

# Shot, Steel and Stone FAQ

As at 23 March 2024

Page numbers refer to **Shot, Steel and Stone—The Bare Essentials**.

## The scope of the rules (Page 7)

### **How do I reflect the special characteristics of my favourite troop type?**

*I'm perfectly open to suggestions for modifications that are circumstance or unit specific, so + or -1 for particular units with special characteristics. I'm thinking, for example, of the ferocious reputation of the Swedes in the Great Northern War, or the elite reputation of French Napoleonic Carabiniers and so on. But what I don't want to do is encourage the notion of 'supertroops'.*

*I'll go further, because I want to encourage people to play games with proper scenarios or, even better, as part of a campaign (and of course I'll be addressing this in my forthcoming book) feel free to adjust factors according to the circumstances of the scenario you are playing. You might have an exhausted rearguard trying to hold off a much bigger advance guard, so reduce the movement, melee factors or firepower of the defenders. You can offset this by having them select terrain features to defend – walls, hedges, buildings, a mountain pass, woodland and so on – which is what would happen in real life!*

*You might also like to carry over the effects of a previous victory or defeat, so +1 on reaction for previous victors, 1 for losers etc. Particularly crack units might gain a boost to their Strength Points, whereas dodgy militia might suffer a penalty. be creative!*

### **How would you handle mixed pike and musket units?**

*Mixed units of pike & shot were still in evidence early in the period — and in fact persisted into the early 18th century, especially notable in the great Northern War, for example.*

*The answer is that such units can't move as quickly because of the unwieldy pikes, so their normal move is 3BW but they receive no charge bonus.*

*The pike-armed bases get to strike first in melee, but if they don't win the first round, it means the enemy has got past the points, so they'll be at -1 in subsequent rounds.*

*Pike-armed troops cannot lie down, nor can they be interpenetrated – it's just too disruptive. Bow-armed troops shooting at pike formations suffer a -1 penalty because the massed pikes shield the troops behind/beneath them.*

*Pike-armed troops suffer an additional disruption point in difficult terrain, if successfully attacked in flank or rear, if it has been broken through or when it is routing.*

*In column of march, they only get a 50% bonus rather than a double move.*

*So, pikes \*can\* be very effective if properly directed, because they get to strike before anything else except firearms (they outreach spears, lances, muskets with bayonets, swords etc) BUT they can be vulnerable.*

## **Morale Classes (Page 8)**

**Thinking about early-to-mid-18th century Highlanders; would it be acceptable to treat a unit of B class highlanders as A class in melee but C class when shooting?**

*Definitely worth trying for c18th. I think by the Napoleonic period they were better shots and of course in the Crimea they were the 'Thin Red Line'.*

*Another option is to allocate additional Strength Points to a unit, rather than upgrading their morale class. So, for example, because they're tough buggers, you could give highlanders one or two additional strength points per base, making them harder to break (or, conversely, deducting a point or two from a fragile unit). This is certainly how I intend to reflect how a unit changes during a campaign due to poor supplies, heroic deeds and so on, because you can get more subtle variations than just "+1 on morale".*

## **Strength Points (Page 11)**

**What, in game terms, is the result of a unit being forced to "retire from the battle" having lost half its strength points?**

*The unit is making a controlled withdrawal, hopefully with its colours still flying. It must be moved back towards its baseline possibly getting in the way of advancing friends. It may defend itself if attacked, turning to face any assailants and even shooting back, but of course by this point, it will probably only constitute a "Small" or even "Tiny" unit, and is unlikely to survive such encounters for very long.*

*Note that, subject to scenario, units defending fortifications or built-up areas, or that have been given written "Hold to the last man" orders may stand and fight until they have lost 75% of their initial Strength Points. However, any commander attempting to order troops so deployed to do anything else does so with +1 on his command roll for that unit - in other words, it's more difficult to change their orders than normal, because the men have psychologically, as well as physically, 'hunkered down' in the defences.*

## **Move Sequence (page 15)**

**The rule says "The C-in-C may attempt to issue commands to any units that a sub-commander has already unsuccessfully attempted to command, but he suffers a -1 penalty to do so". How does this make sense, surely even on a failed roll the sub-commander has got the unit to do something?**

*Not necessarily; in some circumstances, due to a combination of a failed Leadership test and terrain restrictions, a unit (especially infantry) may be unable to move at all. However, the following may help to clarify this:*

*"If any sub-commander's Leadership test was a failure, the C-in-C may immediately step in (at -1 to his Leadership Factor) to issue his own orders to that sub-commander's troops. Note that this must be done before making any other sub-commander's Leadership test.*

*"If the C-in-C's test is successful it applies to any units under the superseded sub-commander that are within the C-in-C's command radius and any other units in the army that have not yet been commanded by their own sub-commander. In other words, as soon as the Commander in Chief gets involved, he affects ALL uncommanded units, with the exception of those able to act independently, such as skirmishing light infantry, light cavalry and horse artillery.*

*If the C-in-C's result is a failure the sub-commander in question and all sub-commanders whose Leadership tests have not yet been rolled are treated as having the same grade of result (failure or blunder) as the C-in-C achieved.*

*Note that the C-in-C can only intervene once in a turn and does so at the cost of not being able to give commands that turn to any reserve troops under his own direct command."*

## **Movement (Page 17)**

### **Do wheels count as complex manoeuvres?**

*Not necessarily. In general you can just measure the distance moved by the outside front corner of the wheeling unit. However, depending on your the movement distance available as a result of the commander's Leadership test it may be better to take the 'Complex manoeuvre' penalty and change the facing of the unit.*

### **When moving into contact, is it necessary to line up base vs base like in DBA?**

*No it isn't, though players often do so as this makes it easier to see if there's an overlap.*

## **Shooting (page 19)**

### **I'm confused by "6 is always a hit".**

*Yes, this is a little confusing. Read it instead as "a 6 always gives you the chance of a hit". Where the chance to hit has been modified to a number higher than 6, use the additional die roll method described on page 19.*

## **Reaction (page 25)**

### **If a unit has been pushed back as a result of close combat (Results of close combat, p 23) does it count as "Retiring" when determining the result of the subsequent Reaction test?**

*No. They have actually been physically shoved backwards, so they are not retiring as such until a reaction test forces them to do so. So they are still treated as stationary/halted (or whatever status they had last).*

### **A unit has to take a reaction test to see if it pursues. How does this work? They pursue if they succeed? They pursue if they fail? They pursue if they pass by three or more?**

*See bottom of p.23: "If the losers of a melee Rout as a result of the subsequent Reaction test, then the victors has the option of pursuing or not, except that impetuous regulars [think Scots Greys] and any irregulars [early Highlanders, tribesmen] must take a Reaction test themselves if the player wishes to prevent them from pursuing.*

*Also p.16: "Pursuers always have the option of rallying at the table edge unless they are classe as Warband or Impetuous, in which case they must pursue thier quarry off the table for d6 moves before being permitted to return."*

*Under normal circumstances, if a unit passes its reaction test, it can do whatever it wants. BUT if it is a regular, Impetuous unit passes its test by 5 points or more, or an irregular unit passes by 3*

points or more, then yes, it must charge/pursue the nearest enemy unit. As for negative consequences, they will suffer a point of Disruption and, of course, depending on circumstances, they may make themselves vulnerable to enemy counter-attacks as they blindly chase their quarry!

**Can a unit testing to see if it pursues suffer negative consequences of failing the test or is it just case of does/does not pursue?**

*If the victors of a melee are in a bad enough state, it's possible they might decide to head in the opposite direction! Sure, a 'Phyrric victory', why not? It could also depend on whether there are lots of other intact enemy units around that threaten their sense of security and so on.*

**Any thoughts on what constitutes "good order" for reaction test purposes? Is a unit that has a Disruption marker in "good order" for this purpose?**

*A unit that is neither retreating nor routing is under control of its officers and is deemed to be in "good order" for this purpose. Having said this, players may agree not to count as "friendly supports" units that have picked up very high levels of disruption.*

**The definition of the Retire reaction test result begins "At the start of the movement phase of its own next turn...". Does this mean that a unit that that gets a "Retire" result when charged stands in place and receives the charge?**

*No. Read this as "At the start of the movement phase of its own next turn or when required to make a compulsory move, the unit makes..."*

*And, in fact, this needs to be added on p.15, point 5. Movement:*

- Carry out compulsory moves: **retirements**, retreats, routs and pursuits...

*And on p.16:*

- **Retiring** and retreating units may fight back, with appropriate penalties.

*Which of course begs the question—what are the appropriate penalties.*

*Here's what I think.*

*Since Routing troops suffer 2 disruption points, it seems right that Retreating units suffer 1DP.*

*Retiring troops, however, are still in good order and firmly under the control of their officers, so shouldn't suffer DP. BUT of course, if forced to test their Reaction again, they are already retiring, which counts as -1, making it more difficult for them to prevent a retirement turning into a retreat or rout.*

**Typo in Close Combat (melee) near the bottom of p.22**

*"...the player must first roll a 6 for each base **fighting** [not firing!]."*

**Omissions from Movement Penalties and Bonuses table p.17**

*Infantry or artillery shooting and moving or vice versa (e.g. **limber/unlimber**) -2BW*

*Column of march to line or vice versa -1BW*

*Troops not in column of march but 12+ BW from nearest enemy +50%*

## Shooting at a charge p.20 additional rule

Assuming that it passes its Reaction test, a defending unit armed with missile weapons may attempt to shoot at an enemy charging it or any friendly unit within its permitted arc of fire during the *enemy's* Movement Phase, *in addition to* any shooting it may have done during its own **most recent** turn. **However, if it *did* fire previously in its own turn, it suffers a -1 penalty when shooting at the enemy charge to represent the need for hasty reloading. If it *didn't* fire previously, it suffers no penalty this turn, but *will* suffer a -1 penalty if it fires again *in its own next turn*. If there is a longer delay before it fires again, the penalty expires and is not imposed.**

## Disorder from casualties p.24 clarification

*Cause: Unit suffered 1+ hits per base this turn (do not include in reaction)*

*Very confusing.*

*I wrote it to mean that a unit that has suffered more than one hit per base this turn is clearly discombobulated and therefore suffers 1 DP. However, this DP should not be included in any Reaction Test that turn because the unit is already suffering -1 for every unsaved hit it has taken when it tests its reaction.*

*Moreover, on p.25 it should read "...deduct 1 point for each **unsaved** Hit suffered during this turn only...". [So, a unit that takes 10 hits, but saves 8 of them, only deducts 2 from its score, not 10!]*

**Reaction table p.25 what does 'Disruption difference in melee' actually mean? Is it difference in DPs between the involved units? I assume it applies to the loser in the melee (as they should be the only ones testing).**

*In melee, retaining cohesion means everything, unlike Hollywood movies where everything immediately breaks down into 1:1 duels. The side that retains its mass cohesion longer than the other, with the men helping each other to defeat the enemy, tends to win. So the more a unit gets broken apart for any reason—casualties, difficult terrain, poor morale etc—the more vulnerable it is. So, for example, it's clear that if a unit that has lost a melee by more than 1 hit per base this turn (1DP), and has already fought two or more rounds of melee (1DP) is suddenly assailed by fresh enemy troops reinforcing a melee, then it is going to suffer the consequences (Reaction -2). If it is also a C class unit taking on an A class unit, then it's in real trouble!*

**Does 'successfully charged by cavalry' in the Disruption table p.24 just mean that the charge contacted? [if so was Ostergotland in video 8 on 1DP - and therefore -1 in the melee?]**

*Yes—if cavalry manage to survive any potential firing at their charge and come to grips, then the men on (kicking, biting) horses have an advantage. BUT note that Ostergotland, for example, are 18th century 'highly drilled infantry' and so the cavalry themselves suffer a -2 that would not be the case in many Napoleonic encounters. [Historical note: see the British and Hanoverian infantry defeat the French cavalry at Minden <https://www.britishbattles.com/frederick-the-great-wars/seven-years-war/battle-of-minden/> ]*

**What does 'Unit suffered 1+ hit per base this turn (do not include in reaction)' in the Disruption table on p.24 mean? The unit suffers 1DP and any DPs usually result in a -1 mod per DP to the reaction roll, does this not apply in this one case?**

*See the answer to this already given above.*

**The reaction roll is modified on p.25 by the total # [unsaved] hits suffered in the turn so—in video 8 - the Kurassiere lost 1 hit in melee but had also suffered (6-4) hits from shooting while charging in, so would have been on -3?**

*Yes, one of my senior moments, that...! They took 6 hits and actually saved 4, so I should only have removed 2 figures. They did not need to take a Reaction test at that point because it wasn't 1 unsaved hit per base.*

*Then there was my complete brain meltdown where I only rolled 2 saving dice for the cavalry instead of 4! Clearly, I was very tired at that point and unable to keep multiple pieces of arithmetic in my head at the same time. But yes, for the purposes of the video, they suffered 1 unsaved hit (let's charitably assume that the 2 unmade rolls were both saves), which means that the 2 from shooting + 1 in the melee = -3. So yes, it should have been -3, not just -1. Culpa mea. (But hey, they ran away anyway...)*

**What is the save mod for armoured troops mentioned on p.23?**

*Blimey, well spotted!*

*Okay, what we should do for starters is remove the "Cavalry fighting cuirassiers -1" from the table on p.22.*

*On p.8 I already gave the "Armour Classes and Dressing" info in a table! Doh! So the easiest way forward is to say -1 per armour class, i.e. Light -1, Medium -2, Heavy -3, Extra Heavy -4. As mentioned, it's unlikely that you'd encounter Extra Heavy armour on a European battlefield and, more than a decade on from first writing the rules, I'm inclined to reduce most European cuirassiers to Medium classification rather than Heavy armour. This is also made more complex because many 'cuirassiers' were only that in name, or wore armour under their uniforms, or just a breastplate without a backplate, or only a 'secret' under their hat rather than a full helmet (very common in 18th century Europe)... On the other hand, some Ottoman cavalry were heavily armoured and even carried shields.*

*So I think we're going to have to suggest that players decide for themselves what save to give, the danger being that the higher the save, the more potentially impregnable some cavalry might become! There could be a trade off that truly Heavy/Extra Heavy units suffer a movement penalty as well and additional Disruption if they attempt to cross certain types of terrain.*

*My final point is that it's easy to get distracted by how heavily armoured the man on the horse is, because infantry were often trained to bayonet the horse, not the rider (anyone who has read the Sharpe novels knows this), because once the rider is unhorsed, he's like a turtle on its back—I seem to recall some accounts from Waterloo of French cuirassiers who had lost their mounts trying to waddle back to their own lines, often casting off their cuirass to make it easier.*

*However, the armour did help when cavalry fought cavalry, because they were at equal heights and so the head/breast/back/neck/arm protection worked as intended.*

*If nothing else, this discussion highlights the potential complexity of a simple Save bonus!*

**When testing for a unit losing a melee and the unit fails what status are they counted as for the reaction failure table on p.26? From the video it seems like Halted?**

*Yes, unless they've already been pushed back or worse, they are stuck on the spot and therefore static. If it was those poor cuirassiers again, they should have counted as 'pushed back', so -1.*