primary defense). They must kill their foemen before their foemen use this to their advantage. Artillery is a form of shock troop, striking hard and fast, and letting others clean up.

Like spears, artillery can hook shields, while working in tandem with each other. Artillery must be aggressive when engaged, and not be idle on the front ranks. Like spears, artillery that does nothing but assist other artillery or spearmen in killing foes are still as valuable as those doing the actual killing.

Great weapons are responsible for the bulk of the killing in any charge or close line engagement. Six and seven foot shafts allow them greater mobility in attacking than spears do, and slashing attacks cause serious damage from above. Once the enemy has backed off, spearmen can then muster up to the front ranks.

On the defense, artillery works behind two ranks of troops by deflecting overhead attacks and making the occasional advance into the second rank to replace a downed comrade until a replacement is found. When the foe charges, they must present themselves to the front ranks with due haste. They are responsible for killing while the first two ranks physically contain the charge. Artillery must act quickly to halt any line breakthroughs. When a charge comes, the rear ranks assume responsibility for holding the line. The first and second ranks will be broken and the third rank must kill the foe, break the charge, and re-established the front line.

Other Weapon Systems

Shorter weapon fighters, like bastard sword and two-weapon, have little integration use in a melee engagement. They are easily susceptible to mass attacks, and have little ability to contribute to a line engagement due to their range. Shorter weapons are useful for commanders who need to defend themselves and still retain vision and maneuverability. They can also be employed to watch the backfield due to their mobility.

Archery

Missile troops are generally used in three roles: individual snipers, small teams, and massed units. Individual snipers rely on covert movement and accuracy to sneak up and engage targets. Small teams work cooperatively with other troops and embody the '20 Yard Pike' concept (By thinking of them as spearmen with enormous range you can get commanders to effectively utilize them). Massed fire can be devastating as firepower through attrition of enemy troops. This is primarily observed in use at Gulf Wars.

Combined Arms Theory

Weapon's use in melee differs from that of individual combat in the fact that you are presented with multiple targets on multiple opponents at any given time, and you are forced to recognize these targets and the threats. These targets are constantly changing, and decisions as to their effects need to be assessed on an ongoing basis. The wrong decision made, and you are dead, or at best, a target is lost. The melee environment is a fluid one, constantly changing until the last blow is swung. This part of the text discusses basic melee fighting concepts – taking advantage of combined arms.

High/Low

In a line, you are engaged with all fighters in the other line, 2 or 200. Combined arms means that you and up to three of your buddies can strike one opponent. A good way to accomplish this is by targeting different parts of a single enemy fighter, as a shield can only block so much. In working with another fighter, single out a foeman, and tell your buddy to go high, or low (then you will strike the opposite). This way, two of you are throwing two different shots, one at say the opponent's head, and one at the opponent's off side body, and it is likely they will not be able to block both. This technique is often used with artillery, but can be used with any combination of arms.

Cross Firing

In melee, you are generally not fighting the foeman directly in front of you. You are fighting the *line* in front of you. In this regard, the majority of your threats and kills will come from the foemen in the line that are within the longest weapons range (plus a couple of feet) from all around. When you are part of a line, there are many targets that can not be protected all at once. Throwing shots at these targets is optimal exploitation for killing.

When you are in a line, you need to be aware of the "make-up" of the enemy line (the placement of weapons, unit organization, demeanor of the unit, etc.), and look for openings. Openings generally occur to the sides of fighters. Targets to look for are around shields, such as: at the base of shields (gaps where legs are vulnerable); shoulder/neck regions where the head is vulnerable; and side pockets between the weapon and shield where you might land an abdomen.

When cross firing, you need to be aware of the fight going on in the line in front of you. Pay attention to who is throwing blows, and in what succession. If a spearman is firing, then pausing, then firing, then pausing, you can see the pattern where they have just fired, then are about to recover. That is the time to make your move: at the point where their shot is about to hit your line. They will be hyper extended, and not yet thinking about coming back to a guard position. Be aware that this (when YOU throw your shot) is the time you will be most vulnerable as well. Pay attention to people who are focused on another part of the fight. The person looking over there is an easy target. People who are not paying attention are asking to be gaked.

There are times when you can't make the killing blow, but you can help your buddy by creating an opening. Use these techniques for getting around shields.

Generally one doesn't aim for shields. Newer fighters have a tendency to do this, and we try to correct it. There are times, however, when hitting a shield is called for. Smashing down on a shield can be demoralizing and sometimes intimidating for a fighter. It tires them out (careful, it tires you out as well), and may encourage them not to advance, if they feel they are under assault. Hitting a shield often opens up a slot for another target (cross firing).

When you have a shield someplace you don't want it to be, you can use the cross-firing technique to open a slot. Hook or press your opponents shield in one of the corners/edges. This will generally cause him to table his shield, and if you informed your buddy next to you, he's wide open.

Leg them

If you can take the legs of a fighter in a melee, you have reduced their effectiveness tremendously. Often you don't have time to fight every fighter you encounter. If you can take their legs, you have destroyed their ability to move around the field, and rendered them fairly useless. You can come back for them after accomplishing your objectives.

Internal Time Judgment

Important to pay attention to, although you may lose all sense of time when you are in a melee is your "internal timer." This is particularly true when you are in a smaller group, or by yourself. As the nature of battle can change in a moment's notice, it is too easy to get wrapped up in killing*, and fail to notice the unit

* *Melee fighting isn't about killing your opponents. Melee fighting is working together to achieve a strategic objective. Often times that does mean a lot of killing, but at times it means keeping a cool head, and knowing the best way to accomplish the objectives set before you. Fighting an opponent at his pleasure can easily divert your command's strategic consideration. If you are engaged, be certain it is to your tactical advantage to fight the enemy at that time.*

closing on your flank, or your buddies running off. You don't have to "run and gun," but be aware about getting too focused on what you are doing, where there are a number of other factors that may change without warning.

Shade

Shade is the concept that you are protecting your buddy as much as you are protecting yourself. In that regard, you can stay more focused on the fight more directly in front of you, and not have to worry about your flank(s). Shade narrows your focus. Always be aware of everything around you.

Scutum fighters are a good example of shade. As shade, they protect the artillery's abdomen and legs, so the artillery can concentrate more on killing, and less on defense of their lower bodies. If a scutum fighter is killed, the shade is gone, and the pole fighter exposed.

In a close engagement, you can also use your opponents as shade. If you run up to a flank and press a spearman where his offense is ineffective, you can use the shade of his body to protect yourself against enemy fire, while focusing your attack on the foemen behind him.

Shade in Use – Confronting a Shield Backed by Artillery

When closing with multiple opponents, there are two techniques that may be employed, both of which use your opponent as a shield – the concept of shade. For example, assume you are a sword and shield (s/sh) fighter confronting a s/sh backed with a pole.

Circumvent the s/sh fighter and get the pole between you and the s/sh. In doing this, you have placed the s/sh out of range, as he cannot fight effectively around the pole. This turns the situation into a one on one fight with the pole.

When pressing a line, get close to the s/sh that they cannot effectively fight you (place the flat of your shield on and above your opponent's shield), you can concentrate your firepower on the artillery behind them. You can also cross-fire to other s/sh in the front ranks. You will need to exert some pressure on your opponents shield. At first he may think you are pressing him, but after a bit he will get annoyed. Also, don't succumb to the urge to kill the s/sh you're pressing. They are helping keep you alive.

If you are confronted in this manner, pivot off of one of your heels, remaining on guard, and take a step backwards with your other foot. If you are being pressed by someone going in a straight line, they will continue to go in a straight line when they don't meet the expected resistance of your shield, and suddenly, their back is open.

Wingman (2 on 2 – Teamwork)

Two combatants line up facing two other combatants. At lay-on, one of you will charge into the enemy line. Your buddy will be a half step behind you, taking advantage of your attack and the openings you produce. If you are not successful in killing your target opponent, come quickly back around and engage the enemy that your buddy is struggling against. Your buddy will then in turn, disengage and come quickly back around and engage the enemy that you just engaged, and so on.

Another scenario is that one fighter runs past the enemy line, maybe engaging and breaking off quickly, then the second fighter will attack while the enemy is focused on the running fighter.

In a larger melee, the same can be done by splitting the unit in two, having the first half of the unit do a pulse charge and disengage, then, as the enemy is turned about, the second half of the unit can hit them in the flank, and the first unit can reinforce the second attack. Take into account the size of the unit you're engaging. A larger force can easily envelope a smaller unit that stops to engage.

Wingman (2 on 1 – Dispatch Quickly)

In a two on one situation, your objective is to kill the one fighter quickly and efficiently. This is used in battlefield conditions when you can't spend a lot of time in one given place. The two of you close quickly and use the concepts of combined arms to quickly off your opponent.

If you are the "one," review How to Confront a Shield-man Backed by Artillery above.

Run the Gauntlet

There will be times that you do not want to engage an enemy, merely move hastily through their rank and keep your unit alive (such as in a penetration or bug-out maneuver). To do this, you need to push your way through the enemy quickly, staying defensive all the while. You can simulate this in a drill by lining a number of fighters up in a row, offset from one another about six to nine foot apart on the diagonal (weapon's range). The fighter running the gauntlet should run up to each fighter, throw a blow, and move on to the next fighter, without stopping to engage. This teaches a focus on defensive movement, while still maintaining a threat.

Engagement

Before addressing maneuvering techniques in Society warfare, we must first have an understanding of what constitutes engagement. Engagement is one of the trickiest concepts for most fighters to grasp and maintain in the heat of battle. With constant movement and repositioning, flanks and attacks, engagement in a melee can change in a split second with little warning.

Conventions of Combat from the Calontir Marshal's Handbook, Section III-B. BEHAVIOR ON THE FIELD (regarding engagement in a melee environment) as of June, AS XL.

6. General Engagement during melee is determined by whether you are currently in a unit or melee group, or if you are acting as an individual.
12. When two opposing groups or units are facing each other all members of each unit are considered engaged. The actual unit make up is not what is important; if two friendly units are standing next to each other they are considered one full unit for engagement purposes. Therefore any unit(s) to their front is also engaged. If a breakthrough occurs a fighter may be struck on the back by the opposing side as he or she pushes through the opposing line. He or she may also strike the opposing fighters as he or she passes through the line, however once a breakthrough has occurred a fighter cannot turn and swing at his or her opponents backs. Once opposing units have become intermingled or unit cohesion has been broken up engagement between individuals should follow the guidelines for individual engagement.
15. Any fighter who has left direct unit support or is operating alone whether on a flanking maneuver or after a breakthrough has occurred is considered an individual for melee purposes. It is possible for a fighter to change from being in a unit to acting as an individual several times in the course of a melee, especially during a skirmish move or when his or her unit has pulled out or moved to far away from each other to act as a cohesive unit.
16. As a general rule, whenever a fighter is outside of weapons support or not acting with another friendly fighter he or she is considered an individual. An individual may engage an opponent by moving up to his target from the front making eye contact and engaging. If an individual moves to engage an opponent from the rear or side not directly in view of his or her target, the individual may foul or snag his opponents weapon or shield, he may move to the front and once eye contact has been made swing at his opponent, or he may get his opponents attention by speaking and wait for his target to turn and engage. The key is where the fighter has moved from in order to gain engagement, at no time should a blow be delivered that was begun while behind your opponent. It is recommended that you allow your target plenty of time to acknowledge your engagement and not try for the quick "kill" by surprising an unsuspecting foe.

An individual who wishes to engage a formed enemy unit should realize that he or she is engaged to the entire unit until such time that they have either retreated out of weapons range or managed to break through the unit..

10. No blow may be started from behind an opponent, unless that opponent is currently engaged, and has turned his or her back to run/dodge/engage another opponent, without first disengaging by distance. Any blow started from behind an opponent, who is not engaged, shall not be considered good. This does not change normal engagement rules.
13. Any unit approaching an enemy unit from behind should be very careful to make sure only those fighters from the opposing unit who have turned and engaged the attacking unit are struck. If members of the opposing unit are too busy defending themselves from the front, the unit attacking from the rear may foul weapons and attempt to get the attention of the opposing unit but may not strike unaware fighters.

Other Thought Concerning Engagement

- You are engaged with someone when you move within weapon's range. That is, the longest weapon's range of the two of you.
- To engage with someone you must have eye contact. Eye contact should be established, before you throw a blow, and this generally means your opponent recognizing that you are an enemy. Your opponent is supposed to "know" (realize, recognize, have "ample" time to defend himself) that the two of you are engaged before you swing at him.

Depending on the urgency of the attack, you may be so kind as to tap your opponent on the back of the shoulder to get their attention. If they ignore you, move around to a better position where they can't. NEVER STRIKE ANYONE FROM BEHIND, EVER.

You may not feel like being polite. Pushing, fouling weapons and the like are perfectly legitimate ways to get your opponent's attention. At the least, you may tie him up where someone else can get a kill (cross-firing).

You may not have the time for such strategies. I encourage yelling at your opponent. A good blood curdling scream from the bad guy who wasn't there a second ago, always brings out the feeling of a period moment. You might even want to introduce yourself, "Hi, I'm a bad guy," or some such verbiage, before you engage. When he turns to acknowledge whatever you are talking about, give him a second to realize the nature of your business, then, lay-on (Some times you pick the wrong bad guy to sneak up on. There's always the chance he could turn around swinging. Always be on guard when engaging an opponent. Even the ones you don't feel threatened by. They're the sneakiest)!

- Two facing lines are engaged when they come into weapon's range. When you are in a line, you are engaged with EVERYONE in that line.
- Flanks are the worst. More than likely this is where you will have engagement problems. You're at the end of a line, on a line that can fold in on itself. You can be engaged from multiple angles, and armies. The same can be said if you engage a flank. The best way to avoid engagement issues is to be aware of EVERYTHING AROUND YOU.

If you are on a flank, and you get pressed from the side, don't disengage from the fight you are in to engage the new threat. If you do, you are now engaged on two fronts.

- Don't turn around! Once you are engaged, you continue to be engaged until you leave the longest weapon's range. You can be hit in the back if you turn to run, disengage, or just get confused or overwhelmed. Once you are engaged, if your opponent turns, give him a firm slap on the head. Just enough to let him know he wasn't clear yet. This is the only instance where you should think

about hitting someone in the back. They knew you were there, and they knew you might do it. Just be friendly about it.

In that same regard. If you charge through an enemy line, you are engaged with the front rank as much as you are they rank you are facing. While it is unlikely you will get killed from behind, you will be swung at as you go through the ranks of your foemen.

If you are being charged, try to block the charge by killing the lead charger. If you can't, keep your guard, and try to kill others as they pass by you. Do not worry if some of the enemy gets through the shield-wall. There are generally a bunch of great-sword guys hanging out in reserve that welcome that kind of visitor.

Maneuvering Techniques

Actual tactics employed by a commander are infinite due to variations in terrain, weapons, numbers, etc., but all tactical movements have basic roots in common maneuvering techniques.

Before committing to any situation, have a good idea of the outcome and what your next alternative might be. Is this pulse charge into the back of the Eastern army going to do anything or just get your guys killed with no significant tactical achievements? Can you actually take that banner and have a good chance of getting out or just weaken the banner guard so that another unit can finish the task (check to see if there's another unit who can back you up before such commitment)? Remember, once you're discovered as a threat, the commanders will want to exterminate you. You need to move quickly to your objective, accomplish what you set out to do, and get out of the situation quickly! Remember Princess Leia to Han Solo, "When you came in here, didn't you have a plan to get out?" Always think about what happens next. This is why we play chess/war games – to develop a "think ahead" mind.

Maneuvering techniques come in the form of direct and indirect advancement towards an objective. Direct advancement usually ends up in either a frontal assault with the objective being attack or penetration of the enemy line, while an indirect advancement is a flanking maneuver with no direct engagement of the enemy lines intended.

Frontal Assault

The frontal assault consists primarily of lining up to engage your opponent, and fighting it out. It is often the best form of maneuver for hasty attacks and meeting engagements where speed and simplicity are essential to maintain tempo and the initiative. The frontal attack is useful for overwhelming light defenses, picket lines, or disorganized enemy resistance. The frontal attack can also be the most costly form of maneuver, since it exposes the majority of the attackers to the concentrated fires of the defenders.

The frontal assault relies largely on power and momentum to accomplish one of two possible goals: Drive the opponent back or drive through (penetrate) the opposing force.

The first goal, useful during limited front battles, is to force the opponent to withdraw, partially or completely, or be destroyed. Accomplishment of this goal relies on mass and troops that can close with the opponent and fight well at close quarters. Shieldmen are invaluable in this type of action.

Attacking on the Oblique

The oblique attack calls for a certain amount of coordination of troop movements where center and flank line troops are used to pin the enemy down and the commander pushes more and more troops into his reinforced (other) flank until the enemy line break. Since most fighters are accustomed to being attacked

from the front, an oblique attack finds many of them unprepared. If the defenders turn to face the attack they open themselves up to frontal spear thrusts.

Strong Side

The strong side is a variation on the oblique assault. Instead of attacking at an angle, the commander brings an overwhelming force to bear on one side of the line. The goal of this strong force is to quickly defeat the opponents they face (by killing or scattering them) and then turning to attack the flank of the remaining opponents. The goal of the rest of the line is to aggressively fix the foes that face them.

Feigned withdrawal

A feigned withdrawal calls for a great amount of coordination of troop movements. The right and left of the line hold to pin the enemy forces in place. The aim of this maneuver is to induce the enemy to leave a good position as the center part of the line withdraws pulling them into a killing pocket.

Pulse Charge

A pulse charge is an aggressive charge with a planned withdrawal after a set time limit. At the call of a pulse charge, the unit will move forward and engage the enemy aggressively for a limited time, then disengage and reform. This has the effect of drawing the enemy line out, or causing them to reform to meet a charge, thus ending a spear engagement.

Penetration

The second goal aims to break through the opponent's line and destroy unit integrity. Penetration is the maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to disrupt the enemy defenses on a narrow front. Commanders direct penetrations when enemy flanks are not assailable or time does not permit another form of maneuver. Successful penetrations create assailable flanks and provide access to the enemy rear.

If you see an opportunity to make a hard press/charge, communicate with the troops around you. The charge will be situational, and you may not have the support needed to make an effective strike. Wait for the opportunity, and when the time is right, make the charge. Tell, quietly and quickly, the people around you that you are planning a charge. If you just shout out, "Let's go!," and run into the enemy line, chances are your buddies are going to watch befuddled as your run into certain death. If you get a group together, you'll have more support to make an effective charge. Be prepared.

Because penetrations frequently are directed into the front of the enemy defense, they risk significantly more casualties than envelopments, turning movements, and infiltrations.

The key to a breakthrough is generally superior depth of forces. The side with the greater depth will be able to breakthrough an opponent with less depth. Depth, however, is not the only factor to consider. Troops that do not understand the difference between the types of frontal assault will generally only be able to execute the first type. Aggressive troops and large troops will also have an advantage. Shieldmen are the most useful in this type of attack but artillery is useful as well.

The key to penetration is the attacking *through* your opponent. In the initial assault, the primary objective here it to get through the line/unit, to the opponent's backfield, without being killed. Keep covered up. **DO NOT STOP TO ENGAGE** (if you do, a clotting effect will occur and the penetration is over). Move through quickly and determinedly. Aim your forces for the gaps in the opponent's line, where shields meet. When charging, keep a high guard, and stay tight & covered until you get into the fray. When you are all bunched up with the enemy, take advantage that the enemy is just as bunched up, and has less room to swing. With a higher guard, you can move a bit more freely than your opponents (and look at all those heads!). The gauntlet drill is an ideal exercise for this maneuver. Remember you're engaged with everyone

around you, so pay attention to the difference between weapons striking you and incidental contact with shields and armor.

Once the bulk of the unit has breached the opponent's lines, continue through and leave the enemy force behind. Stay defensive! Following units will be tasked with killing the now-disorganized opponent while the breakthrough forces move on to regroup. More than likely, enemy reserve units will step up (when available) to meet your unit as you come through the ranks.

At this time, your forces can bring overwhelming force and mass to bear on him. At that time, it is vitally important to re-establish the order of your forces and attack. A unit that breaks through the opponent's battle line is of little use if the individual members then break off and turn the battle into a series of individual combats.

Variations of penetration techniques include the wedge and column charges.

Wedge

The wedge assault is a maneuver performed by a picked unit. The point man at the head of the wedge chooses a weak point and charges for it. Everyone else keeps their position relative to the point man.

Column Charge

The column charge is a variation on the wedge. A number of soldiers on either side of a line form up into a column and charge through the enemy's line. This maneuver can be done to break out of a bridge or push a weak flank.

Bug-out

There may be times when survival is more important than holding ground. Bugging out is disengaging from a hopeless fight to regroup elsewhere.

Flanking Maneuvers

Envelopment to Engage

Flanking avoids the enemy's principal defensive positions by maneuvering out of range of concern to achieve objectives in the enemy's side (flank) or rear, thus causing him to move out of his current position or divert his forces to increase combat strength where he is not as well defended, on his left flank (as most troops are right-handed, flanking to engage on the enemy's right side is natural) or rear. This maneuver gives you the opportunity to roll up his entire flank, breaks cohesion in the enemy's ranks and may destroy the advantage of his current formation. Such a threat to the enemy's backfield forces him to attack or withdraw rear-ward, thus "turning" him out of his defensive positions. Turning movements typically require greater depth than other forms of maneuver.

Flanks can occur by accident when a line breaks, or naturally when a unit is passing by. Natural flanks tend to be more supported, but all that changes quickly when the primary engagement is in front of the line.

Flanking is often best done when the unit being flanked doesn't see you until you engage. Wide flanking maneuvers create the best opportunity for engagement. In these cases, you need to consider the amount of time it will take you to get to a certain location, and if you can spare that time in the overall battle plan.

There are two elements to any flanking maneuver, the frontal attack to fix the opponent and the flanking attack to disrupt their line. Flanking requires that a portion of your line remain unengaged when you first contact the opponent. If you have numerical superiority this is not a problem, you can simply use your extra troops to extend your line. If you do not have numerical superiority you can sacrifice some depth to extend your line. Once the line is engaged, a portion of your line maneuvers around to the less-defended enemy's right flank, or rear and presses the attack. Flanked troops become engaged on two fronts, and can easily be eliminated, or driven into other enemy units.

The double flank (horns of the bull) maneuver is a more complicated tactic that calls for superior numbers or superior coordination. As with the single flank maneuver it makes use of highly mobile troops to get around the enemy flanks and pin them into place. One approach is to have both flanking units hit simultaneously; another is to have them strike in succession, one just after the other.

Mad-dog

A flanking/engagement maneuver where your army runs wide, left or right of the enemy army, and continues to circle the enemy, just in range, throwing shots at any opportune target. The enemy will try to track you as you run by, only to be hit by the next upcoming fighter. The mad-dog maneuver continues until your unit has the superior odds, it breaks out into small melees, or a counter measure is taken by the enemy, splitting your line, and reducing your momentum. A countermeasure is to send a flank wide to engage the lead runner. Unless the mad-dog unit flanks the lead runner, the mad-dog turns to a strung-out line engaged with a more solid packed unit.

Infiltration

By knowing the tactical situation of the battlefield you can surmise how your unit can be the most devastating in regard to the situation. Sometimes there is want to be behind the line enemy line. Using a unit's mobility, you can easily create havoc where you want, and aid in an overall control of the battle.

Infiltration is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force moves through enemy territory undetected or unhampered to occupy a position of advantage in the enemy backfield. The need to avoid being detected and engaged may limit the size and strength of infiltrating forces. Typically, forces infiltrate in small groups and reassemble to continue their mission.

Infiltrations maneuvers are best suited to attack lightly defended positions or stronger positions from the flank and rear; to secure key terrain or objectives; to cause havoc in the enemy backfield; or to support the strategic objectives.

Have a small unit charge through gaps in a line and get in the backfield*. Do a wide flank - really wide (out to the edges of the hard boundary if time permits) - and get in back of their army. Get small or walk unassumingly, as people sometimes discount the fighters who look like they're walking back to resurrection point (not paying attention to tape color). Never lie when asked if you're dead though, and don't go out of your way to look dead (NEVER CHEAT). Be prepared to run away. If a big unit is coming at you, maybe you should keep your distance. Know how to charge through a group of fighters without engaging. It's hard but rewarding when you come out in back and see the unguarded banner (Getting back out is another problem.)

* Small units differ from skirmish or cavalry units due to their purposes: Skirmish units generally are a part of the army that screens incoming stray fighters or delays an attack while the army forms up. At that point, they fade back into the main body of the army; Cavalry units are often called on to support the army when a hard attack is called for in a specific area; Small units are just that, a small group of fighters who have a specific assignment, and are unattached to the main body of the army.

Once in back, you can observe the situation to see where your unit can do the most damage. Look for flanks of lines that you can engage or gaps where the enemy line is breaking up. Look for thin lines you can break through. Look for key targets, commanders, spearmen, or banners you can take out. Again, you're running a lot and are under a great deal of fire often. Don't ignore shots; expect to be hit from behind. Expect to be hit hard (Like I said, they really hate it when you're running amongst them). Penetrating an enemy unit from the rear can cause utter chaos, and can be devastating. By crowding the foemen together where they can't swing, pushing them (politely but firmly) out of ranks, or tying up their weapons or shields where they can't swing or block you are creating a distraction that the enemy must deal with in addition to the front they are facing.

In a rear penetration, if you need to get back to your unit, they're right in front of you. Be careful when you run through the back of the enemy lines to return to your company. You might be confused with a charge and be killed by friendly fire. If you can signal to your friends (if you have the opportunity) that you're either going to be a disruption they can have time to monopolize on it, or that you're coming through and you'd like them to help you out of the situation you've put yourself in.

Tactical Considerations

Unit Composition

When having the luxury of being able to compose a small unit, one formula is the "pyramid" method of building: for every two shieldmen, have one pole-arm; for every two pole-arms, have one spear. This formula keeps your artillery well covered by your infantry a good balance of firepower and maintains the quick response and mobility of your unit. You might substitute a spear for the second pole, when a number of poles are not available (giving you range with less numbers). Any given situation will demand new reasons to increase the number of a particular weapon style. Adaptation to the needs of the objective is a crucial consideration in every case.

Battlefield Awareness

Always be aware of your environment. Look around at all times unless you are directly engaged. Look for tactical situations developing. Is the unit in front of you getting ready to charge or disengage? Is that a big unit on the move? Look around every opportunity you get to see what kind of opponents you are facing. When you encounter another group, know the size, make-up, and when possible, what they are doing/where they are going.

Look to see if this is a major army with multiple companies/reserves or a small unit like yourselves. If at all possible, try to get an accurate estimate of numbers. If you run into an allied commander, you can act as a scout and inform them of those three elements of the unit you encountered. Saying that there's a bunch of blue tape over there doesn't help that much.

The make-up of the unit you encounter is equally important. What is their balance of weapons? Look to see if the unit is armed with shields (and if they are war shields or regular shields) or artillery. Get an estimate of the ratio of shields to poles/spears if you can. This can give you clues to their potential assignment or where they could be a threat later. Also look for key targets: Kings, dukes and other command types of people that might have heraldry.

Knowing heraldry also gives aids you in determining what kind of unit you are facing. By recognizing the heraldry of a unit, you can begin to tell how specific units fight: the Black and Purple unit hits hard; or the unit with White Stages on a Green Field runs and guns, those guys with the fur and no armor are 'crazy'. Knowing how a particular unit fights a particular way, and seeing them across the field, you will have a greater knowledge of how to react to them.

Banners or specific scenario objectives are good to know about. Specific units, like a roving pack of knights or Tuchux are hunter/killer groups sometimes assigned to just run around and kill off resurrecting fighters or other small units. You might run across a small, disorganized band of fighters coming from resurrection point. **NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POTENTIAL THREAT FROM ANY SIZE UNIT.** Just because they don't look nasty, doesn't mean they aren't.

It is equally important to know the make-up of your own unit, the skill level of those who will fight beside you (as well as their war experience), and what weapons you have to work with. This knowledge of your unit's potential and limitations will aid your decision-making when decision-making time is a premium.

Know also the physical health of your unit, as well as their morale. A group of fighters who just came out of a hard fight aren't going to be able to run back and take a banner. Likewise, morale is equally important. Fighting should be fun, never desperate.

By a few moments' observation (or just by passing by the unit encountered) you may be able to discern what the enemy is up to. They may be engaged on one side, and you've come across their rear/reserves. If they are defending a key target, they may have skirmishers to keep you at a distance. Keep at a distance and look past the skirmishers to see what they are guarding. They may be a decoy. If the unit is on the move, look to see if they are marching or are at a faster pace. Shadow them if they let you. They may be taking you to a desperate fight that one of you needs to win (or not).

Be aware of your physical environment as well. Know the lay of the land, including boundaries, hazards, marshals, churgeons, and bubble-holds. This knowledge will help you move from point to point faster and let you put the whole battle in perspective as you observe what is going on. Keep away from anywhere you don't want to fight. Know where your best escape route is. A small unit can move through dense or even crowded terrain much faster than a big unit. Use terrain to hide in, escape, and deter your opponents.

Also keep an eye for the occasional 'gonzo' fighter who will charge you from a blind side. **ALWAYS** be aware of everything around you.

Maneuvering

In any combat, the unit having the control of movement (maneuvering) will control the fight. Being able to get to where you need to be, then getting out quickly ensures the survival of the unit. A unit's movement is generally limited to the movement of its slowest fighter.

In Movement across an open field, lines get strung out and separated, wait for this to happen to the enemy. At the point where the enemy is closing on your command, attack with smaller units to make it easier to bring troops to bear on gaps in the enemy's line.

It is hard to pull back from an attack, and easy to become over committed. All maneuvers must take this into account. An anomaly of this is the pulse charge, where troops rush forward, hit, and then back into their own line.

Pursuits should be used primarily for clean-up operations. In an active pursuit, you can annihilate discombobulated foes; prevent disorganized enemy units from reorganizing; or spread alarm and loss of cohesion among enemy units.

Fewer maneuvers equates to more command control. However, the size of the field and mass of combatants are factors that limit movement.

Pursuits are very difficult to execute well over long periods or large areas. Fleeing troops are not perceived as much of a threat as entrenched or advancing troops, consequently the pursuers are less willing to make the effort or take risks against the pursued. Pursuit takes you deep into enemy territory, farther from your own resurrection point and allies and much closer to the enemy's.

Know how to use terrain features to your advantage. Fight down a hill (from on top), using trees as immortal shieldmen. Know the best escape routes.

Know how to do more advanced maneuvers like pulse charges, flanking maneuvers, and how to bug-out. Being able to disengage at a moment's notice is stunning to an enemy.

Mobility effectively changes the size of your unit. A small unit that faces a bigger unit, line to line, will easily get devastated by the large number of fighters in front of them. A small unit that is mobile can run and gun, hit the larger unit on virtually any side, or even penetrate through the unit, causing chaos in their ranks and possibly breaking it up. The best example of that tactic is a mad-dog type of maneuver.

Smaller units can move more readily through hazardous terrain where a larger unit will not follow such as through dense forest or through a pass between other units, for fear of losing cohesion of the unit. Smaller units can also react quicker to a given situation. A larger army takes longer to regroup, turn, and engage. A smaller unit can do all this in a fraction of the time

Targeting Efficiently

Targets of opportunity are:

- People who are not paying attention to the fight going on around them.
- People shouting orders. These people are doing what you don't want - communicating. People shouting orders are probably more experienced fighters, trying to motivate their unit (or section of unit around them) for an assault, or react to a situation to your detriment.
- People wearing crowns/coronets/white belts/or recognizable heraldry. People wearing recognizable heraldry are likely commanders (they at least advertise that they have some skill at arms). In many units, the commander is the glue that holds the unit together. Killing a commander can be demoralizing and confusing for the enemy. A lot of the time, more undisciplined units will go into battle with their only command being, "Follow me!" If you kill that commander, the rest of his unit has to make up their next plan, and depending on the skill of the unit, killing that one commander may effectively take the threat out of that unit.
- Threats. The overly proficient spearman; the lead man in a charge; the fighter sneaking up on your flank; and the combat-archer in the second rank. When you see something that is "bad" and you can do something about it, quickly weigh the options (Will it get you killed? Will it save the unit? Can this be done some other way? Is it worth it?), and *commit*. At the very least, let some other fighters know what's going on. Someone may have a better opportunity to correct the situation.

The Principles of War

As a commander, you are faced with strategic, tactical and logistical situations that present you with challenges and opportunities you must overcome to survive. How do you maintain cohesion of the unit to accomplish your task or reinforce the main body of the army? Consider the principles of war.

The Principles of War are defined as the fundamental and timeless truths governing the basis of strategy and tactics. They vary from time to time, country to country, and between various theoreticians, but generally speaking there is little practical difference between the version of Sun Tzu and the most updated official version of the US Army. They are useful, if not essential, in any evaluation of command.

The principles of war, generally agreed upon, and in the context of Society warfare are:

Mass

Commanders “mass” the effects of combat power by the number of fighters they can bring to bear either against multiple targets simultaneously, or from different angles against a single target. The more troops you can commit, the better your chance of victory.

It is the rule in war, if our forces are ten to the enemy's one, to surround him; if five to one, to attack him; if twice as numerous, to divide our army into two. If equally matched, we can offer battle; if slightly inferior in numbers, we can avoid the enemy; if quite unequal in every way, we can flee from him. Hence, though an obstinate fight may be made by a small force, in the end it must be captured by the larger force. (Sun Tzu, The Art of War, 3:8-10)

Objective

Commanders should have a clear understanding of the overall strategy of the war, and their army's part in it. Strategies should be decisive, attainable, and easily understood. A strategic objective will be different every time, but the overall objective is to win the battle.

No commander can plan for every contingency, nor control every action of the army, once the lay-on is called. When two forces are in contact, friction causes orders to be carried out more slowly and with less precision. To better see through the “Fog of War*,” the commander must previously have conveyed the battle's objectives to his sub-commanders. This allows units to respond to changes in circumstances and plans in a way that contributes to the accomplishment of the overall strategy.

Move not unless you see an advantage; use not your troops unless there is something to be gained; fight not unless the position is critical. (Sun Tzu, The Art of War, 12:17)

Offense

Offensive warfare is essential to maintaining freedom to take whatever actions are necessary for the success of the strategic objective; to exploit gaps in surfaces; and to react rapidly to changing situations using the OODA Loop. Offensive actions are those taken to gain and retain initiative. Offense does not mean a constant aggressive battle. Offensive action is key to achieving decisive results; and is the essence of successful operations.

While battles are won through offense, it is seldom possible or desirable to be on the offensive at all places and at all times. Defensive actions should be viewed as temporary maneuvers designed to achieve specific

* Fog of War - Erroneous or late intelligence given to a commander for decision making after the lay-on is called.

goals, including: drawing the enemy into killing pockets; holding enemy forces while other units maneuver; covering the flank or maneuvers of a friendly unit; or gaining time for the development of more favorable conditions. Improved conditions include: arrival of reinforcements; improvement in your position; or resting of troops.

Tactics used in a defensive action must be keyed to the purpose for which you assumed the defensive. Do not think narrowly of defense as static holding of terrain - maneuvering is just as important to a successful defense as it is to a successful offense. Not every defensive battle is a last stand.

In an active defense the commander should assume a defensive position that places the enemy at a tactical disadvantage. The enemy is permitted or induced to attack first. The commander then launches a counterattack against the disorganized enemy. Timing of the counterattack is critical, and the situation must be assessed before engagement.

While counterattacks are made to recover positions previously lost to the enemy, counteroffensives are general attacks that go beyond the area defended. Counteroffensives occur when your defense changes to offense. This most likely will take place when the enemy's attack lets-up or becomes disorganized; the attackers are becoming fatigued or losing numbers, or the defenders receive reinforcements.

Security against defeat implies defensive tactics; ability to defeat the enemy means taking the offensive. Standing on the defensive indicates insufficient strength; attacking, a superabundance of strength. (Sun Tzu, The Art of War, 4:5)

Maneuvers

Movement in general is not maneuvering. Maneuvering is an action on your part that places and keeps the enemy at a disadvantage and constantly forces him to respond to and confront new problems and dangers faster than he can work through his OODA Loop. It is always critical to grasp and maintain the initiative of checking the enemy at every turn so that he never catches his balance long enough to be a threat.

In maneuvering, you attempt to break the enemy's cohesion without attempting to destroy his forces. You do this by creating a succession of unexpected and threatening situations that will bring the enemy to see his situation as deteriorating. Aspects of this include: destroying the enemy's combat effectiveness; keeping him exposed to potential threats; flanking maneuvers against units larger than your own; breaching his line and forming in his rear; and quick responses to the enemy's mistakes.

After that, comes tactical maneuvering, that which there is nothing more difficult. The difficulty of tactical maneuvering consists in turning the devious into the direct, and misfortune into gain. (Sun Tzu, the Art of War, 7:3)

Unity of Command

Command is the concentration of authority and responsibility. Calontir uses the pool of command instead of the chain. A chain can be broken, and while we have single overall commanders, unit or line command is left to the sergeants. Any fighter who sees a gap or a threat is encouraged to act using resources at his disposal.

Commanders of an army must have complete authority over their fighters. A king who countermands his general, is counter-productive to the overall strategy of the war.

A good point about the small unit is that one person can generally command the unit without having interference from different stimuli (i.e., a small unit generally can only fight one fight at a time, unlike a company which can be fighting on two fronts at once). One commander can focus the unit's attention. One fighter can readily give direct commands to everyone in the unit, without the confusion of a sub-

commander. This greatly aids in quick, concise decision-making. Communication is much easier, and the small unit can hit harder, quicker, and disengage more readily than a large unit.

*Thus we may know that there are five essentials for victory:
He will win who knows when to fight and when not to fight.
He will win who knows how to handle both superior and inferior forces.
He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit throughout all its ranks.
He will win who, prepared himself, waits to take the enemy unprepared.
He will win who has military capacity and is not interfered with by the sovereign.
But when the army is restless and distrustful, trouble is sure to come from the other feudal princes.
This is simply bringing anarchy into the army, and flinging victory away. (Sun Tzu, the Art of War, 3:16-17)*

Economy of Force

Economy of Force is simply making the best use of troops available. Commanders should never leave any soldier without a purpose. When the time comes to engage, all soldiers should have tasks to perform. Using economy of force, any action an enemy takes to avoid one threat should expose him to another. Dongal's "Rock, Paper, Scissors" essay* deploys the right technique to negate the enemy's attack, thus using economy of force.

When you engage in combat as a small unit, you ideally want to do the maximum damage with the minimum effort, take little or no casualties, then leave the fight intact. With a small number of fighters, you need to do those things perfectly, of which your unit is capable. You can't change that there is a unit of 30 combatants that you have to get through, but you can out-manuever them, draw them out so another unit can take them more readily, string them out to kill them more efficiently, or hit their flank when they're engaged so that you now face a smaller threat.

The bad thing is that when you take any losses, your unit's strength is greatly reduced. When I think about the make-up of units/armies and trying to split them up, I think in percentages, as they better translate to any size unit. You need to quickly dispatch your opponents, or move rapidly to your objective, without interference. A small unit can do these things with mobility and focus.

The fighters in the small unit must work together to ensure survival. There is no reason you can't maximize your killing potential by working together and devastating any small group (maybe even up to twice your size) if your shields and artillery work off of each other and remain fluid and mobile. Support each other by capitalizing on targets (just as in line fighting). DON'T belly-up fight (engage a unit head on), unless you can either disengage easily, blow through the line, or devastate your opponent quickly.

By discovering the enemy's dispositions and remaining invisible ourselves, we can keep our forces concentrated, while the enemy's must be divided. We can form a single united body, while the enemy must split up into fractions. Hence there will be a whole pitted against separate parts of a whole, which means that we shall be many to the enemy's few. And if we are able thus to attack an inferior force with a superior one, our opponents will be in dire straits. (Sun Tzu, the Art of War, 6:13-15)

Simplicity

Strategies and Tactics should be simple and direct. Clear and concise plans cut down on misunderstandings. Generally, Society troops and commanders are not professionally trained in warfare. Therefore, tactics used must be fairly simple. Even the simplest of maneuvers requires practice, and a lot of group training.

*Now the general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple ere the battle is fought.
The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus do many calculations*

* In his essay, "Rock, Paper, Scissors," by Duke Dongal Erickson, His Grace takes the childhood game into tactical considerations thusly: Shield walls (rock) beat charges (scissors); Spears (paper) beat shields (rock); and Charges, including pulse charges, (scissors) beat spears (paper). His Grace states that, "This is generally true for any type of battle situation, and more so for controlled frontages (Bridges, Gates, etc.) It tends to hold true in more open situations, as well, ON A LOCAL LEVEL."

lead to victory, and few calculations to defeat, how much more no calculation at all! (Sun Tzu, the Art of War, 1:26)

Security

Security involves the collection, evaluation, analysis, integration and interpretation of information (Intelligence) gathered from the enemy (such as their internal command structure or deployment setup), and keeping our plans secret (Be sure to ask your friends on the enemy side what their plans are in casual conversation, and never reveal your own battle plans). On the field, lookouts and scouts bring security to the main body of the army.

It is the business of a general to be quiet and thus ensure secrecy; upright and just, and thus maintain order.

He must be able to mystify his officers and men by false reports and appearances, and thus keep them in total ignorance. By altering his arrangements and changing his plans, he keeps the enemy without definite knowledge. By shifting his camp and taking circuitous routes, he prevents the enemy from anticipating his purpose. (Sun Tzu, the Art of War, 11:35-37)

Surprise

Surprise is striking the enemy in the areas least expected. Types of surprises include: time, place, strength, intent and style. Achievement of all five of these surprises (complete surprise) generally assures victory. Surprise results from taking actions for which an enemy or adversary is unprepared. It is only necessary that the enemy become aware too late to react effectively. Contributions to surprise include speed, information superiority, and asymmetry.

All warfare is based on deception. (Sun Tzu, the Art of War, 1:18)

Planning and Execution of Society Warfare

The commander of an army needs to take certain considerations into planning the strategy of battle. Willingness and enthusiasm for the position are vital to ensure a good moral in the troops, and will make it that more enjoyable for the commander.

Before the War

Here are some ways to improve your or your local group's melee skills:

- War Practice - At least once in a while, have a fighter practice devoted to melee. Two on one drills can be exponentially increased to accommodate any number of fighters. Learn how to work with, and play off of one another. Practice melee situations, especially engagement. Practice fighting with unequal numbers.

- Take your show on the road - Get together with the next closest group and challenge them. Have a local 'war' event between the two groups to determine who owns that river/road/pile of cookies. Test yourselves.

- Go to war - The best way to experience what SCA combat is like, it to be there doing it. Experience gives you insights no practice can. Experience is our best recruiter, anyone who has been to a major war will urge others to go and share in the camaraderie.

- Focus on the weapons of war - Train in pole, spear, and shield. These weapons are most effective in melee.

- Take command! - Take turns in your small local unit. Command gives you better insight on how things work. When you have to figure out where to commit your troops in a heavy fight, you soon begin to learn what works and what doesn't. Even if you never command a large army, you will have a better understanding of why the generals issue the commands they do.

- Read, game and research - After the practice, hang out with your comrades-in-arms, war game together, play chess, read about tactics and strategies of wars and battles. Practice thinking ahead.

These are just ideas to get you started. Be innovative. Continue to practice and learn from any source available. When you see something that needs done - do it! When you see a hole in the line - fill it! Improvement of our army comes from each one of us, from the beginning shield-fighter to the veteran commander. Tactical conditioning starts with the individual fighter, and spreads throughout the army with repeated training and exposure (to combat; to new ideas). Take a leading role in the Calontir army and prepare yourself for the next time Their Majesties call us to arms!

Your Command

In choosing sub-commanders, you want a mix of experience, and new talent. By mixing these two factors, you present the upcoming leaders the experience of command while giving them a base of wisdom to draw on. This makes command familiar and adds stability into the unit. Other considerations are the sub-commanders willingness and enthusiasm for the same reasons; and choosing regional commanders for if there are a number of troops from a specific region going, a familiar face quickens the tempo of command. Your total command should be less than ten percent of the compliment of your unit.

A lot will depend on the Crown's war effort. It is up to politics to commit the body of the army to any cause. If the crown is not behind an action, the muster will call about 50% less than if they were. As commander, this is not your duty, but it will effect the size of army you field/command.

Intelligence

Start gathering intelligence right away. Be familiar with the treaty of war you are going to fight. In it, the warring kingdoms list armor and weapon standards, and the scenario rules and objectives for each battle. Be ready for these rules to change at any time, even after the lay-on.

Find out how many fighters your unit will have, and who the allies and enemy are. Start examining what roles your command can achieve in possible strategies. Review the battlefields when you get on site to get a feel of the terrain. Map out the battlefields as they will appear on the day of the battle, and play through some strategies in your war council.

Put all your intelligence to bear at war maneuvers. Make your plans for the specific war scenarios. Take into account your troop's experience, weapons you will need to accomplish a particular objective, speed at which you will need to move, and any special maneuvers you need to train for this upcoming battle.

Generally, for defense warfare, you will want a strong Shieldwall with tight unit command and for offensive warfare you will want a strong mix of weapons with good mobility.

Walk the camp to learn the heraldry of allies and enemy. You should already be familiar with the arms of the kingdoms. You need to next familiarize yourself with the heraldry associated with predominant shires, baronies, households, mercenaries, and individual commanders who will be participating in the battle.

War Council

When it comes time to meet with your allies, relax and be confident. They know your group's reputation. You know your current abilities based on your troops. Do not be intimidated by personalities or titles.

Stand up for your army, so you don't get some lame job in the backfield, and that your soldiers see action. Be ready to tell Duke Dufus that his plan sucks (always have a valid reason to do so, and it helps if you have a counter proposal to his sucky plan). Often, you will speak with the voice of your Crown in these meetings, but, depending on your rank, it may be advisable if you bring a royal peer who has no direct involvement to speak to these bad plans. That way, you are not seen as an over-critical ally.

Don't over commit your troops, but do speak up for their abilities. When stating numbers, don't exaggerate. If anything, give the overall commander a count 10% less than what you know. This will account for attrition of troops, armor failure, injuries, etc. If you have any allies conscripted under your banner, bring their commanders to the war council as well. This is your time to play general. Play your part!

After the war council, meet with your commanders immediately while the discussion is still fresh in your mind. Make sure that all your sub-commanders are present, and that everyone has a good understanding of the intent of the overall strategy, as well as what is expected of your unit during the battle, so they can carry out the plan under any circumstances. Listen to your sub-commanders as they may have extraordinary insight that you can capitalize on. Always be willing to modify your basic assignment.

The Battle

Get to the field with your army on time. You will be able to set up where you want (although you will have to move to accommodate bigger/host units), and will be able to see the layout of the enemy's battle formation. This will allow you to know literally what you are up against.

Everyone should already know who the unit sub-commanders are, and everyone should be comfortable in their roles and places. Form your wall where their starting position is supposed to be. Set your artillery to cover the front rank of shields, determine what you have for reserves, and who is lined up on your flanks (get to know your flanks, and plan to stabilize possible gaps that will occur upon movement). Leave room to maneuver.

Meet with the other commanders as they arrive, to ensure that the plan has not changed significantly (or at least your unit's objectives are still the same). Make no (major) adjustment to the battle strategy unless necessary.

When it is time for the lay-on rejoin your forces and wait. Now begins the time where you put your theory and plans to the test.

Afterwards

Sitting around after the battle, listen to the stories. They will give you insight as to specific events that may have either made or defeated the battlefield tactics. Review with others, both command and in your unit, about what occurred from their perspective, and what the factors involved were. Talk about, "what ifs" for future scenarios. This re-hashing of how the battle went, builds on your experience for future commands.

Warfare in the Society brings all elements of the culture together. The artisans who make the armor and tunics we fight in, the service given freely by our support staff, water bearers, surgeons, marshals and autocrats who put the war together, and of course the martial aspects of chivalry our Society is based upon.

Being a commander is being an advocate for group combat. In your position, you often have more power than the king at your disposal. You are center stage for what transpires at the war. Commanding is a showcase of leadership, comportment, and application of knowledge and people skills that few will have the opportunity, skill, or want to achieve. How you comport yourself gives your command presence the reputation it deserves for future command opportunities. Take advantage of fostering newer troops into the unit, and continually welcoming veterans to the mix. Remember that you will both win and lose battles. Learn from every mistake you make and build your melee acumen for future commands. Command is a grand experience, shared only by a few. Do your best and no one will think less of you.

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Sir Andrew's Melee-Chess Game

This is a game that Syr Andrew-Lyon of Wolvenwood created to simulate melee combat using readily available pieces.

Piece	Represents	Attack			Special Rules	
		Range	Defend	Move		
Pawn	Sword/Shield	1	5	1		
Rook	Pole-Arm		2	4	2	
Bishop	Spear		3	3	2	
Knight	Duke (two weapon)		1	6	3	Gets two attacks
King	King		1	5	2	Reduces defense -1
Queen	Archer (Optional)	4	2	4		

Initial Play – Each player rolls to see who gets initiative each round. The winner decides if they want to move first or not. The player who moves first, moves any number of their pieces (all, some or none). Then the second player moves any number of their pieces (all some or none).

Declare Attacks – Next, the first player declares his attacks. He may attack with any, all, or none of his pieces. Pieces may fire over one another from either player's pieces the number of squares in their range. One piece may be attacked from multiple pieces (i.e. three shieldmen in a range of one pole-arm, may each attack that pole-arm). However, when the target has been killed, the remaining pieces may not declare a different attack that round. The second player then declares his attacks in like manner.

Attack/Defend – The attacks are next resolved. The first player goes through his declared attacks one at a time, the defending player rolling the single die for results. If he rolls below the defend point, he successfully defends from the attack, and nothing happens. Should he roll the defend point or above, his defense failed and his piece is dead, and should be removed only after his play. Pieces killed during the first player's turn get to make their attack even if they are killed. This is to simulate concurrent combat conditions.

Special Rules – The duke gets two attacks per round. He may use them on the same target or two separate targets.

The king effectively gets a +1 to hit. He reduces his opponent's defense by one point.

Play Variations

You can play this game as a field battle using the whole board. You can play as a limited front using only a few squares. You can play different scenarios, like to the last man, or kill the king.

Combat Pictography

Combat Pictography Viscount Sir Ternon de Caerleon



Sword and Shield
Right Handed



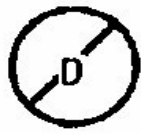
Sword and Shield
Left Handed



Weapon and Shield



Scutum
Right handed



Sword and Shield
Dropped



Weapon and Shield
Dropped



Florentine



Scutum
Dropped



Beastard
Sword



Great Sword



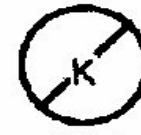
Polearm



Spear



Tactical Specialist



King

From "The Handbook of Rattan Death" by Viscount Sir Ternon de Caerleon.