

Tactica Calontir: Manual at Arms.
Our "Playbook" for Estrella.

This is a summary of maneuvers and tactics that we expect to use, with a description, to be hopefully understood by everyone in the army. This has been reviewed and chewed over by the command team, the captains and sergeants, of the war council. Hopefully these descriptions are relatively clear to the average Calontir trooper. If you have any questions, ask your sergeants. We all recognize that, in the chaos of the battlefield, we amateurs on our vacation will not achieve execution at the level of the ideal, but the more people who know the goal, the better we will do.

This is a list of ten sergeants, which may seem like slightly "too many," but my intent was to have one sergeant per ten people, and to have everyone "belong" to a particular sergeant. So that if we really shatter in a big fight, we still have teams of 5-10 fighters trying to stick together. I'm showing nine sergeants in the two companies of $44+27=71$ troopers, so I have about one "extra" in each company... but that allows for some attrition in sergeants too. Distribution of sergeants into companies is tentative. Sergeants should be with troopers whom they are most comfortable with, so we may shuffle sergeants depending on how the muster falls out. If we get over 110 people, I may give someone a field commission and rework this so that we have three companies. I'm playing that by ear depending on muster.

Muster Assumptions: 100 actual fighters on the field, 50 person C1, 32 person C2, 12 person skirmish (all commander team inclusive), five royal body, and me.

1. Situation: Open field. This is non-fixed front, could be open field or broken field (conceivably could be forest, though not at Estrella).

1.A. Tactic: General Maneuver. Formation: Assault column.

Purpose: Going somewhere in force, probably to attack something!

This is the big bus, steered by the "follow me" method by one of the top commanders (me).

Companies in close order, C1 8w6d, C2 6w5d. Sergeants must keep the rear ranks closed up with the front, show/tell your guys to hop/skip/jog those few steps to catch up and close ranks. Sergeants must keep the outside files straight and closed. Show/tell your guys to follow the guy in front of you, do not drift out to the side to "look out the windows of the bus."

The reason for both of these imperatives is that both make the center of the formation thin, it makes a "hole" in the middle of the formation. Also, it takes lots of energy to get troops bunched up and ordered, but it is always easy for troops to spread out, they do it naturally by entropy.

C2 is following behind C1, no more than a nine foot gap -- two feet is preferable, again it is always easy to spread out.

This is the big purple bus steered by the follow me method. Companies need to automatically wheel up to 45 degrees or so. If we need to shift sideways (or otherwise reorient), it will be done by stopping the unit, (me) running to the side, ordering everyone to face (left/right face without the left/right confusion), follow me to the new position, face me again, etc.

Skirmishers are out loose. Skirmish captain has authority to go all the way to the nearest enemy, but must not actually engage them in fighting.

Skirmishers, in my conception, are on the field to take up space, and should_not_ engage in fighting unless it is a three on one free kill. Skirmishers should_not_ get killed, not even be in real danger, until the main army is nearly wiped out. Example: If the nearest enemy is 100 feet away, and if the skirmishers go up to about ten feet in front of the enemy, then I own 90 feet of battlefield in which to drive the big bus. The skirmishers are still outside of spear range from the enemy! Why should they fight, we already own 90% of the battlefield! Skirmish captain has the responsibility to keep pulling his guys back, keep them from fighting in anything that is not a freebie three-on-one kill. Skirmish captain MUST keep very good track of

the location of the main column, and must continually reorient so that he is between the main column and the nearest/biggest threat to the main column. This is very tactically challenging.

1.B. Tactic: General Attack. Formation: Assault column. Purpose: Crash into something. This is a Don't stop, PBS walk into contact scuta don't pass through rank two until you've killed them all kind of attack. It could be called a charge, but it is neither a pulse charge, nor is it a column charge (see subsequent). It only involves running for those last couple of steps.

Skirmishers squirt and rally in back, C2 wheel or shift right or left, tactical choice.

We target C1 to hit something big and penetrate. The target will have a wider frontage than C1, and on one flank, C1 will then begin to suffer flanking attack. C2's job is to roll in on the immediate flank of C1 -- soon, before the flank attack depletes C1's momentum.

C2 must be close enough behind C1, where it can come up with 0-6 feet between companies, before C1's flank collapses.

Advantages:

(1) Maneuverability is good as a column.

(2) Shock impact maximized from C1 _and_ C2 hitting adjacent (may also benefit by hitting flank of enemy who are working C1's flank).

(3) This is a fighter delivery system. It gets a large number of Calontir fighters get into the fight quickly, yielding a frontage of 14+ (C1 and C2 end up side by side) with a depth of 4+ ranks. This is optimum fighting situation for Calontir. Our best play.

This is a very aggressive posture, with both C1 and C2 in a combined attack.

It requires us to move more aggressively than our opponent.

1.C. Tactic: Defense by company. Formation: Fort up by companies.

Purpose: Stand our ground in defensive situation in the open (I'll try to get us a hill or a something on our flank, anything but flat open ground!!!). C1 face primary threat, C2 face secondary threat, skirmishers face tertiary threat.

1.D. Tactic: General Skirmish/Attack/Defense.

Formation: None (amorphous blob). Purpose: generate offensive pressure over a wide front, or to create a defensive screen over a wide front. Sections stick together in loose order with their sergeants. Independent actions, this may be a generally defensive or generally offensive fight, but it is not the assault of 1.A and 1.B above. If attacking, do not get killed charging for penetration, harrass and kill. If defending give as much ground as necessary. Some sergeants/sections will hopefully be held back as reserve in this formation (we can hope!). This is our default resurrection broken field formation.

1.E. Tactic: Withdrawal. Formation: None (amorphous blob). Purpose: To give ground while generating a positive kill ratio -- kill more of them than we lose, while backing up. Alternative Purpose: To switch gears from a forward, advancing, attacking mode of fighting, to a defensive, falling back mode of fighting prior to disengaging and reforming.

From any formation, fall back by odds and evens. Each trooper will have a partner, one of you will be odd, one will be even (Sergeants will organize this before battle so that the odd and even teams have sensible weapons mix). When the withdrawal is called, two man teams alternate falling back a few feet and covering their partner. Sergeants or officers _may_ call orders if they are alive and in control ("Withdrawal! Evens, fall back!" "Odds, Fall back!").

This order can't be given in the face of an all out charge by the enemy, but when they are tentatively advancing, and when we have room to give ground, this may generate a high kill ratio. Alternatively, if enemy have been shocked into standing and we need to disengage to reform, this also allows a sensible method to pull back from combat with a minimum number of casualties.

1.F. Tactic: Reform By Companies. Formation: None (amorphous blob).

Purpose: Put companies back together after breaking off. **THIS SHOULD NOT BE CALLED TOO SOON.** If a company is heavily engaged, fighting for it's life, the fight has to lull before calling to withdraw, then

calling to reform. Withdrawal should happen before actual reforming. If you are fighting for your life, don't stop; But, if you find yourself in a lull, start thinking whether or not you will be called to advance or withdraw/reform -- one of those things is going to happen next. Troopers should reform with their sergeant if possible, with their company otherwise, and with the nearest Calontir at worst case. Companies will have banners for this.

2. Situation: Fixed front, this can be a bridge, a breach in a wall, etc.

2.A Tactic: Down shieldwall. Formation: Interlocked scuta with doors on each side. Purpose: defend a bridge/breach. C1 forms the wall, C1 captain is in charge of this formation. One of C1 sergeants is in the scutum line with no weapon or shield, crawling around under the feet of the polearm men, adjusting the wall, dressing the line, replacing shieldmen -- straight old school Pavel style. One C1 sergeant is in control of each door, right and left. Door sergeants have the authority to fire off pulse charges.

C2 forms ready reserve with a few spare scuta, some ready scutum replacements, some ready artillery replacements, and ready pulse charge teams. C2 captain and C1 captain maintain traffic control space between the companies, room for spearmen and proper traffic flow for ready pulse charge teams. C2 sergeants are linked with C1 sergeants on the side doors, C2 sergeants compose the pulse charge teams and hand them off to C1 sergeants to "fire."

If we need this level of control over the spearmen, the skirmish captain and sergeant take the right and left doors, and they belong to/coordinate with the C1 door sergeants.

This thing should be pretty mechanical, operated by the sergeants -- C1 door sergeants coordinate spearmen and pulse charges through their doors, C1 scutum sergeant maintains the scutum line and artillery, C2 sergeants "load" for the C1 door sergeants, skirmish captain and sergeant rotate the spearmen in and out of the doors depending on enemy action.

Once we pin down the muster and pin down who each of these sergeants are, it should be pretty straight forward to develop your personal relationships so that you have good coordination and control.

2.B. Tactic: Breach Penetration. Formation: C2 is cork, C1 subdivides into four columns. Purpose: Attack a breach. C2 captain sets up C2 as a standing defensive force with plenty of air on both sides - much bigger "gaps" than the doors for 2.A. This is the cork. C2 sgts in charge of keeping left and right of this closed up, C2 captain has authority to charge in order to stop a counterattack. C1 captain and C1 sergeants form up four columns of suitable width -- it will depend on the size of the breach, but probably two man wide, eight man deep. Everyone in the column puts their hand on the guy in front of them and leans forward.

Lead man leans back, commander can stand physically by/in front of this group and can start charge by talking/prompting lead man. When the lead man leans forward and goes, everyone else in the column should feel the column start, and they should go with it. The lead man aims the column, based on what the commander suggested and what he sees as he goes in.

Following troops in column watch guys in front of them to opportunistically move around dead and move into any gaps that appear in the enemy line. If the column angles or curves right/left as it goes in, it may improve effectiveness. Skirmish captain and sergeant separate into two sections and harass enemy in gap in front of C2 but stay well clear of columns. Goal is to punch four sixteen man columns into the gap, followed by a general charge with C2. This is our one-two-three-four-five punch, our best play to try to break into a heavily defended breach. The odds are always heavily weighted towards the defenders in this situation, so our goal is to do the best we can and have a good time. Sergeants need to convey this to their troops, we don't want to have a lot of people get frustrated thinking that they did a bad job just because they died -- we are pretty much all going to die in this tactic.

3. Situation: Road movement. Included for completeness, this is the part where we form a column in ranks of three to march somewhere. Three is the optimum number, because everyone knows you are either the middle guy, or the right guy, or the left guy; it doesn't take actual marching skill to wheel around corners; and it is a narrow enough column to snake through a path.

Administratively, we need to make sure that we get someone to use their pickup truck to haul shields, helmets, weapons, and water along with this...

About one truck per 40 fighters (i.e. two would be good for Estrella).

Centurion
Sir Rolf Eichmann, called Germanicus
Primus Pilus
I Calontir