

How To Remove An Albatross

OR

What to do about dragoons that cost too much but are theoretically worth it.

By the computer points system (a very bad name for it, but a rather neutral one), dragoons are really worth about 2.5 points each. Which is all well and good, except that no one is willing to pay that much for them. At least not in the masses that were historically present at many battles.

The reason is not difficult to determine, we have made them specialists. They are both completely satisfactory heavy cavalry and mounted infantry. Perfect, no, but without major flaw in either role. Unfortunately for their cause, our games are such that most of us have very little use for mounted infantry. And pricing dragoons properly for this double function makes them too expensive to serve either function singly.

So, a tentative plan has been agreed upon. Dragoons will be priced according to their value as cavalry and the dismounting capability will be thrown in for free. Some of you may protest that your dragoons cannot dismount or cannot dismount effectively, but verily I say to thee—Peace! and be still. The function of dismounting simply isn't that often used and when it is critical for a game, the inability of one army to effectively perform the function should be taken into consideration in setting up the game.

Another subject: Battlefield reorganization of troops. For every kind of troop, there is an ideal organization to perform any specific function. In order to illustrate this point, I am going to select a unit known to almost everyone, but I want to make it completely clear that this is only an example of a large general case. The unit will be Oudinot's carabinier which are French light infantry with grenadier capabilities. Their normal organization is either 24 or 36 man battalions. The point system is capable of making a definite, if small, distinction between these two.

Let us further take as our example, two 36 man battalions of these troops. Now as long as these two battalions are either used as such or are used as skirmishers, the point value assigned to them remains valid. However, if the user should decide at some point in the game to form three 24 man battalions or four 18 man battalions or six 12 man battalions (and it is irrelevant whether the new units are actually treated as independent battalions for C.E. or whether they are just operated separately with a normal 36 man C.E. total), then the point value which was assigned is no longer accurate.

In some cases, this is a minor problem, but in others it is quite serious. The attachment of a stand of grenadiers to a battalion of line which normally does not have them, alters the whole fighting capability of the unit. The six 12 man columns of carabinier mentioned above will fight in melee almost twice as well as the original two 36 man units. And with the rules the way they are now, any problems that come with the small sized units

(such as the inability to form square) can be avoided by recombining whenever necessary into a unit large enough to form square. But small units which are inherently and historically organized that way have no such ability-they are thus penalized. In other words, it is possible for the users of certain kinds of troops to have their cake and eat it too.

Now I can value these units according to the most extreme use to which they can be put OR we can consider some modifications in the rules. The most important of which is also the most difficult to phrase (help, anyone?) so that it holds fluid. The concept is that a unit must be played as it is purchased or in skirmisher formation EXCEPT when it is being broken up to occupy buildings or other normal type detachment duty. This would not prevent, for example, the British from attaching a company of rifles (or Guard, as at Maya Pass) to each line battalion-all it would do would require that they pay the proper number of points for it and put it on their troop roster as such. Failure to do so would result in such a unit being declared provisional and under the automatic C.E. rout rule applicable to such units. On the other hand, French heavy guard would not be allowed to run around in 1 or 2 company packets-again unless they were so purchased and rostered.

Now I may get some opposition to this concept and I don't claim I have all the answers. But something does need to be done to strongly discourage two things: unhistorical attachments and overly cheap detachments. So far, I have not arrived at the ideal wording, and possibly I haven't even arrived at the ideal solution to the problem.

DRAGOONS REDONE

(AND OTHER THINGS)

	<u>BN</u> <u>Sq.N</u>	<u>COMM</u> <u>Sq.N</u>	<u>REGT</u>	<u>MAN</u>
NE 2 MAN STAND	9	12	28 (14 MEN)	2.13
3 MAN STAND	13	18	53 (27 MEN)	2.09
4 MAN STAND	16	23	85 (44 MEN)	2.02
5 MAN STAND	20	29	84 (45 MEN)	1.97
6 MAN STAND	12	16	96 (51 MEN)	1.93
ARD 2 MAN STAND	15	21	50 (14 MEN)	3.85
3 MAN STAND	22	31	92 (27 MEN) 113 (33 MEN)	3.57
4 MAN STAND	27	38	270 (84 MEN)	3.34
5 MAN STAND	32	46	135 (45 MEN)	3.18
AVARIAN, ETC. MILITIA (32)	18			0.57
ASSEVAS DE MONTAGNE (28)	25			0.91
ALDE DE PARLI (REVISED 28)	19			0.69