Nick’s ACW rules.

Divisional Warfare in the American Civil War  
  
Based on Death in the Dark Continent by Chris Peers.

With input from Roger Gerrish, Cory Ring, Mark Wheatley.

Text in red are optional rules.

**What do you need:**

6’ by 4’ table for 28mm sized figures with suitable terrain.

Miniatures. This was written with 28mm sized figures in mind, can be played with any sized figures.

Dice. 20 sided dice (D20), at least four a side. 6 sided dice (D6), at least two a side.

Ruler/ tape measure in inches.

Disorder markers. Any kind of token to put behind the unit to show disordered status, upto 5 per unit.

**Basing**

Figures are based on 60mm frontage bases.   
Infantry 30mm deep, 4 figures  
Cavalry 50mm deep, 2 figures  
Artillery 60mm deep, gun and crew.  
Commanders are individually based figures, whether on foot or mounted.

**Unit Size**

An infantry unit (Regiment) is 4 bases. A cavalry unit (squadron) is 4 bases. An artillery battery is 1 base. A commander is 1 base.

**Cavalry**

Cavalry with carbines + repeaters can fire mounted or dismount to count as infantry. A cavalry unit can move mounted, dismount and fire as infantry in the same turn. To remount counts as a formation change, they can fire as mounted that turn.

**Commanders**

Every army must have a General. This commander is in overall charge, and represents the Divisional Commander.

You can also have commanders, representing Brigade General, one for every 3-5 units.

Commanders cannot be targeted by shooting or contacted for close combat. They do not block line of sight. They move as a separate unit, unless you move a commander into base to base contact with a unit and then they can move with the unit. (This is classed as attached) If the commander is ever in a position where they can be contacted by an enemy unit, just move them out of the way at the commander’s players choice.

Commanders can be killed if they are within 2” of a unit. See the shooting and close combat.

Commanders can aid in close combat when within 2” of a unit, help rally one unit within 4” and negate one morale check each turn for each unit within 4”.

You can grade your commanders depending on their proficiency on the battlefield. There are Skilful Commanders, Competent Commanders and Inept. This can either be by a random role, or reflect an actual personality from history.

Skilful: Always player 1 if CinC and opponent isn’t. Rolls 2 dice for Rallying. A Skilful C-in-C may choose to re-roll the movement dice for 1 infantry or cavalry unit of his choice each turn, as long as at least part of that unit is within 12” of his own base and in line of sight.

Inept: Always player 2 if C in C and opponent isn’t. Must be within 2” to aid in rallying and morale.

**Levels of Training**

Raw. -2 to shooting, -1 if defender in close combat. -1 morale roll. Commander must be within 2” to help Rally and negate Morale check.

Dashing. +1 attacking close combat.

Veteran. Rolls 2 dice to Rally. +1 to morale roll.

Sharpshooter. +2 shooting.

**The Battle Rules**

If you are not playing a scenario, then set up this way:

Choose side 1 and side 2. If one General is Skilful they are side 1. If one General is inept they are side 2. Otherwise roll a dice, the highest is side 1.

The sides remain the same through the game.

**Turn Sequence**

The game proceeds as a series of turns. It is important that the turn sequence is followed correctly as this will avoid issues later in the turn. Within each turn the sequence of events is:

1. Players both attempt to rally units and remove their accumulated disorder markers.
2. Dice for late arrivals as appropriate.
3. Both sides make any retirements required by last turns close combat results.
4. Side 1 moves one unit of its player’s choice. Side 2 then moves one unit of its choice.
5. Repeat until both sides have moved all the units they wish to. A declaration that a unit is not going to move counts as a move for the purpose of this sequence.
6. Resolve shooting. This is treated as simultaneous, so that a base or unit rendered hors de combat in this shooting phase may still shoot back, and disorder markers inflicted by shooting do not affect the target’s return fire during this turn.
7. Resolve close combat in any convenient order. Note that disorder caused by this turn’s shooting is taken into account at this stage.
8. Take any morale tests that are required as a result of events this turn.
9. If either side has achieved its victory conditions, the game ends at this point. If not, continue with the next turn.

**1. Rally**

A player throws 1 D6 for each of his units which currently have any disorder markers. A score of 6 is needed to remove a single marker.  
Veteran units roll 2 dice.

A General can throw a single additional D6 per turn for any one of his units that has at least one of its bases within 4” of his figure (Measure from the figures head). A Skilful General may throw 2 such additional dice instead of 1, and can allocate them to the same unit or to different ones. These extra dice may be used either to remove further markers from units that have already partially rallied, or to give unsuccessful units another attempt.

Each Brigade general may also do this, but can only influence units from his own Brigade.

**2. Late Arrivals**  
Each unit not deployed at the start of the game is diced for individually each turn, starting at the beginning of the fourth turn, until it arrives.

Player 1 dices for and places his late arrivals first. To arrive, each unit requires a score on a D6 of:

* 5 or 6 if mounted infantry or cavalry
* 6 otherwise

Add +1 per turn after the 4th.

It may then be placed anywhere the player wishes within 3” of the table edge and within his own half of the table (i.e. along his own base edge, or that half of a side edge nearest to his base edge). The second player to place his late arrivals may not deploy any of them within 12” of any of his opponent’s units that have arrived that turn.

Newly arrived units may not move, shoot, or be shot at or contacted in close combat in the turn they arrive, but they take morale tests for all applicable causes.

**3. Retirement Rules**

Compulsory retirements from combat the previous turn are conducted now.

The unit throws movement dice as dictated by the combat result. They move the full permitted distance away from the nearest enemy so long as they are not prevented from doing this by terrain or other troops. (If this happens, each base halts at the point at which it reaches the obstacle).

Commanders who are attached to a unit that has to retire because of a close combat result must retire with the unit in the following turn.

A unit with 5 or more markers must retire in this phase of the turn. It must move towards its own base line at maximum permitted speed by the shortest route which avoids terrain which it cannot cross, or friends it cannot interpenetrate and does not take it nearer to any visible enemy. If no such route can be traced - for example if it is surrounded by hostile units with no gap wide enough to get a base through - the unit will surrender, and is removed from play immediately. A retiring unit may only be rallied if it has not been under fire in the preceding turn. A unit which is not successfully rallied and retains 5+ markers will keep running until it leaves the table. If it does so, it cannot return during the time period represented by the game. Attached commanders do not have to retire with the unit, they can choose to do so or not.

**4. Movement**

The movement of a unit is a random distance determined by dice roll, see the movement chart below for the different distance units can move. They can move all or none of that movement in a turn. Rolling for movement but not actually moving still counts as ‘not moving’. Sometimes a minus number may come up, that means the unit can’t move that turn. No base in a unit may move more than the movement dice rolled.

Treat the whole unit as being in difficult terrain is any of it’s bases are in difficult terrain at any point in the turn.

Zone of Control. Any unit you have within 60mm of an enemy unit may only move towards or away from that enemy unit. (The exception is if you are surrounded and to retire you must move across an enemy units front/ side or rear edge that’s within 6”. Here let common sense prevail, but the retiring unit must take a morale test)

How a unit moves depends on what formation it is in.

Interpenetration.

Never pass through enemy units.  
Infantry and cavalry can pass through artillery without any penalty.

Artillery cannot pass through any other unit.

Infantry and cavalry cannot pass through each other.

Infantry in line can pass through other infantry in line, but all units involved must take a morale test.

Cavalry in line can pass through other cavalry in line, but all units involved must take a morale test.

Columns cannot pass through other units, nor can they be passed through by any units except retiring units, then a morale test must be taken by both units.

Line Formation.

The Line formation is where all four bases line up side edge to side edge. It doesn’t have to be all four bases in one line, but there must be at least two. A line can do this without penalty:

Move straight ahead, only sliding by no more than 1” to meet enemies or avoid terrain.

Wheel, either hinged on the end base or from the middle of the unit.

Turn 180 degrees and move.

If a line wants to do anything other than the above, then there is a -2 inch penalty.

Column Formation

The column formation is one base wide. The front base moves in any direction it wants and the bases behind follow, keeping in contact front edge to rear edge. The column can ‘snake’ along a road or do so to avoid friends and terrain. A column can turn 180 degrees for free.

Change Formation

To change from one formation to another, the unit must not make a movement roll.

A column becomes a line by the bases behind the leading base ‘lining up either to the left, or right, or both sides of that leading base. They may go no further forward than the leading base.

A line can turn into a column facing any direction, but cannot be further forward than the line was.

If a line wishes to shrink or expand, even by one base, that is a Formation Change.

A line can use change formation to face a flank, either one base to ‘refuse a flank’, or the whole line, but again it cannot be any further forward than the line began.

Change formation counts as moving for shooting purposes.

Cannot be used to contact enemy unit.

Artillery

Artillery move as ‘limbered’ until you want to use them. It takes a turn stationary to unlimber, then you can fire in the next turn. Once unlimbered, a gun can be manhandled upto 2”, including pivoting the gun. A gun can be limbered and moved in the same turn. Once an artillery pieces horses and limbers are gone, they cannot be returned. The horses are gone once an artillery base gets 4 or more disruption markers.

If limbered artillery are contacted in close combat, the limbered artillery will try to evade. The base will move directly away from the attacker. If the attackers full move means they still contact the evading artillery, the artillery base is removed and the attackers stop where they contact.

Good Going Difficult Terrain

Infantry in Column 1D6+6 2 D6-2

Infantry in Line 1D6+2 1 D6

Commanders 3D6+4 2D6

Cavalry 3 D6 1D6-1

Artillery 2D6 Not Allowed

Manhandled Artillery 2” Not Allowed

Heavy Artillery 1D6 Not Allowed

**5.Shooting**

Shooting is done base to base, not unit to unit. Must be in range, in shooting arc and line of sight.

Each base throws one dice, unless it is an artillery piece or machine gun that can throw more than one dice. If an artillery piece rolls more than one dice, it can only target one unit, but can cause multiple hits on the target.

Line of sight is blocked by terrain, and by other bases, both friends and enemies, on level ground. Bases in trenches can be fired over. Commanders do not block line of sight.

To shoot through a gap between units or terrain, the gap must be more than 60mm. You must be able to draw a line between the front corners of the shooting base to anywhere on the target base and remain in the shooting arc.

A base in close combat can be targeted with shooting only if it moved into close combat this turn.

The shooting arc is 45 degrees either side of the shooting bases front edge only.

Units can move and shoot with penalties. Artillery can only shoot if they didn’t move in this or the previous turn. An artillery base can be manhandled upto 2” in one turn, and fired in the next.

Shoot overhead. Only a single rank of bases may fire, no second rank can fire. The only base type that can fire from a hill over other bases is artillery. They can only shoot over other bases if the intervening units are at least 6” away from the target and the firer.

Enfilade. A column is always classed as enfiladed. A line is enfiladed if fired at by a base who’s front edge is parallel with the targets side edge.

Target priorities.

Units firing must fire at targets in this priority:

1. The nearest enemy base within range and advancing directly towards them this turn.

2. If the shooters are artillery, the nearest enemy artillery directly in front of them.

3. The nearest enemy base directly in front of them.

4. Otherwise, the nearest enemy base within range.

Priorities apply even if the firer can’t hit the target due to firing reductions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Effective Range | Maximum Range |
|  |  |  |
| Smoothbore muskets and carbines | 6” | - |
| Rifled muskets/ carbine | 6” | 12”/6” carbine |
| Breech-loaders/ repeaters 8” 16” | | |  | 20” |
|  |  |  |

Field Artillery: Mobility Max Range Effective Range Usage

Smoothbores:

6 pounder Light 40” 16” USA 61-63, CSA 61-65

12 pounder howitzer Medium 26” 16” USA 61-63, CSA 61-65

12 pounder M1857 Napoleon Light 44” 16” 61-65

24 pounder howitzer Heavy 32” 16” CSA 61-65

Rifles:

10 pounder Parrott Light 48” 16” 61-65

3 inch Ordnance Rifle Light 72” 16” USA 62-65

12 pounder Whitworth Medium 72” 16” USA 62-63

14 pounder James Medium 40” 16” USA 61-63

20 pounder Parrott Heavy 44” 16” USA 62-65

Cannister range for all Artillery is 6”

Shooting Procedure.

Throw the following number for each base shooting (not per unit shooting), depending on the type of weapon:

• Artillery: 3 D20s

• All others: 1 D20

If more than 1 D20 is allowed, each throw is treated separately for the purpose of deciding hits; the scores are never added together.

Add 2 if:

* Breech-loaders, repeaters within effective range.
* The target is enfiladed.
* Artillery firing canister.

Deduct 1:

* For every disorder marker which the shooting unit currently has.
* If artillery is firing at a target in a marsh which is beyond canister range.
* Target behind wooden fence. Do not count if fired at by Artillery.

Deduct 2 if:

* Shooters are Raw.
* Shooters are using firearms and have moved or turned during the movement phase of the current turn.
* Target is on foot in cover. Do not count this if in woods & fired at by Artillery.
* Target is beyond effective range.

Deduct 3 if:

* Shooters are mounted.
* Target is on foot, and in trenches or foxholes. Do not count this deduction if the target is being shot at with heavy artillery.
* Target is on foot and occupying solidly constructed field fortifications or fortified buildings.

All these modifiers are cumulative.

Shooting Outcomes.

• A final modified score of 14 or more inflicts a hit on the target unit, which receives 1 disorder marker as a result.

• A modified score of 19 or more inflicts a severe hit, giving 1 disorder marker on the target unit and lose a base at the target players discretion. If a commander is within 2” of the unit, roll a D6. On a 6, the commander has been hit and killed.

**6. Close Combat.**

This where a unit moves into close combat with an enemy unit. At least one base must contact the enemy unit. Only Infantry units in line can move into close combat. Cavalry in column may move into close combat with other cavalry or artillery. Artillery, Commanders and Infantry in column may never move into close combat. Close combat must be from a diced movement not formation change. Close Combat is the only time you can contact an enemy unit.

Units may not contact an enemy unit if they have 3 or more disruption markers.

Bases ending movement in contact with an enemy base may not fire in the shooting phase.

A base cannot contact an enemy flank or rear edge unless it begins entirely behind that edge. (flank from the front edge, rear from side edge.)

An attacker can move into contact with more than one enemy unit. However, once an attacker has contacted an enemy, they themselves cannot be subsequently contacted by an enemy this turn. The defending units cannot move this turn once contacted in close combat. Defenders can still be contacted by other attackers this turn.

A base belonging to a unit contacted this turn, but they themselves not actually in contact can still fire. It’s target can be the attackers that have moved into contact if they are high in the target priorities. You can only shoot an attacking base if it moved into contact this turn. You can’t in subsequent turns.

The number of bases in combat is not relevant to the outcome.

Close Combat Procedure.

The attacking player rolls 1x D6 and applies the modifiers to determine the result. The defender does not roll.

If the attacker has contacted more than one unit, roll a dice for each combat separately. In these cases, where a unit receives 2 or more combat results, it takes the worst result and acts on that, ignoring the others.

Add 2 to the score of each dice if:

* Any of the attacking unit’s bases is in contact with the flank or rear of an enemy base that is also engaged frontally.

Add 1:

* If the attackers are Dashing.
* If their commander is within 2” of any part of the attacking unit.
* For each disorder marker the defenders currently have.
* Defenders are Raw

Deduct 1:

* If the attackers are mounted cavalry, and any part of their unit has traversed difficult terrain this turn.
* For each disorder marker the attackers currently have.
* If the defenders are armed with muskets, in the first turn of a combat against this attacker.
* If their commander is within 2” of any part of the defending unit.
* Attackers on foot must cross abatis, wire or similar obstacles in order to reach the defenders.

Deduct 2 if:

* The defenders are armed with breech-loaders, in the first turn of a combat against this attacker.
* Mounted attackers must cross abatis, wire or similar obstacles in order to reach the defenders.
* Mounted attackers moving into contact with Infantry in Line

Deduct 3 if:

* The defenders are armed with repeaters, in the first turn of a combat against this attacker.
* All the defending bases in contact are on foot and inside a fortification or behind a breastwork.

If the final score is:

* 1 or less: The defenders stand firm and unleash a devastating volley at the last moment. The attackers lose a base of their player’s choice, receive 2 disorder markers and fall back 2 D6”, still facing the enemy.
* 2 or 3: As above, but the attackers maintain their cohesion better so do not lose a base.
* 4: The attackers temporarily break into the defending lines before being driven off, they fall back 1 D6”, and each side receives 1 disorder marker.
* 5: Neither side is prepared to give ground, and a bitter hand-to-hand struggle ensues. Continue to dice every turn until the combat is resolved. In this case the original attacker continues to count as the attacker unless a fresh enemy unit joins the combat.
* 6: The defenders are driven back but manage to maintain their order. They receive 2 disorder markers, and must fall back 2 D6” facing the enemy. They also lose a base if fighting against mounted cavalry in good going.
* 7 or more: The defenders lose their nerve at the last minute and flee, but too late to escape their assailants. The defending unit is massacred, and all its bases are removed permanently from the table. If a commander is within 2”, he is killed on a roll of 4,5,6 on a D6

Note units forced to retire do so in the retirement phase next turn not the movement phase.

Attacking limbered artillery.  
If limbered artillery are contacted in close combat, the limbered artillery will try to evade. The base will move directly away from the attacker. If the attackers full move means they still contact the evading artillery, the artillery base is removed and the attackers stop where they contact.

After Combat.

In the following turn, a unit may leave combat. It can shoot and be shot at as normal, but may not move out of combat and into another close combat. If your opponent gets to moves first, and declares their unit is staying in combat, you cannot then move yours out of contact. If you move out of combat, your opponent can follow up and contact you again if they get enough movement dice.

**Infantry or Cavalry attacking deployed Artillery:**

The attacker throws a D6 for each of his units involved.

Add 2 to the score of each dice if:

* The attacking unit starts its move entirely outside the defender’s arc of fire

Add 1 if:

* The attackers are mounted, and the guns are not sited in a built-up area or behind field defences.
* The attackers are Dashing.
* Artillery defender has 4 or more disruption markers.

Deduct 2 if:

* The attackers must cross abatis, wire or similar obstacles in order to reach the defenders.

The result of the attack depends on the attacker’s final score:

* 4 or less: The gunners fire a volley of canister at the last moment and inflict heavy casualties. The attackers fall back 2 D6”, lose a base of their player’s choice, and receive 2 disorder markers. A friendly commander of staff officer who is within 2 inches of any part of the attacking unit must thow a D6, and is killed on a score of 6.
* 5: The gun crews stand their ground, but they are beginning to lose their nerve and most of the rounds go high. The attackers must fall back as above fall and receive 1 disorder marker, but do not lose a base or need to dice for risk to officers.
* 6: The gunners are unable to compensate for the rapidly reducing range, and fire uselessly over their attackers’ heads. The guns are captured and their crews flee, but not before they have managed to spike the guns. The guns cannot be used again by either side for the remainder of the game.
* 7 or more: The gunners run and leave the guns to be captured intact. Either side may fire such a gun as if it was their own, but it can only be moved by manhandling from now on, as the horse teams will have either retired with the crews or been killed by close range fire.

**7. Testing Morale**.

All morale tests are taken at the same time in the turn, during the morale phase.

Commanders never need to test morale.

Any other unit must do so for each of the following circumstances, and may therefore have to take several tests in a turn:

* For each friendly unit destroyed or otherwise removed from play this turn within 6” of the testers and in line of sight. If a unit is removed at this point in the turn as a result of a morale test, others on its side must now test for it if appropriate, even if they have already taken their tests for other causes this turn.
* A unit must test each time it loses a base. If it loses more than one base in a turn, it must test separately for each one.
* All units must test if their Army Commander is killed within 24” of them this turn, whether they can see it or not.
* All units must test if their Brigade Commander, is killed or captured within 12” of them this turn, whether they can see it or not.
* All units that have been interpenetrated this turn must test
* Retiring across the zone of control of an enemy unit (only 1 per turn)

A commander lets each unit a turn ignore 1 morale test if they are within 4”. Measure from commanders head to nearest point of the units base.

Morale Test Procedure.

To take a morale test for a unit, throw a D6. The minimum score required to pass is 4 on a D6.

Minus 1 from that score if troops are raw

Add 1 to that score if the troops are Veteran.

If the score is less than the minimum listed, it has failed. A unit receives two disorder markers for every test failed except interpenetration which only adds 1 disorder marker.

The Effects of Disorder.

The sections on Shooting and Close Combat set out the disadvantages that disorder involves in those situations. The following additional penalties also apply:

* A unit (not dashing, it’s 4 for them) which has 3 or more markers cannot voluntarily move into close combat or scale a defended wall.
* An artillery unit with 4 or more markers is assumed to have lost most of its horse teams and limbers, so can no longer move except by manhandling.
* A unit with 5 or more markers must retire. It must move towards its own base line at maximum permitted speed by the shortest route which avoids terrain which it cannot cross, or friends it cannot interpenetrate and does not take it nearer to any visible enemy. If no such route can be traced - for example if it is surrounded by hostile units with no gap wide enough to get a base through - the unit will surrender, and is removed from play immediately. A retiring unit may only be rallied if it has not been under fire in the preceding turn. A unit which is not successfully rallied and retains 5+ markers will keep running until it leaves the table. If it does so, it cannot return during the time period represented by the game.
* A unit which has 6 or more markers has been dispersed beyond rallying, and is removed permanently from the game. (If a Commander is within 2” of the unit, on a roll of 6 on a D6 they are removed with them)

A disorder penalty applies as soon as it is inflicted, so that for example a unit which accumulates 3+ markers as a result of being shot at while charging into close combat cannot complete the move, but must be moved back to where it started from.

Terrain

Hills.

Don’t effect movement. Block line of site over the crest (an imaginary line going through the middle of the hill. Units on the hill, and not on the crest cannot see another unit on the hill over 4” away.

Steep Hill.

Like Hills but are counted as difficult going to move across. Artillery at the top of a steep slope cannot fire at enemy on the slope below them.

Hills are the biggest feature on a tabletop, and you can view units over other types of terrain from a hill top. Hill top to hill top is considered level unless there is another hill inbetween.

Rocky ground.

Difficult going for artillery. Infantry that has not moved this turn count as in cover.

Forest

Difficult going. Cover for units inside it. Artillery can’t enter except along roads. Line of sight blocked over 2” away. Units on the edge of forests can’t be seen until they move, shoot or enemy gets to 2” from them.

Orchards

Same as forest except line of sight is 4”

Tall Crops.

Count as cover to units who have not moved and being fired at from over 4” away.

Marsh

Difficult terrain for infantry. Cavalry and artillery may not enter. Counts as cover to infantry who have not moved and being fired at from over 4” away. Artillery less effective against targets in Marsh.

Streams

Upto 3” wide, count as difficult Terrain. Banks count as cover to units up against them being fired at from the front.

River

3”+ can’t be crossed except at fords. Treat fords as streams.

Buildings.

Treat as an area rather than a single building or group of single buildings. The whole area is difficult terrain. Line of sight blocked over 2”. Counts as cover against all but artillery.

Roads.

Negate the terrain they cross. Count as a clear line of sight down them.

Fences and Stone Walls

Difficult terrain to cross (Lines straddling each side move normally until they have to cross). Cover against firing from the front. First unit to a fence/ wall counts as cover, unit approaching the other side doesn’t. No effect on close combat. An attacker doesn’t have to move over the fence/ wall to contact defender. Fence is no cover against artillery.