

Gentlemen of War

Rulebook

Playtest Version 3.0.0

Introduction:

“The folks thought the wars would be over after Napoleon the Third carked it, but now the Frenchies were replaced by the only thing on Earth that’s more revolting: The Brits.

They took the opportunity to march their little red men all over the Old Continent. Built a bridge, too, “Spanponsee”, they call it. She reckons them gutter rats she dragged along to build the thing would be easy to kick out now that job’s all dun, but gutter rats be gutter rats, aye?

Them hollered once and now the whole Span’s a mess. The surviving Frenchies and all the rest of Europe jumped at the opportunity to cause more trouble. Now the Span is all blockaded, angry people shout from either side, it’s just all a mess, really.

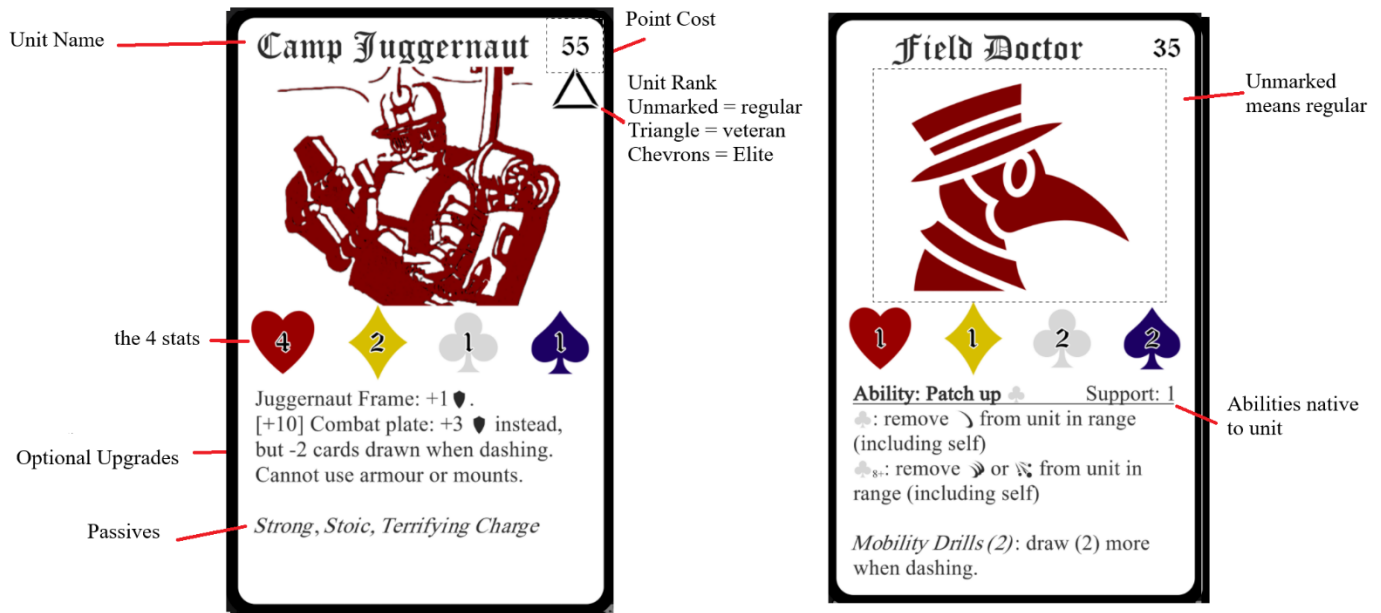
“Anyway, that’s why I’m stuck in Calais, and why that grenadier threw you out the window, and why I’m not gonna bother him about it. Where you from? Canada? The hell is Canada? No, you’re not getting another pint. Also, you best call Her ‘Her Fearsome Majesty’ from here on out. I think she prefers that.”

Basic Rules:

In Gentlemen of War, players **activate** their units in alternating order. A **turn** concludes when every single unit has been activated once. Player 1 activates a unit, acts with it, then player 2 does the same, alternating, until all units have acted once. If one player has no remaining units to activate, the other player activates all their remaining units in any order.

At the beginning of each activation, the current player will have, by default, action points equal to their **Clubs** stat. **Actions** points are used for **Abilities**. **Unspent action points are wasted upon end of activation.** Best to use all of them!

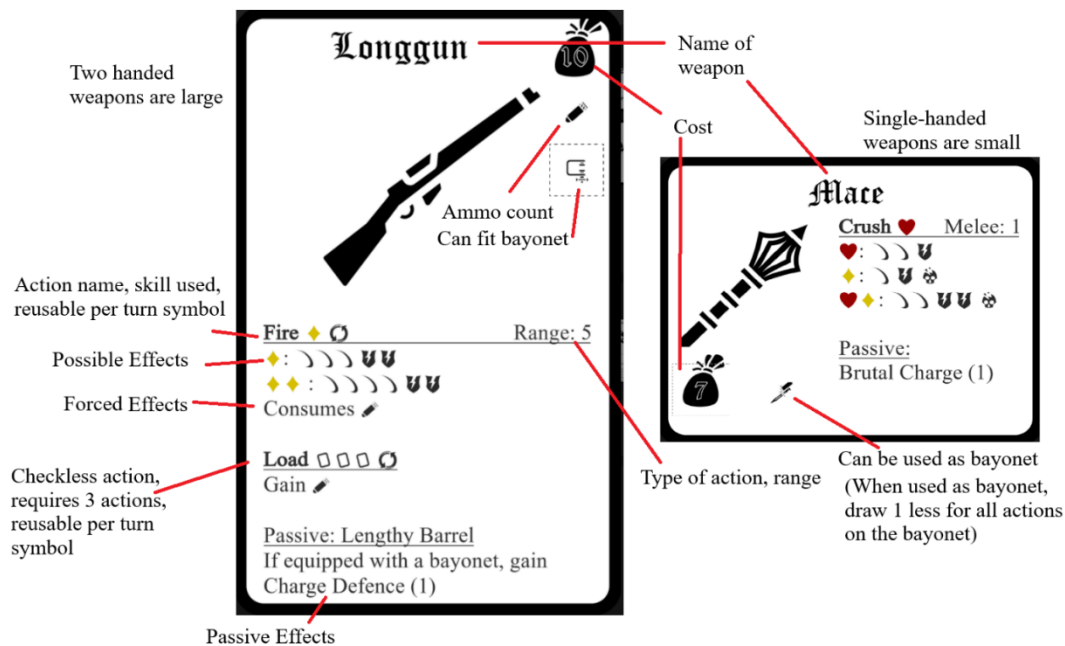
Every unit has 4 stats: **Hearts**, **Diamonds**, **Clubs**, and **Spades**, each representing one of the four humours of the body (Rubedo (Blood), Citrinitas (Yellow Bile), Albedo (Phlegm), and Nigredo (Black Bile), respectively). Hearts and Diamonds are **Martial** humours, representing strength and skill respectively, Clubs and Spades are **Commanding** humours, representing tactical-mindedness and resolve respectively. The martial skills are often used in attack **skillchecks**, Clubs grants action points, and Spades is used for surviving damage.



Each player has a **deck** of 54 playing cards. These are used during skillchecks. Used cards are placed into a **discard deck**. At the end of an entire turn, **shuffle** the discard deck back into the draw deck. If you run out of cards to draw in the middle of your turn, shuffle your discard back into your draw deck and keep on drawing.

After activating a unit, you have action points equal to your clubs stat. These points can be used for **Abilities**. An ability is either marked with one of the four suites, or with a **card icon** . The card icon indicates a **Checkless Action**: Spend action points equal to the number of card icons, and the action succeeds automatically, granting you the effect. Checkless actions can be achieved across multiple turns. For example, you may have 2 action points left, spend them to load a longgun, which requires 3 points. Next activation, you can finish the load with just 1 action point. **Note that checkless abilities (along with ranged and support abilities) may not be used if in melee.** You don't have time!

For actions marked with a skill suite, draw cards equal to the skill level the unit has for that suite. You may additionally spend more of your action points for these actions to draw more cards. Using the drawn cards, you may “purchase” effects under the ability. Sometimes the suite has a small number next to it. This means you need a card of that suite, AND a value higher or equal to this number.¹



For example, a unit with 3 Diamonds using the “Fire” ability of the Longgun would, by default, draw 3 cards for their skill level. If you have unused action points, you may spend them to draw additional cards. **Declare this before drawing.** If you draw 3 Diamonds, 1 Club, you may select either of the possible effects, **but not both**. Abilities only allow for 1 choice, except if it says **Multichoice** (Allowing multiple choices) or **Repeatable** (Allowing the same choice multiple times). Each ability may also only be used once per turn, unless it has the ♻️ symbol, allowing repeated uses, should the conditions allow it². These repeated uses in one turn get weaker each time, drawing 1, 2, 3... less, or requiring 1, 2, 3... draws more for checkless

¹ In these rules, you may find some example images that may have outdated stats. Please disregard them for now and refer to the roster sheets for the most up-to-date stats.

² Most of the time, said condition is ammo count. For single shot weapons, you still must reload each time you fire, even if it is reusable. It will however allow for multiple uses in a turn if you are speedy with the reload, or if your weapon has multiple shots.

abilities. It resets upon next activation. If no result is chosen for an ability, it is considered to have **failed**.

Units have access to any abilities on their weapons, their own native abilities, and the **universal abilities**. Units each have 2 hands (usually), which allows either a single 2-handed weapon or a pair of 1-handed weapons (bayonets, if slotted properly, do not take up hands). **They may carry only as many weapons as they can hold.** Some weapons are considered heavy. Non-strong units carrying heavy weapons cannot stow them, neither can they dash with one equipped.

Ability types:

“Ranged: x” can be used to target any unit, but if they are more than x hexes away, you draw 1 less card per tile beyond x. x is the **Optimal Range**.

“Melee: x” can only be used to target units within x hexes (usually 1 or 2). If the enemy is hit by your melee attack, both your unit and your target are considered to be “in melee”. This means no checkless, support, or ranged abilities are possible until **both** of you move out of each other’s melee range.

“Support: x” can only be used to target units within x hexes. Nothing else to note.

Some abilities don’t have a type assigned. This usually means it is self explanatory. This includes most movement abilities. The game takes place upon a hex-grid. Your unit may move to any adjacent, empty tile for each hex of movement they have. If you intend to charge a unit, you must declare this before you draw to dash. Your maximum declaration range is equal to the total amount of cards you will draw. Once you draw and begin movement, move your unit one hex at a time. If the enemy has units with **guard**, they may act now **only if the enemy moves within**

Universal Abilities

Available unless stated otherwise

Move

Move 2 hexes.

Dash

 or : Move 1 hex.

Repeatable

If dashed next to an enemy, it counts as a charge. Gain charge bonus (+1 card drawn for the next melee attack, increased by Brutal Charge and reduced by enemy Charge Defence. Note that charge bonus can become negative.)

Punch

Melee: 1

 : 

Each empty hand has this ability.

Battlefield Calculus




:  1.

Repeatable

You may then choose to shuffle the draw deck.

Recuperate

Support: Self

 : Heal 

their guard range. If guard is activated, the enemy stops on a hex within the guard range, decided by the defender, and the guard may move to any tile in their guard range to initiate melee. Your activation then continues. Your charger counts as having charged the interceptor. If multiple units have guard and they can all intercept, the defender chooses one to intercept first. Once the charger connects with the interceptor, the other units with guard may choose to move in and join the melee, but only if their guard movement is sufficient. The charge succeeds if the charging unit ends the movement **adjacent** to the target, no matter the range on their melee weapon.

To win, one must deal damage. When a unit is damaged, they suffer **Wounds**. Wounds persist on units unless healed³. Once a unit has wounds equal to their Spades stat, the unit is on **Death's Door**, at which point any new wound would take them **Out of Action**, and should be immediately removed from the battlefield. A unit cannot have more wounds than their Spades stat. If a unit at death's door is healed, they would no longer be at death's door.

If half or more units of one side are out of action, they must make a **Rout Check** at the beginning of each turn. To make one, draw 3 cards. Any Clubs will pass the check. If the check is failed, the team flees and loses! Otherwise, continue making morale checks each turn, drawing 1 less **each time another unit is taken out of action**.⁴

Units may also have **Armour**, denoted by ♠. When you have unnegated armour, you may make an **Armour Check** when damaged. Draw 1 card per unnegated armour point. Abilities may have **Armour Piercing**, denoted by ♣. Each point of armour piercing negates 1 point of the defender's armour.

Armour Checks

Armour checks happen when a unit suffers a hit while they have un-pierced armour.

To make an armour check, immediately execute the following action at no action cost:

Hold Fast (Draw equal to effective ♠ points)

♠: Ignore all the wounds. Note that you still suffer any other effects the attack may apply.

♠♠: The armour deflected the attack! Ignore the wounds *and* the effects.

Each un-pierced armour point allows you to draw 1 card each time the unit is hit.












Jokers and Queens still trigger their effects if drawn.

³ You may (if you wish) use dice to denote wounds. For example, use the 3-pip face to indicate 3 wounds.

⁴ Temporary morale rules, subject to change.

Abilities may also have other symbols. The meaning of each of them is listed below. Effects that say “1 turn” disappear at the end of activation. If cleared before then, their effect ends.

Symbol and Keyword Glossary:

	Armour Piercing	Ignore 1 armour per symbol
	Concussion	Target loses 1 action per symbol. 1 turn.
	Immobilize	Target may not dash. 1 turn.
	Suppressed	Target may not activate next, unless they are the only option.
	Knockback	Target knocked 1 hex directly away from attacker.
	Reveal	Look at the top cards of your deck, then put it back.
	Ammo	Ammunition in the weapon. If an attack consumes ammo, it can only be used when a weapon has ammo. Some actions gain ammo, which loads the weapon for future use.
	Bayonet Lug	Allows a bayonet weapon to be equipped without requiring the hands to take them.
	Bayonet	If used as a bayonet, -1 card drawn for all bayonet actions.
	Multichoice	You may choose multiple options for this action. Resolve each hit separately i.e. the enemy makes an armour check for each hit.
	Repeatable	You may choose the same option multiple times for this action. Resolve each hit separately i.e. the enemy makes an armour check for each hit.
	Multitarget	You may choose different targets for each option of this action. <i>Ranged multitarget skills may only target those within range.</i>
	Reuseable	You may use this action multiple times each turn, with 1 less draw each time you reuse it. Refreshes after the end of activation.
	Commanded (x)	Target will gain x actions if activated at the next available opportunity. Otherwise, this does nothing.
	Heavy	Unless user is Strong, this weapon cannot be stowed, and user cannot move and use this weapon in the same turn.

Common Passive Glossary:

Brutal Charge (x)	Increase charge bonus by x.
Charge Defence (x)	When charged and not in melee, reduce enemy charge bonus by x.
Cavalry Killer (x)	+x cards drawn when striking mounted units.
Mobility Drills (x):	+x cards drawn when dashing.
Mobile Loading (x):	After loading a ranged weapon, this unit may move x hexes for free.
Longgun Training (x):	-x cards required to load two-handed ranged weapons.
Guard (x)	When an enemy charges, you may move x hexes to intercept.
Parry (x)	When defending against 1 enemy, their melee attacks draw (x) less.
Block (x)	All enemy attacks targeting you draw (x) less.
Strong	Ignore Heavy penalties.
Mounted Training	Ignore Mounted penalties.
+x Martial Skills	You may allocate up to x stat points in either Hearts or Diamonds.
+x Commanding Skills	You may allocate up to x stat points in either Clubs or Spades.
Arsenal (x)	This unit can take x points worth of equipment for free.
Stalk (x)	When using ranged attacks, if benefitting from cover from the perspective of the target, draw (x) extra cards.
Skirmisher	Ignore movement penalties of cover.
Scatter (x)	Move the target tile by (x) hexes in any direction.

Equipment Notes:

Every unit **has 2 hands**, so either 2 1-handed weapons, or a 2-handed weapon.

Hands can also be empty. An empty hand can punch. Two empty hands can punch twice, not that that's recommended.

Bayonets, attached on weapons that can take them, do not take up a hand. **However, all actions made with them draw 1 less.** Also, you read that right, instruments may take bayonets.

Units may only wear 1 piece of armour and 1 headgear.

Units may only have 1 mount. They must ride it, though they can dismount as a free action. They can't remount. The horse runs away and the velocipedes fall over. Without the Mounted Training skill, mounted units suffer -1 in both Hearts and Diamonds.

Units may carry any number of miscellaneous items.

Units may modify their guns. They may double, triple, or quadruple the maximum and starting ammunition count. This doubles, triples, or quadruples the price.⁵

Terrain, Cover, and Deployment Rules:

To begin, players deploy their units. The one with less models may decide: They may deploy first and activate second, or deploy second and activate first.

Agree on deployment zones. The game is designed to have a wide front, so deploy near the long edges. Rigorous deployment rules will come soon.

There are also a few types of terrain. Most terrain is **Flat Ground** that has no effects. There's also soft and hard **cover**. **Soft Cover** can be stood on, though it requires 2 hexes of

⁵ In-universe, you may consider these as multiple guns in a brace, or an underbarrel, a pepperbox mechanism, or a revolving mechanism, depending on the amount of bullets added.

movement. It can also be charged over, though this charge will be a disrupted charge, providing the defender with Charge Defence (2). If you don't have enough, you can't cross it. **Hard Cover** is impassable. To determine if an attack is influenced by cover, draw a straight line between the target and the attacker. If that line touches a piece of cover, it will affect the attack. The attacker isn't affected by cover within 2 hexes. That's close enough that it doesn't obscure you. Other units on the battlefield offer the same effects as soft cover, except they can't be walked over.

If the line touches soft cover, the attack draws 1 less card when resolving. If it touches hard cover, it draws 2 less. There's also a possibility that you don't have **line-of-sight**! If there's doubt, draw 2 parallel lines between the target hex and the attacker's hex, maximizing the distance between these 2 lines. If hard cover takes up more than 3 quarters of the space between these lines, line of sight is blocked! Don't ignore any cover for this check. You can't see through walls.⁶

There is also **Water**! Water has all the movement restrictions as soft cover, but it provides no cover! Try to get your enemy stuck in some.

Objective Rules:

No objectives set in stone yet, but feel free to create your own.

Here're some ideas:

On the Sussex countryside map, let one team be the defenders of the river. The attackers want to ford the river. Once all of them make it to the other side, they win. If 5 turns pass and they don't, they lose.

On the Span-upon-Sea City Streets map, defenders must hold the bottom left building. They can only deploy in there. Each time an attacking unit activates in there with draws available, they gain one point. Win at 3? If defenders hold for 5 turns, they win.

⁶ If this sounds convoluted, that's because it is. Sometimes common sense is better for line-of-sight stuff. If you have a better way to do this, please let me know.

Alternatively, defenders gotta stop the attackers from swimming in the fountain. 3 swimmers = win for attackers.⁷

On the little hut map, hold the hut. Activating unit inside grants 1 point. First to have 3 more points than opponent wins.

Special Card Rules

Not all cards are a simple success or failure! Manage your deck well to make the best use of all of your resources.

Aces: Numerical value 10. For each Ace drawn for an attack, that attack will ignore 1 armour, even if the Ace wasn't used for any results. It may also be discarded to nullify Big Joker's effect.

Jacks: Numerical value 2, but it can count as any suite! Jack of all trades, master of none.

Queens: Numerical value 10. You may discard Queens in order to draw 2 more cards.

Kings: Numerical value 10. Also counts as any suite. Hit the road, Jack!

Little Joker: Doesn't count for any suite! But after the action, you may check the top 3 cards in your deck and choose to shuffle your deck.

Big Joker: Drawing this fails your action! But after the action, you may check the top 3 cards in your deck and either choose to rearrange them in any way or to shuffle your deck!

⁷ I'm losing it.