

# MIX AND MATCH BATTLES WITH SPI'S PRESTAGS® SERIES

by Brian L. Reddington

The Egyptian General looked down across the battlefield. The enemy phalanx was drawn up in front of its city. An allied Legion was already marching across the plain to engage the phalanx. Viking fleets were sailing down the river, hastening to aid in the city's defense. He turned towards his troops, drawn up behind him in their chariots, and ordered, "Bowmen, race to the cliffs and fire a volley down at the fleets; fall back before any survivors can debark and engage you in combat; harass them for as long as you can. Swordsmen, we have to cross the ford before the Vikings cut us

off; if we don't get across the river, nothing can prevent them from hitting the Legion's flank. Let's go!"

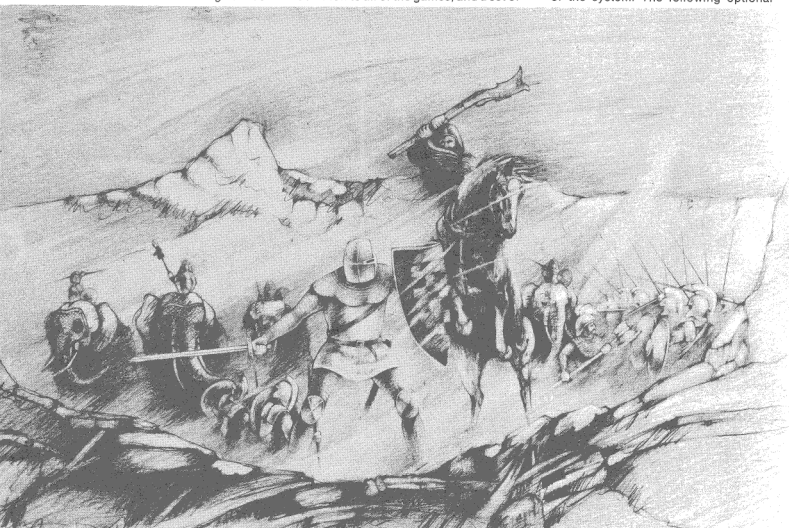
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In 1975, SPI published five games in the PRESTAGS (Pre-Seventeenth Century Tactical Gaming System) Series, CHARIOT®, SPARTAN®, LEGION®, VIKING®, and YEOMAN®. This series unified five older games; *Armageddon®*, *Phalanx®*, *Centurion®*, *Dark Ages®*, and *Renaissance of Infantry®* into one compatible system. Each game in the series comes with a set of Standard Rules, common to all of the games, and a set of

Exclusive Rules, detailing the unique rules and scenarios for that particular game. Although the Designers' Notes in the rules mention that the five games can be linked together (the unit counters are totally interchangeable between the games), a system is not provided in the rules for doing so. Here then, is one system for linking the five games and creating mix and match battles with the armies available in the series.

## ADJUSTING THE RULES

The optional rules presented in each of the Exclusive Rules sets require slight adjustments to complete the unification of the system. The following optional



rules were designed to replace conflicting ones presented in the individual games:

#### Terrain Prohibitions

Class A units may not enter woods hexes. Class Mf, Class C, and Elephant units may not enter swamp hexes.

#### Terrain Effects Chart

When fighting a battle on one of the PRESTAGS maps, it is convenient to use the Terrain Effects Chart printed on that map. For consistency, or for battles fought on other maps, the accompanying chart has been averaged from the ones in the games.

#### Unit Capability Chart

Effect on Melee Defense Strength:

#### ATTACKING UNIT

DEFENDING UNIT	Class C	SD
SD	x½	x1
Class A	x2	x½

The type of Attacker is cross-referenced with the type of Defender; the Melee Defense Strength is multiplied by the indicated factor. Any combination not covered in the chart is assumed to take place at normal strengths. In the case of more than one type of Attacker the benefit is given to the Attacker.

#### Range Effects

Fire units on hilltop hexes firing on units on slope or ground level hexes may add one hex to their Range Allowance.

All fire units attack at full strength at a range of one hex (two hexes if utilising the range bonus listed above) but Fire Strength drops off after that. (see Range Effects Chart for range effects.)

#### Fleets

In scenarios utilising Viking Fleets, only Class Mf, Class C, and Elephant units may cross the streams, but they may not end their move in a stream hex. No type of unit may end its move in ford or bridge hexes.

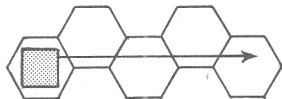
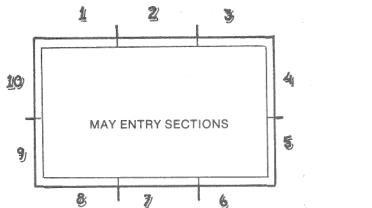
#### Chariots

In addition to the rules presented for Chariot units, the rules for them from *Armageddon* should also be used:

Units embarked on chariots may have their Melee Attack Strength augmented. If the embarked unit 'charges' (moves in a straight line, see accompanying diagram) for at least four unoccupied clear terrain hexes and ends its movement in the last of these consecutively travelled hexes, any attack that unit participates in will be shifted two columns to the right. For example, a 1-1 attack would be shifted to a 3-1 attack. The attack may be made into any type of hex.

#### THE SCENARIO

Despite the varied victory conditions presented in the scenarios printed in the rules of each game, such as holding a piece of terrain or exiting a number of units off the map, the battles usually develop into a fight to the death, after which the victor goes about completing the victory conditions. Hence, for fighting non-historic battles there is no need to spend time developing intricate victory conditions. Victory is computed for each army by the standard Marginal, Substantive, and Decisive ratios of units killed to units lost. Any army which retreats off the map will suffer at least a



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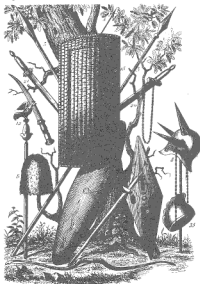
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**Marginal Loss.** Any army which controls the Defender's starting hex will win at least a Marginal Victory.

The first step in creating the scenario is to determine the sides. The number of players on each side should be balanced. If there is an uneven number of players, one side should not outnumber the other side by more than one player. Roll a die, giving each player an equal chance of being the Defender. The Defender then rolls to determine who his allies will be. If there is an uneven number of players, the Defender has a 50% chance of having the extra player on his side.

Once the sides have been determined, initial placement must be determined. The map used will be the one that corresponds with the Defender's army, i.e., a Viking army will defend on the *Viking* map, or on any other map chosen by mutual consent. The Defender may choose any hex on the map to defend and may set up his army within two hexes of that hex. Each of his allied armies has a 50% chance of beginning the scenario on the map. Each one that does begin on the map may set up within two hexes of any hex the owning player chooses.

Once the Defender and his onboard allies have chosen their set-up points, each of the other armies roll to determine from which section of the map edge they will enter. The accompanying diagram shows the fewest sections the map should be broken into for determining entrance areas. It may be broken into more areas if desired. Armies from opposing sides may not enter from the same section. Reroll if such a conflict occurs. All entering armies come on during the first turn.



Each side moves all of its armies and resolves all of its attacks during the same Player-Turn. Once the armies have been selected, roll to determine which side will move first. Allied forces may move through each others' stacks; however, they may not combine units in one stack. Allied units may combine strengths to attack. Leaders do not exert control or rallying benefits over units from other armies.

#### SELECTING ARMIES

After the scenario has been determined, each person builds his army. Start by placing one unit from each counter mix in a cup (Some of the counter colors have been duplicated in the series; draw a line in the corner of all the counters in one of each of the duplicated sets to avoid confusion). Each person draws a random counter; that is the counter mix from which he can build his army. Unless otherwise noted, the player can utilize any of the special abilities of that counter mix as detailed in the Exclusive Rules for the game it came from.

Once the army types have been drawn, each player consults the Army Organiza-

tion Chart (averaged from the scenarios printed in each game) and rolls two twenty-sided dice. The first roll determines that army's stacking limitations. The second roll determines that army's special abilities, if any. In some instances, the stacking limitations must be adjusted to maintain play balance. If any enemy units have a stacking limit of 3 and none with a stacking limit of 1, treat one's own stacking limits of 1 as 2. If any enemy units have a stacking limit of 4, treat one's own stacking limits of 1 as 2.

Once the army organizations have been determined, each player rolls to determine how many points he will have to purchase his army. Each person receives 60 plus 1-20 points; unless there is an uneven number of players, in which case two players on the larger side will each receive half-sized forces: 30 plus 1-10 points. Units cost one-half their Melee Attack Strength (retain fractions) plus their Fire Attack Strength. Leaders cost their Combat Bonus plus their Movement Control Radius. Chariots cost 1 point. Viking Fleets cost 2 points. Units which can dismount into other types cost according to their most expensive possible option.

An army's Panic Level is equal to one-half the total points spent on non-leader units. Lost units count towards the Panic Level according to their cost. Lost Leader units do not count towards the Panic Level.

#### EXPERIENCE

Armies benefit (or suffer) from experience in past battles. Each Victory Level has a numerical equivalent: Marginal = 1, Substantive = 2, and Decisive = 3. Whenever a player is rolling for points to purchase an army from a counter mix he has used before, he adds the Victory Levels of any battles he has won and subtracts those of any he has lost with that army. For example a player is rolling for Viking Force A; previously he has won three Substantive Victories and lost a Marginal Victory with this force; he will now have 65 (60+2+2+2+-1) plus 1-20 points. In addition to the point bonus, for every three Victory Levels that an army accumulates it may acquire one leadership level free of charge. For example, this Viking army has a total Victory Level of +5, for its next battle it may move one of its leaders up a level of acquire a 4L leader at no charge. If this army wins its next battle (thus acquiring a total Victory Level of at least +6), it may move two

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### ARMY ORGANISATION CHART

Army	Die Roll	Stacking Limit	Die Roll	Special Abilities
Chariot Force A	1- 3	1	-	none
	4-17	2		
	18-20	3		
Force B	1- 9	1	-	none
	10-17	2		
	18-20	3		
Spartan Force A	1- 4	2	1-10	Leadership Mt. Ex.
	5-14	3	11-20	none
	15-20	4		
Force B	1- 6	2	1- 3	Leadership Mt. Ex.
	7-16	3	4-20	none
	17-20	4		
Legion Force A	1- 2	2	1- 5	Leadership Mt. Ex.
	3-10	3	6-20	none
	11-20	4		
Force B	1-12	2	1- 8	Leadership Mt. Ex.
	13-18	3	9-20	none
	19-20	4		
Viking Force A	1-13	2	1- 7	Leadership Mt. Ex.
	14-20	3	8-10	Viking Ferocity
			11-20	none
Force B	1	1	1- 6	Leadership Mt. Ex.
	2-19	2	7- 8	Viking Ferocity
	20	3	9-10	AX Units have Francisca
			11-20	none
Yeoman Force A	1-11	2	1- 2	Leadership Mt. Ex.
	12-18	3	3- 5	PS Units have Ferocity and a Stacking Limit of 4
	19-20	4	6- 9	Cavalry Units may dismount
			10-20	none
Force B	1- 9	2	1- 3	Leadership Mt. Ex.
	10-19	3	4-10	PS Units have Ferocity and a Stacking Limit of 4
	20	4	11-14	Cavalry Units may dismount
			15-20	none

Notes: Legion Armies without Mt. Ex. may use Swordsmen and Legionary rules. Legion Armies with Mt. Ex. may use Byzantine Cataphract Rules. Yeoman Armies are considered to be pre-1500. Yeoman Longbowman may always convert to Axmen. Yeoman PS Units with Ferocity may form Squares.

leaders up one level, or move one leader up two levels, or acquire two 4L or one 3L leader free of charge for the battle after that. Conversely, for every three Victory Levels that an army loses, it must lose one leadership level. For ex-

ample, an army with a total Victory Level of -3 pays the cost for a 3L leader but only receives a 2L leader. For half-sized armies, apply the full Victory Level point bonus, but not the leadership adjustments.

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### TERRAIN EFFECTS CHART

Terrain Type	Movement Point Cost to enter hex	Fire Protection Strength	Effect on Fire when Firing Unit is in hex	Effect on Melee Strength when Unit is in hex and is . . . Attacking . . . Defending	
Clear	1 MP	3	none	none	none
Village	1 MP	5	none	none	doubled
Woods	3 MP	4	none	none	doubled
Slope	2 MP	3	none	none	none
Stream	2 MP	1	No Ff Fire	halved	none
Swamp	3 MP	3	No Mf Fire	none	doubled
Road	1 MP	2	none	none	none
Bridge	1 MP	1	none	halved	doubled
Ford	1 MP	1	No Ff Fire	halved	none

### RANGE EFFECTS CHART

Unit Type	Normal Fire Strength	Fire Strength at Firing Range						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EX	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
BW	2	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
IB	2	2	2	1	—	—	—	—
SK	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
BL	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	1
CB	2	2	2	1	—	—	—	—
AE	2	2	2	1	—	—	—	—
AL	2	2	2	1	1	—	—	—
LB	3	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
HB	1	1	½	—	—	—	—	—
OC	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
BC	1	1	½	—	—	—	—	—
HA	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	1
LA	2	2	2	2	1	1	—	—

In multi-player battles, it is important that each player keep track off how many points he has eliminated from the opposing armies (not counting leaders) in order to calculate individual Victory Levels at the end of the battle. It is possible for allied armies to come up with different Victory Levels.

### TACTICS

When fighting mix and match battles with armies from 3000 B.C. to 1500 A.D., each type of army will encounter tactical situations which its historical commanders did not have to face. Each type of army has special advantages and disadvantages in relationship to the other armies. It is important that each player comprehends the relative "uniqueness" of his army before purchasing and leading it into combat.

The Chariot armies are probably the most delicate ones to handle. They have weak units and low stacking, but very high mobility. When pitted against more powerful forces, such as a Phalanx or a Legion, they should not even consider fielding an infantry force. Their chariots and cavalry can provide screening and flanking functions for an allied army (which will do the heavy fighting), while occasionally throwing in a chariot charge to bolster an ally's attack. When pitted against other mobile forces, they have an advantage in that they are the only ones that can move, fire, and move. This ability is particularly useful for sinking Fleets and panicking Elephants. Although the cost of large numbers of Chariots is expensive, they are worth the investment.

The Spartan armies are amongst the most powerful ones available. With strong and fast units to choose from, these armies can serve well as either the front line or the primary reserve of an allied force. Although their predominant units are Class A and halved when attacked by Swords, the Professional Pikemen, which are available in large numbers, can withstand all but the most concerted attacks, and when used in conjunction with cavalry can easily eliminate the noisome Sword units. To add to the shock value of the Phalanx, Spartan armies also have Elephant units available to them. However, these units are quite difficult to use successfully. In any event though, they are sure to liven things up. ("OK, who invited the elephants?")

The Legion armies will usually be the backbone of any allied force. They have a counter mix of strong units to choose

from and usually have very good stacking limits. The historical Roman army organizations were quite good and it will be to a player's advantage to copy one of them, picking a mix of Swords, Skirmishers, and Light Cavalry; or Byzantine Cataphracts, Oriental Cavalry, and Skirmishers. In either case the army is capable of delivering the main thrust of an attack, either head-on with the Roman Legion or flanking with the Byzantine Army.

The Viking armies do not have quite the cross country mobility of the Chariot armies, but on the rivers they have the fastest armies. On the defense, they can enter the map and get into position before the attackers arrive, or sally forth to cut off an incoming attacker before he joins up with any allies. On the offense, they can slip past defensive lines and debark in their opponents' rear, or move to cut off an incoming opponent before he reaches the Defender's position. The Viking player does not have to purchase Fleets to carry all of his units; the Fleets can carry half the army at a time and still get everyone together fairly quickly. The Viking player may also wish to purchase a sizeable cavalry force, as this is useful in protecting the moving Fleets from missile fire.

The Yeoman armies have the best fire power of all the armies. On the defense, Heavy Artillery placed on a hill can do unpleasant things to an attacking army. On the offense, the army should wait for its Light Artillery to get into place on a hill just behind the jump off point before advancing into combat. The artillery, combined with Longbowmen on the slopes and in the front line, can soften up an opposing army considerably. With the dismount capability, the Yeoman player also has the option of moving his infantry force as dragoons, riding to a favorable position and dismounting before the attack.

There are, of course, some general points which apply to all the armies. Combined arms are useful; in most cases an army should have some Class A, Class C, and Sword units to take advantage of the Unit Capability Chart. Leaders are expensive, but their benefits are invaluable; do not be afraid to purchase several of them. The army with the best organization; in terms of units, leadership, and/or stacking; will have a distinct advantage over the other armies.

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