Mit von Futsch zum Rheinland-Pfalz

(aka "With MacDuff to the Palatinate")

By Arofan Gregory, 2019

This game is a subset of Ross Macfarlane's "With MacDuff to the Frontier" for The War of the Polish Succession in the 1730s, to be played with glossy 40mm semi-round toy soldiers. All dice are ordinary 6-sided dice. An ordinary pack of playing cards is used, as well as a dedicated set of event cards.

Regiments have a commander (1 or more figures) and 2 or more battalions (each 12 infantry) or squadrons (each 6 cavalry). Artillery units are a gun and 4 crewmen. These units are based on 2.5" square bases, with 6 infantry in 2 ranks, 3 cavalry, or an artillery piece and crew. Skirmish units have 6 figures, based individually (1" bases). Commanders are 1 or more figures on a base 1-3" across. All units report to the overall commander, either through the chain of command or directly.

TURN SEQUENCE: A card is drawn from the deck: one player is red, the other black. If the card is anything but an Ace, King, Queen, or Joker, the designated side may activate a regiment, commander, or detached unit. If a Joker, the turn is over, and all cards are returned to the deck for shuffling. If a King, the activation may be immediately used or the card may be held to seize an activation out-of-sequence before any later draw in the turn. If a Queen, then a unit of the designated side may remove 1d3 hits. If a Jack, the designated player may select an enemy unit and force an out-of-command activation on it (even if the unit is in command). If an Ace, a card is drawn from the Events deck by the designated player (optional). When all units have activated, the turn ends if no Joker has been drawn. The deck is reshuffled with all Kings returned to the deck. Army morale is checked at the end of each turn.

When activated, a regiment in good order (if all sub-units are within 12" of another sub-unit in their regiment) may choose to fire, march, or maneuver. You may make a half-move and then fire if desired. Artillery may unlimber and fire if limbered. If more than 12" away from its regiment, a sub-unit will require a separate activation.

If more than 12" away from its regimental or army commander or not in line of sight (LOS), the unit (regiment or independent subunit) will need to make an initiative check. Roll 1 die: 5/6 - the unit may advance but not retreat; 3/4 - the unit operates normally; 1/2 - the unit may retreat but not advance. Elite units get a +1 on this roll, poor units -1. When attached, commanders may only command the unit(s) to which they are attached - all others must make initiative checks.

Commanders may be activated if not attached to a unit, moving up to 9 + 2d6". They may attach to a unit or unit(s) under their command within 6" and then move as if part of that unit but must remain attached for the rest of the turn. When a unit is activated, the general within 6" may be declared as attached instead of using a separate activation.

FIRE: To fire infantry (cavalry and wagons do not fire), roll a die for every two figures (rounded up) for two ranks of ordered non-skirmish infantry or a single rank of all others. Fire is 45 degrees to either side of facing from the front of the unit (for skirmishers in any direction). Short range is 6" and all fire hits on a 4-6. Long range is up to 12", and all but skirmishers hit on a 6; skirmishers on a 5/6. To fire artillery, roll 4 dice within 12" or 2 dice within 36". Hits are on a 4-6. Each hit kills one enemy figure. Targets of fire must be within LOS. Shaken units roll half-dice.

Difficult targets (those in hard cover, skirmishers, cavalry, and artillery) suffer 1/2 casualties (rounded up). Vulnerable targets (those in column, square, or lines taken from flank or rear) allow all misses to be re-rolled.

If a unit suffers 25% casualties from a single firing, they must check morale by rolling one die: 4+ - unit remains steady; 1-3 - unit wavers, retreats a move, and is disordered; 0 or less - unit routs, and retreats a double move in disorder. If a routed unit in disorder is again routed or leaves the table, remove from play. Retreating units will face in the direction of the retreat. Disordered units must reform with their next activation to restore order and may not counter-charge or shoot until then. Reforming units may choose to retreat a half move or hold fire as part of reforming, and may face in any direction, but will retain formation. Elite units get a +1; attached army commanders give a +1; poor units get a -1, and a -2 is given if half or more of the unit are casualties. If morale is passed (or is not needed) the unit may return fire if it has been held or the unit has not been activated for the turn. This fire will count as its activation.

MOVEMENT: If within 6" of the enemy, a unit may only go straight forward or backward. Otherwise, they may choose to march or maneuver. A march involves moving straight ahead (may wheel): 6 + 1d6" for infantry and limbered artillery; 9 + 2d6" for cavalry; 3 + 1d6" for wagons; or 1d6" for unlimbered artillery. Skirmishers, columns, and light cavalry get +3". An attached army commander will

add 1d6" of movement. Skirmishers have no front or flanks, and so may move in any direction or combination of directions. Skirmishers may interpenetrate and be interpenetrated – otherwise this is only allowed in retreats and causes disorder for all units.

To maneuver, a unit may move half speed to the side or backward or may change facing and/or formation by pivoting one base on its center and aligning the other along one full side as appropriate. Formation changes are made at the level of battalions, squadrons, and artillery/skirmisher units. Artillery only have two formations (limbered and unlimbered) and may not fire if limbered. Skirmishers have no formation, and do not maneuver, but always operate in a cloud with bases within 1" of another. Infantry may form column (one base wide) or line (two bases wide) or square (bases facing opposite directions). Bases are always touching along one full side. Cavalry may form column or line as infantry - these formations for both types always have a single facing for both bases. Note that 3-sided and regimental squares are allowed, but that squares of any type are unable to move.

If a unit marches and moves less than half, it may then fire or hold fire (allowing a unit to return fire if fired upon later in the turn). Artillery may additionally unlimber (a maneuver) and fire. A unit may also maneuver and hold fire. Before rolling for movement, the intended action must be indicated.

TERRAIN: Roads add 3" for wagons, limbered artillery, and columns moving along them. In broken ground, skirmishers move full but all others half. In difficult ground, infantry move at half speed - others are not allowed. Visibility inside woods and similar is 6" - you may only see into and out of woods 1".

CHARGES: Non-artillery/wagon units may charge a visible enemy to their front, although only cavalry may charge cavalry. The charged unit uses their activation for the turn. Charged cavalry may countercharge; frontally charged infantry or artillery may fire at short range if not yet activated or holding fire; infantry charged by cavalry may form battalion square instead of firing; skirmishers and light cavalry may evade by falling back a full move or until out of reach. If a unit fires before charging, return fire may be made before evasion if applicable. Charging units may follow an evading unit or stop when they reach their initial target point, up to their full move.

MELEE: Whenever units are in contact, a melee is immediately conducted. Formed, ordered infantry units fighting to front count 2 ranks, others 1 rank, and roll a die for every cavalry figure or every 2 figures for others (rounded up). Shaken units roll half dice. A roll of 4-6 is a kill. Charging cavalry get a +1; Elite troops and heavy (non-light) cavalry get a +1; cavalry get a -2 vs. undisordered squares. Inflicted casualties are reduced by half for defenders in hard cover, any unit contacting the flank or rear of an enemy, skirmishers fighting in difficult or rough terrain, or for cavalry charging in the open.

After melee the side with more hits must test morale, as for fire. Shaken units rout automatically. If the defender retreats, charging cavalry may follow up a full move and melee again. The position may be occupied by any winner. If units are still in contact another melee is fought without benefit of charges. If units are still in contact the attacker must retreat at least a half move, up to a full one. All combatants in melee are disordered afterwards and will need to reform (for charging cavalry after all pursuits are completed). Reforming is as for fire, above. If an army commander is attached to a unit in melee, they roll a die for each round: on a 4+ an enemy kill is negated; on a 1 the commander has been wounded and is removed from play. Otherwise, there is no effect.

SHAKEN: Normal units which lose half their strength are immediately Shaken; Elite units are Shaken when they lose 2/3, and Poor ones 1/3. A Shaken unit must immediately check morale, as for Fire, but with an additional -1 modifier. This test is applied even if the unit has just won a melee and replaces normal morale from fire or losing melee as applicable. The unit remains Shaken (and disordered) until it passes a morale check, and must test in place of any other activity when activated until no longer Shaken.

CAPTURING COMMANDERS & COLOURS: If an enemy unit is routed in melee, roll to see if their colours (or guns, for artillery) are captured (un-spiked in the case of guns). This is the case on a 4+ on one die and conveys bragging rights on the capturing unit. Note that composite grenadier units often have no colours.

If an unattached commander at any level comes within 1" of an enemy unit, both players roll a die: if the commander rolls less than the threatening enemy unit, they are captured. Otherwise, they may make an immediate full move to escape (this uses their activation for the turn if not already used).

ARMY MORALE: Each army has a break point determined by counting the number of battalions, squadrons, and artillery and skirmish units and dividing the total by 2 (round up). Subtract 1 for each unit routed, destroyed, or forced off the table, and for each commander captured/killed or otherwise rendered hors de combat. At the end of each turn, check to see if either or both sides have reached 0. If they have, the game is over and they have lost (mutual defeats are possible).