

# *Belle Epoque*



**Aperitif Game for Gentlemen,  
By Pierre Laporte**

## *“Belle Epoque”*

### Aperitif Game for Miniature Battles in the Victorian Era and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

#### EQUIPEMENT NEEDED

Small coloured counters, ordinary six sided dices, and a hexed board/terrain or similar system.

#### SCALES

1 unit = 1 Brigade or 1 Division depending on the scenario.

1 UD (distance between the middles of 2 adjacent hexes) ≈ 1km

#### MUSTERING

Any sector may contain only one unit at the same time. Maximum number of stands per unit:

- Cavalry/Mounted Infantry: **3**
- Formed Infantry: **4**
- Tribesmen: **6**

#### DOCTRINE

Formed regular infantry units can be in **loose** or **close** formation. This must be specified before the game starts, and cannot be changed during the course of the game.

As a rule, tribesmen and cavalry are considered as in close formation.

#### GAME TURN

1 – Players roll for Command Points

2 – Players activate their units one after the other, the initiative switching sides randomly.

#### COMMAND POINTS

Roll 1 dice for every 8 stands. Use **d4** if mediocre General, **d6** if average, or **d8** if superior.

Total obtained = number of Command Points (CPs) available for current turn only.

Each player keeps 1d20 within reach to indicate his remaining number of CPs.

#### ACTIVATION

Each player chooses a colour before the game starts. At the start of each game turn, each player puts in a bowl as many tokens matching his colour as units of his own camp deployed on the tabletop. Tokens are mixed and picked up one after the other: each triggers the activation of one unit of the corresponding camp. Once played, place the token next to the unit to help remember that it has been activated. Turn ends when the bowl is empty.

If a unit is eliminated before having been activated, a token matching its colour is removed from the bowl and discarded.

#### REACTIVITY TESTS

When activated, a unit must test in order to perform a *march*, a *fire*, or an *assault*.

Basic Score (BS) is:

Reactivity level/Doctrine	Loose Order	Close Order
Poor	1	2
Trained	2	3
Elite	3	4

To the Basic Score, add as many CPs as wished; then roll **1d6**. If the obtained score is lower or equals the modified Basic Score, the unit is successfully activated. If it fails, the unit may only perform a *basic move* (1 UD), and eventually defend itself if assaulted.

## MOVEMENTS

Any activated unit must complete its possible movement before firing or initiating an assault.

Troop type	Basic move	March (firing not allowed)
Infantry	1 UD	2 UD
Native Warriors	1 UD	3 UD
Cavalry	1 UD	4 UD
Mounted Infantry	1 UD	3 UD

Sectors can be Open, or Cover (kopje, woods, etc.). Units must stop when entering cover, hill sector, or when entering a sector adjacent to a sector containing enemy troops (ZoC); movement is impossible from an enemy ZoC toward another enemy ZoC.

A unit cannot fire nor initiate an assault during the same turn when entering “rough” terrain (swamp, dense woods, etc.).

Except for special units, march movement is not allowed when leaving rough terrain.

According to scenarios, some sectors can be designed as *impassable* to all or some units.

## INTERPENETRATION

If successfully activated, a unit may cross throughout a sector containing friendly troops if the movement begins in a sector adjacent to the intervening unit.

## TROOP TYPES

“A” type unit: infantry equipped with magazine rifles, and supported by machine-guns and quick-firing artillery.

“B” type unit: infantry equipped with magazine rifles and supported by machine-guns and breech-loading artillery.

“C” type unit: infantry equipped with breech-loading rifles and supported by first generation machine-guns and muzzle-loading artillery.

“D” type unit: infantry equipped with breech-loading rifles and supported by BL artillery.

“E” type unit: infantry equipped with muzzle-loading rifles, and supported by ML artillery.

“F” type unit: infantry equipped with smoothbore muskets and supported by ML artillery, or cavalry supported by horse artillery.

“G” type unit: foot soldiers with very limited firepower, or unsupported cavalry.

## FIRING

Troop type/Range	1 UD	2 UD	3 UD	4 UD
“A” unit	5 (3*)	4 (2)	3 (1)	2
“B” unit	5 (3)	4 (1)	2	1
“C” unit	4 (2)	3	1	-
“D” unit	3 (1)	2	2	1
“E” unit	3	2	1	-
“F” unit	2	1	1	-
“G” unit	1	-	-	-

\* Between brackets: “To Hit” number if firing unit is moving

Procedure: roll 1d6 per stand; each score lower or equal to the “To Hit” number is successful, and the targeted unit losses directly one stand (there is no “To Kill” test). A unit performing a basic movement can fire only if a “To Hit” number is indicated between brackets.

If the target is rated “conspicuous”, the “To Hit” number increases by 1 (but a score of “6” is always a miss). If the firing unit is uphill from its target, an extra dice is rolled.

If target is a loose order unit in the open or a close order infantry unit at cover, a score of 1 is a miss. If target is a loose order unit at cover or any infantry unit in fortifications, 1 or 2 is a miss. Example: at medium range (2 UD), a “B” unit must roll 3/4 to hit an entrenched target. The Line of Fire is drawn between centre point of the targeted unit’s sector and that of the firing unit; firing is forbidden if the LoF crosses throughout a sector containing troops or terrain that blocks sight, except if the firing unit is uphill from both target and obstacle.

## VISIBILITY

Basic line of sight (LoS) range is **4 UD**; deduct 1 UD if:

- the targeted unit didn’t move nor fired since the beginning of the game, **or** if the targeted unit didn’t move **and** is equipped with smokeless powder rifles,
- the targeted unit is at cover,
- the targeted unit is in loose formation.

No modifier can apply if the target is rated “conspicuous”.

## ASSAULT

If activated and not firing, a unit may assault an enemy unit occupying an adjacent sector.

Procedure: each side rolls 1d6 per stand and adds Successful Scores (SS). Then players compare their respective totals; highest wins, and his opponent loses a number of stands equal to the difference between both totals. In case of a tie, both sides lose one stand. SS chart:

Militia, or Regulars in loose order; 1/2
Regulars in Close Order; 1/2/3
Choc troops; 1/2/3/4

If a unit recoils, evades or is eliminated following an assault, the winning unit may carry the position. A unit rated “*bold*” **must** take an abandoned position.

Example: a 4 stands Zulu warriors unit attacks a 3 stands British regulars unit. The defending player rolls 4, 2 and 3; as his soldiers are *close order regulars*, the 4 is a miss and player totalizes a score of 5. The attacking player rolls 1, 4, 5 and 3; as his soldiers are *bold choc troops*, only the 5 is a miss and player totalizes a score of 8. The difference between both totals is 3; thus the British unit sustains 3 losses.

## TACTICAL MODIFIERS

If an infantry unit defends a sector providing tactical benefice (hill, kopje, etc.), its SS level increases by 1, or by 2 if defending fortifications. However, a score of 6 is always a miss.

- When attacking, the SS level of troops classified as “*dashing*” is upgraded by 1.
- When defending, the SS level of troops classified as “*stubborn*” is upgraded by 1.

Regardless of other circumstances, cavalry unit’s SS is reduced to 1 if fighting from or against cover or rough terrain.

## MULTIPLE COMBATS

A unit may initiate only one assault per turn, but can of course sustain several attacks. Thus, if a unit fights several combats during a same game turn, its Successful Score level decreases by 1 per assault fought beyond the first one. For example, regulars in close order will fight a second time with a SS level of 1/2. However, a score of 1 is always successful, even if the SS level falls below 1 due to successive attacks.

## FALL BACK MOVEMENTS

Except if the unit is rated “*stubborn*”, or infantry behind fortifications, “even” losses (2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, etc.) sustained following an assault are converted into 1 UD backward movements.

For example, a unit that loses an assault with a difference of 5 points will sustain 3 stands of casualties and must fall back 2 UD.

This rule does not apply if the backward movement cannot be performed (because of impassable terrain, etc.), or if the unit doesn't move away from every opponent in the process. In case of "even" losses due to fire fight, the player in command of the targeted unit may choose to sustain casualties or convert it into fall back movements.

### **SALVO AND SUPPORT FIRING**

If assaulted and not yet activated, a unit may fire once the attacking unit has completed its possible movement, but before resolving the assault. However, the defending unit must pass a reactivity test and therefore will be considered as activated; the player must remove one of his tokens from the bowl, even if it fails. This rule may apply not only to the assaulted unit, but also to a neighbouring friendly unit within 1 UD from the assaulting opponent.

### **EVADE MOVEMENTS**

If assaulted by a slower opponent and not yet activated, a unit may perform an evade move similar to a march, in order to try to avoid fighting. However, the evading unit must pass a reactivity test and therefore will be considered as activated; the player must remove one of his tokens from the bowl, even if it fails.

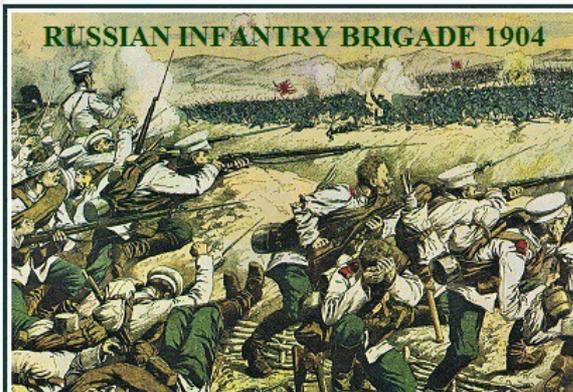
### **"ENCOUNTER" SCENARIO SUGGESTION**

24 to 36 stands per side; and 13 sectors (wide) x 9 sectors (depth) table/board.

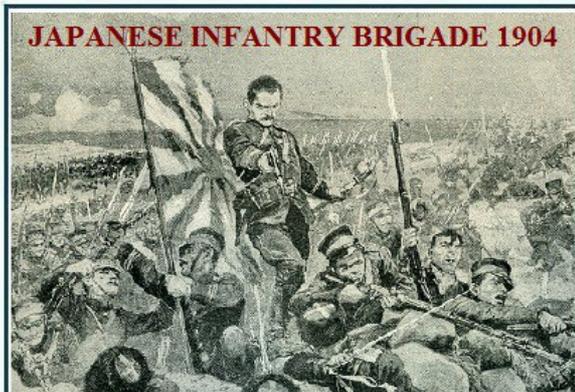
Deploy units along their respective tabletop edge. Roll 1d6 for each sector within LoS of a unit: 1/2/3/4; open, 5; hill, 6; dense vegetation (cover/rough). Renew the process following each unit's movements during the course of the game, until all the sectors are "discovered".

Use red tokens to indicate unexplored sectors, and green for the "investigated" ones.

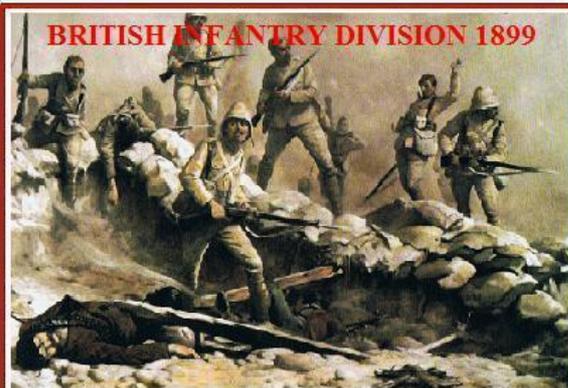
### **SAMPLES OF UNITS QUICK REFERENCE CARDS:**



**RUSSIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE 1904**  
**Doctrine:** Close Order  
**Reactivity Level:** Poor (BS 2)  
**Travel March:** 2 UD  
**Firing:** "A" Class Unit  
**To Hit Number (not moving/moving):**  
\* 5/3 (close range, 1 UD)  
\* 4/2 (medium range, 2 UD)  
\* 3/1 (long range, 3 UD)  
\* 2 (extreme range, 4 UD)  
**Assault Classification:** Regulars (1/2/3)  
**Special:** Stubborn

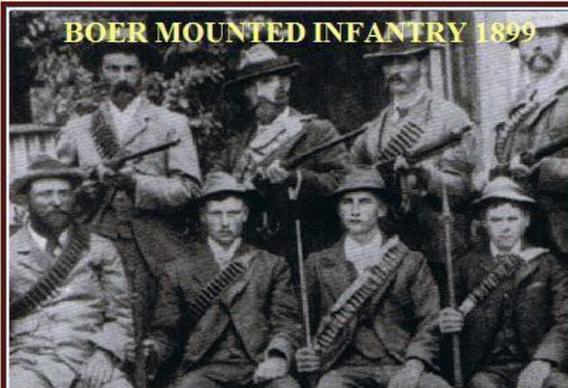


**JAPANESE INFANTRY BRIGADE 1904**  
**Doctrine:** Close Order  
**Reactivity Level:** Trained (BS 3)  
**Travel March:** 2 UD  
**Firing:** "B" Class Unit  
**To Hit Number (not moving/moving):**  
\* 5/3 (close range, 1 UD)  
\* 4/1 (medium range, 2 UD)  
\* 2 (long range, 3 UD)  
\* 1 (extreme range, 4 UD)  
**Assault Classification:** Regulars (1/2/3)  
**Special:** Bold/Dashing



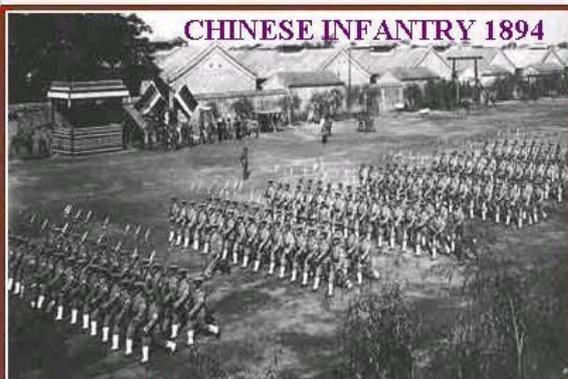
**BRITISH INFANTRY DIVISION 1899**

**Doctrine:** Close Order  
**Reactivity Level:** Trained (3)  
**Travel March:** 2 UD  
**Firing:** "A" Class Unit  
**To Hit Number (not moving/moving):**  
 \*5/3 (close range, 1 UD)  
 \*4/2 (medium range, 2 UD)  
 \*3/1 (long range, 3 UD)  
 \*2 (extreme range, 4 UD)  
**Assault Classification:** Regulars (1/2/3)



**BOER MOUNTED INFANTRY 1899**

**Doctrine:** Loose Order  
**Reactivity Level:** Trained (2)  
**Travel March:** 3 UD  
**Firing:** "B" Class Unit  
**To Hit Number (not moving/moving):**  
 \*5/3 (close range, 1 UD)  
 \*4/1 (medium range, 2 UD)  
 \*2 (long range, 3 UD)  
 \*1 (extreme range, 4 UD)  
**Assault Classification:** Militia (1/2)



**CHINESE INFANTRY 1894**

**Doctrine:** Close Order  
**Reactivity Level:** Poor (BS 2)  
**Travel March:** 2 UD  
**Firing:** "C" Class Unit  
**To Hit Number (not moving/moving):**  
 \*4/2 (close range, 1 UD)  
 \*3 (medium range, 2UD)  
 \*1 (long range, 3 UD)  
**Assault Classification:** Militia (1/2)  
**Special:** Dashing



**JAPANESE INFANTRY 1894**

**Doctrine:** Close Order  
**Reactivity Level:** Trained (BS 3)  
**Travel March:** 2 UD  
**Firing:** "B/C" Class Unit  
**To Hit Number (not moving/moving):**  
 \*4/2 (close range, 1 UD)  
 \*3/1 (medium range, 2 UD)  
 \*2 (long range, 3 UD)  
 \*1 (extreme range, 4 UD)  
**Assault Classification:** Regulars (1/2/3)  
**Special:** Bold