

Rank and File Optional Rules

Supplement 2

Wave Attacks

Wave attacks are carried out by successive lines of troops in an attempt to overwhelm the enemy, if the first battalion does not go in the second may do so. Both waves of the attack will have a better chance of closing with the enemy than they would if charging independently.

To declare a wave attack you must have troops in line formation that all have the chosen enemy unit as a valid charge target – this follows all of the usual rules for determining if a charge is valid except that other battalion involved in the wave attack does not block LOS.



In the example above both of the Confederate units are ordered to charge and are conducting a wave attack. The second unit is in range of the target - it would normally not be allowed to charge as its LOS is blocked by the unit in front. With a wave attack the 'other' unit in the charge does not count as blocking LOS but all other restrictions apply as usual.

No more than two units may take part in a wave attack and they must go in successive waves against the same side of the target – two battalions charging side by side would not use the wave attack rules, nor would one unit charging the front and another the flank. Each battalion is moved in the charge phase as normal, the first will halt at 2" from the target as per usual, the second will halt 1" behind the first.



The two units have now charged towards their target in the charge phase - the first unit halts at 2" as usual while the second unit halts 1" behind that. For purposes of this example the numbers mark the hits that the units have taken so far.

Defensive fire is carried out against the first unit as usual but the hits are split between the two targets in a 2:1 ratio. The first unit will take the first 2 hits, the third hit is then applied to the second unit, the next 2 hits are applied to the first unit and then the 6th to the second unit and so on.

The attackers will both take a morale test as normal if they lose a stand and the usual results apply. Halting unsteady at 2" (or at 1" behind the first unit) or routing as appropriate.



Defensive fire is carried out as normal - in the case above the artillery and the Union infantry regiment will fire upon the attackers. Their combined fire causes 5 casualties - the first 2 hits are marked against the front regiment, the third against the second regiment and then the last 2 against the first regiment. This is enough to remove a stand from the first unit and they will need to take a morale test to charge home.

Both of the attacking waves will get the 'supported' charging morale modifier if they do not already have it. In addition both units will benefit from the command bonuses of leaders attached to either unit – however the melee bonus, leader casualties or re-rolls still only apply to the actual unit that the leader is attached to.



Only the first unit has lost a stand and so will need to take a morale test. It has lost one stand so far this battle for a -1 modifier, it counts as being supported during a charge because of the wave attack so gains a +1 modifier, it will also gain the +1 modifier that the leader confers as his bonus applies to all of the units involved in the wave attack no matter which unit he is attached to.

Being a regular morale class unit they need to get 4 or better to pass the test, with a total modifier of +1 the dice roll is a 3 - which means they just pass and are moved into contact with the target of the charge. The second unit is now moved directly up behind them.

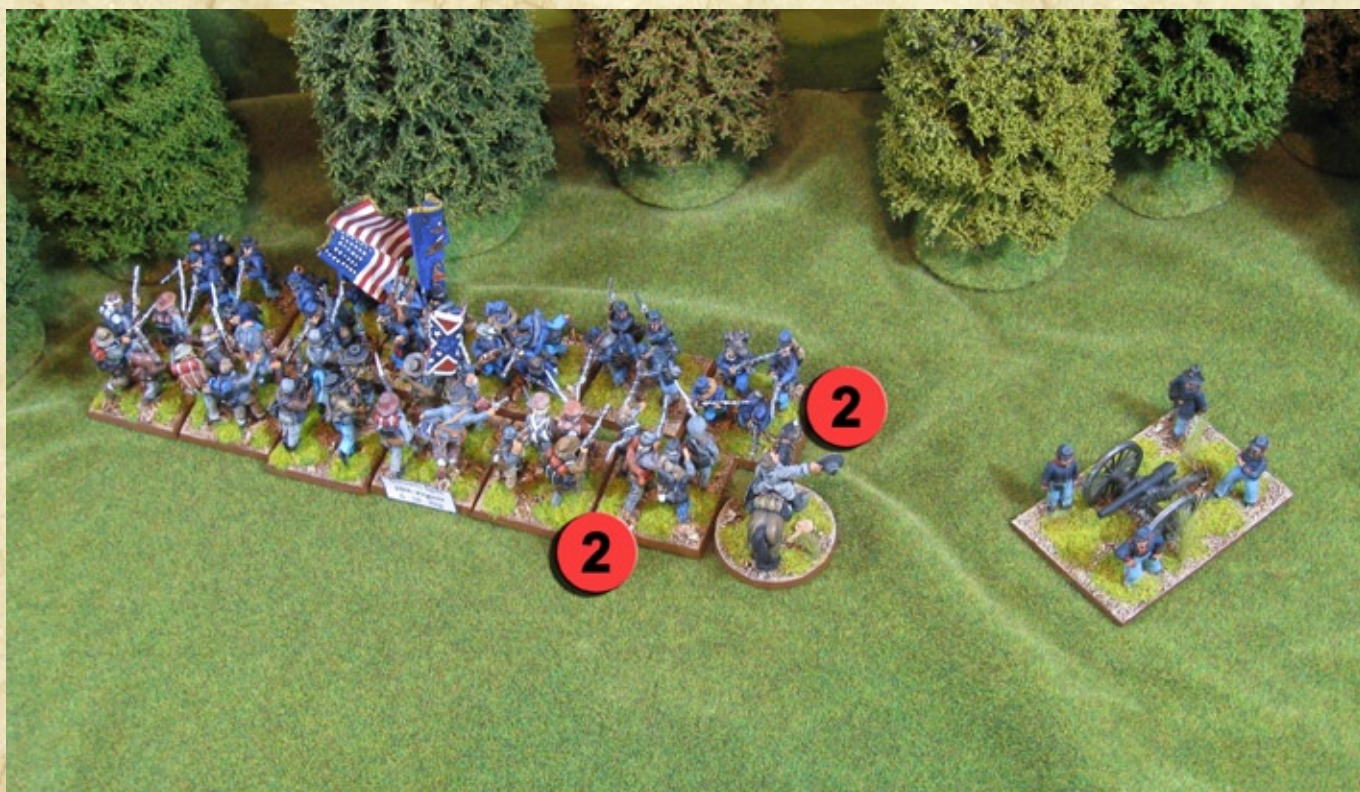
Note that even though the leader applies his morale bonus to both units there is no leader casualty roll as the unit he is actually attached to did not lose a stand.

Once you have determined which units will actually complete the charge it is time to move onto the melee. There are 4 things that can happen –

- Both units fail their morale and do not charge home – there is no melee phase.
- The front unit charges home and the second does not – carry out the melee as normal, there are no special modifiers for this.
- The back unit charges home but the front does not – move the back unit into contact through the front one – then carry out the melee as usual, there are no special modifiers.
- Both units charge home – move the first unit up and then the second directly behind it. The first unit will now fight a melee as usual, the supporting line will allow it to count as 2 deep so it may well get the 'deeper formation' modifier or take it away from the opponent – all other modifiers and rules are the same for this melee. You fight this melee to a conclusion, if the result is that the target of the charge loses then the melee ends with the attackers being able to occupy the ground. If the first unit in the wave attack loses the melee then it will rout or retire unsteady as usual – then the second unit is moved up and immediately fights a melee against the target using all of the usual melee rules.



The first CSA unit 7 stands strong will now conduct a melee with the 6 stand strong Union regiment. The Unions have no modifiers to their dice and will hit on 4 or more, the Confederates will gain a +1 for having a deeper formation so will hit on 3 or better. The actual results are 3 hits on the CSA unit and only 2 hits on the Union, this means that the Confederates lose the melee and must retire 2D6" and become unsteady.



The second wave of the attack now moves forward into contact with the Union regiment. This time the CSA troops will not get the benefit of deeper formation so both units will have 6 stands each hitting on a D6 roll of 4 or more.

The actual result is 2 more hits each, both sides losing a stand but because of the leaders' melee modifier the Confederates win and the Union troops will be forced back 2D6" unsteady.

ACW Buck & Ball

Units armed entirely with smoothbore muskets may use 'Buck & Ball' at very close ranges. So long as the target is within 2" the firer may add +1 to hit modifier.

Pass Through Morale Test

Normally units will only take morale tests when they have lost a stand to fire, with pass through morale tests it is possible for a unit to become unsteady or rout because another friendly unit has just routed through or around them.

During the morale phase you should test for all units as normal but when a unit is routed you will need to determine if the routing unit will affect any nearby friends. Only friendly units or individual stands that are routed through or past will have any chance to be affected. Single stands that rout do not cause pass through morale tests.

No matter what the cause of the morale test a unit will only have to test morale once in the morale phase. For example if a unit is passed through by routers and happens to have lost a stand to fire this turn it will still only take one test.

To count as 'passed through or around' a unit must be blocking the most direct route that the routing unit would have to take. If a routing unit can still move towards the edge of the table and avoid passing through any friendly units then it should do so but it will only deviate from its course by a maximum of 45 degrees. Players are going to have to use their own common sense and judgement when determining whether tests should be applied.

All of the normal modifiers and results apply to pass through tests. These rules can make units brittle – especially those that already have low morale. If you find that the pass through tests are too extreme then a second option is to allow the tests but the maximum result is that the passed through unit becomes unsteady.