

Bounce into Action

This is a provisional title for a series of games set in Jim Wallman's universe for medium to small actions involving infantry, vehicles, air and space assets.

Its lineage is partly from *On The Bounce* but it probably owes more to a combination of *Plan A* and *Starship Soldier* all of which were written by Jim Wallman.

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Credits

Most of the design work is by James Kemp, with significant input from Jim Wallman on how the Universe works. Initial play testing by the Full Moon crew of Richard Hands, Peter Howland, James Kemp, Tom Mouat, Mukul Patel, John Rutherford & Jim Wallman.

All errors to be blamed on James Kemp.

Design Criteria

- quick battles (about two hours playing time to a decisive finish)
- it should cope with orbital and air activity in support of the ground action
- it should cope with things too big for 'Starship Soldier' and too small for 'Plan A' in a way broadly consistent with both rulesets
- logistics and morale should have an appropriate impact
- it needs to support a campaign approach as typified in the Full Moon IFU campaign
- capable of playing with multiple players on each side (min two each)

Level of Resolution

This should be two-down from the main action level. The size of action that we are most likely to play with these rules might have an infantry company of up to 100 supported by up to eight tanks. On the air front there are only likely to be two or three combat capable craft on each side with perhaps one side having some shuttles to conduct a landing from orbit.

Orbital

There could be orbital reconnaissance or even weapons platforms, the latter being most likely to be of similar capability to artillery. There might be some attempt using shuttles, pacifiers or marines to deal with orbital platforms.

Stuff happening purely in orbit should be abstracted and turned into a quick lookup table with a set of factors and some way of working out how long it will take.

Shuttles should be dealt with as individual air assets when they come into play to land/evacuate ground force elements.

Orbital weapons platforms in support of the ground forces should be treated the same as artillery. Orbital reconnaissance should remove any hidden movement, or at least make it more likely that units are acquired and placed on the table top even when there is no direct line of sight to enemy ground forces.

Air assets

These should be very few in number. Each aircraft or shuttle should be individually represented.

Ground Vehicles

All fighting¹ [vehicles](#) should be individually represented.

Infantry

[Infantry](#) should be shown in groups dependent on their primary function and level of equipment. Crew-served weapons should be a single stand each, Special Forces in pairs, regular ground forces in four man fire teams and unarmoured militia with assault rifles in sections of eight. This should allow more flexibility for the better armed (and by extension better trained) troops and also make each stand slightly more comparable in terms of firepower.

Commanders

All commanders should be individual figures to allow a separation between the commander and the troops under command. Only those commanders above platoon level will be separately represented.

¹ tanks, armoured personnel carriers and anything mounting a weapon

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Commanders may include key NCOs and other specialists (e.g. medics, demolitions experts etc).

Time slice & Ground Scale

For the purpose of working out all the other times in the rules I am going to use a five minute time slice. This doesn't mean that all that time will be used by units for moving, firing or doing anything else, it is merely a choreographic abstract to allow all the bits to notionally fit together.

Notionally the ground scale is 1 unit (whatever you want to use whether mm, cm, inches etc) is approximately equivalent to 50 metres. If played in cm that gives a scale of 1:5,000.

Technology

There is a huge gulf between the most and least able.

At the bottom end you can have a people's militia with untrained people armed with hunting rifles and the like through to infantry in Heavy Mobility Armour that can run at 40Km/h, shoot explosive slugs and are almost impervious to assault rifles.

With vehicles there is also a range from civilian wheeled vehicles up to the well armoured hover tank that can largely ignore ground conditions, move at road speeds across country and can shoot accurately on the move.

In the air there is also a wide range of capability, although this is more down to specialist aircraft rather than great technological differences. Largely that is because the air assets all represent controlled military hardware of one kind or another.

Sequence of Play

1. Orders
 1. write orders for all units (including setting posture)
 2. declare Air Defence targets (and test for lock-on)
 3. declare Air to Surface targets
2. Morale
 1. Militia morale
 2. Aircraft morale
 3. GF Infantry morale
 4. GF Vehicle morale
 5. Hovertank morale
 6. Force morale
3. Suppressive Fire
 1. stationary defenders (including AD systems)
4. Movement
 1. aircraft
 2. ground forces
5. Firing
 1. Air to Surface
 2. infantry firing
 3. vehicle firing
 4. indirect fire
6. Orbital Activity
 1. move shuttles and pacifiers
 2. launch/recover shuttles/pacifiers
 3. orbital combat
7. Special Actions
 1. rally troops
 2. treat casualties
 3. reorganise commands

Troop Types & Weapons

The types of troops, vehicles and weapons used will be simplified into a small number of categories to make life easier. There are four broad categories of unit.

- Infantry** Armoured Infantry (HMA), Regular Infantry (LTA), Militia etc
- Vehicles** Hovertanks, Tanks, Hoverbus, APC, Hovercar, armoured car, truck, car
- Aircraft** Pacifiers, AIR, Jets, Flyers, shuttles
- Artillery** mortars, orbital weapons, rockets, guns, static Air Defence

Infantry

Once the mass of the defending infantry become possessed of low morale, the battle is as good as lost.

Douglas Haig

There is no substitute for boots on the ground when it comes to winning battles and taking ground from the enemy. For this you need infantry.

There is a wide range of capability in the universe. Infantry range from groups of settlers armed with hunting rifles and other small arms to the fully professional and highly trained Ground Forces using Heavy Mobility Armour (HMA).

Each infantry group (stand) has a number of characteristics that determine how it fights the battle. Training and Experience combine to give an idea of how capable the troops are and how flexibly you can use them. Better trained troops will have smaller groups represented by a single stand, they will also be harder to hit. Each infantry unit will also have a morale rating which will be the target number for morale rolls when required. Lastly the level of equipment that an infantry unit has will determine how well it can engage other units and also how well protected it is from fire.

Training

All troops will fall into one of the categories below, if in doubt use the lower category.

Category	Definition	Stand Size
Civilian	Those with no formal military training, or less than required to reach the next level. Units at this level that survive sufficient actions to become <i>Seasoned</i> should be upgraded to <i>Recruits</i> even if they don't get formal military training.	Around 50 people per stand, not very flexible, no officers or crew served weapons.
Recruits	A minimum of 40 days training in basic military skills, discipline and rudimentary weapons handling, this is equivalent to the first phase of basic training most western soldiers go through. All non-infantry Militia (except officers) fight at this level if required to do so as infantry. At this level only basic weapons can be used, assault rifles and grenades.	About 30 people per stand, officers from a higher training class only. Crew served weapons in groups of four to six.
Trained	A minimum of 150 days of military training analogous to what most recruits to professional armies will get in the modern period. All non-infantry GF (except officers) will	Each stand represents a squad of about 8 to 10 soldiers, officers are

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fight at this standard if forced to do so in an infantry role. Militia infantry and GF non-infantry officers also fight at this level. Training to this level allows the use of Light Tactical Armour (LTA) and SLA weapons.

individually based. Each crew served weapon would be a stand on its own.

Regular A minimum of a year's training in advanced infantry tactics and weaponry is required to hit this level of training. All GF Infantry are of this standard which also allows the use of Heavy Mobility Armour

Stands are groups of four soldiers, officers are individually based, Each crew served weapon is a single stand.

Special Forces the elite will have trained continuously for years. They are highly motivated and can use any equipment likely to be found. They are also capable of training others.

All special forces soldiers should be based in pairs, except officers and NCOs who should be singly based. Crew served weapons are individual stands.

Experience

Category

Definition

Raw No combat experience or exposure to fire.

Novice Trained troops (or better) who have yet to be involved in combat. They are likely to have been exposed to some incoming fire during training in a safe way.

Experienced Fought at least one action where incoming fire was received and weapon was fired in anger at the enemy.

Seasoned Fought at least 15 actions (as above). Being wounded² counts as two actions.

Veteran Fought at least 30 actions.

Equipment

There are four equipment levels for infantry:

- Civilian weapons
- Assault rifles
- Light Tactical Armour
- Heavy Mobility Armour

Civilian Weapons

Troops equipped in this way are unarmoured and can only successfully engage targets that are either unarmoured or in light armour. HMA troops and armoured vehicles are immune to their fire (except for morale purposes). Any class of troops may use this equipment level.

Assault Rifles

This is the equivalent of early 21st century military technology. These troops have light armour covering vital organs and automatic weapons. They usually have armour piercing ammunition that is very effective at short range and moderately effective at longer ranges.

Some training is required to use this kit effectively so *Civilians* may not be equipped at this level.

² Including suit kill even if unharmed

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Light Tactical Armour (LTA)

This is the main level of equipment for most professional troops in the universe. Body, vital organs, head and major joints protected by lightweight laminar armour. The suit is airtight and has environment controls, HUD with tactical information, medic readouts, IFF system etc.

A considerable level of training is required to use LTA so only troops that are at least *Trained* can be equipped to this level.

High Mobility Armour (HMA)

This is specialist armour used only³ by professional Ground Force infantry. Complete body environmental laminar armour. The suit is airtight and has environment controls, HUD with tactical information, medic readouts, IFF system etc. The main advantages of this armour are speed, sustainability, firing platform stability and occupant survivability.

Marine Armour (MA)

This is specialised space armour used by Starship Marines. It is similar in support and protection to HMA, but a lot less maneuverable in planetary situations (it is designed for use mainly in zero g). It's here because Starship Marines are sometimes used as assault troops in planetside missions.

³ Special Forces and Marines can also use HMA

Orders

Every unit must have a set of orders to carry out. Players must write down their orders. These should not usually change every game turn. They should also have a posture which may well change from turn to turn as they carry out the orders.

Changing Orders

Orders can be changed only by a senior officer. So a platoon commander needs to be given orders by their own Company Commander and they in turn must give orders to their section commanders that are in line with the orders that they have been given.

To change orders an officer must spend an entire turn doing nothing else. They must also have communications with the officers of the unit which they wish to change the orders of who similarly must do nothing for the turn in which they receive orders.

Orders are likely to be of the flavour “Seize and hold the bridge at Grid 648382”

Posture

Within the orders framework each of the stands controlled by a player must be given a general posture that determines how it will attempt to carry out the orders.

Morale

The morale of the soldier is the greatest single factor in war.
(Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery)

Overview

Every unit has a morale number. This is determined in advance of the game and then used, with modifiers, to determine whether or not units will do what the player wants when the situation becomes difficult.

Group morale

Group morale applies to the entire player command. If there are multiple players on the same side then each player's troops form a separate group.

When any of the following conditions apply then morale should be tested:

- two or more casualties⁴ (or 25% of group if more than eight members)
- 50% casualties (at -4)
- 75% Casualties (at -8)

Score the unit morale number or more on 2d6 to carry on. If morale is failed the group will withdraw in good order, recovering any casualties and/or fighting their way back to their own line.

If morale has to be tested for more than one group then do so in the following order.

- all attacking groups first from biggest to smallest
- all defending groups second from biggest to smallest

Individual Stand Morale

This is only tested when one of the conditions mentioned below is reached, once morale has been tested once for a particular condition then it should not be tested again for that group. Test individual morale when any of the following conditions apply:

- coming under fire for first time
- attempting to enter enemy position/cross a fire swept zone
- first-time in hand to hand combat
- 'morale' result from being hit by enemy fire

Roll 2d6 for each⁵ individual/stand or group (i.e. a group all inhabiting the same space). Modify the dice roll if any of the factors below apply.

Situation	Modifier	Situation	Modifier
Officer leading by example ⁶	+1	Officer taking morale	+2
Each enemy casualty in sight	+1	In APC	+1
Under fire from close range or indirect fire/grenades	-1	Enemy in HMA/APC	-1
Each friendly casualty in sight (10% of hits on own company/platoon including attached troops)	-1	Enemy Tanks	-2
Visibly outnumbered (i.e. more enemy than friends	-1	Under air attack	-3

⁴ note that casualties are individual hits, not lost stands

⁵ i.e. the same roll should be applied to all co-located stands, modifiers may differ

⁶ i.e. in sight and doing the same as the others in the group, only the most senior in the group counts if more than one commissioned officer present

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in view)

Result	Resulting Individual Morale
morale number or more	No restrictions, carry on with whatever they wanted to do.
-1 to -3 less	Move no closer to seen enemy. May stand where they are and fight. Will not enter a known fire-swept zone
-4 to -6 less	Retire in good order to nearest cover. If no enemy in sight then count as 'move no closer'. If there is no cover, or nowhere to duck into within a tactical move distance, then stand and fight.
7 or more less	Surrender to nearest known enemy if within 5, otherwise move non-tactically away from the enemy abandoning casualties.

Definitions for Morale

Fire Swept Zone

This is any area that has been fired upon by the enemy in the previous turn, either by direct fire (including being under a MG dangerous area) or by indirect fire or grenades. Generally it should represent a greater danger to the figures than the area they currently inhabit.

Casualties

For group morale purposes any losses from the stands in a platoon or company count towards the percentage losses.

In individual morale only those casualties that are physically co-located with the troops in question and that can be seen count for determining the morale modifiers. All visible casualties count for this purpose regardless of whether or not they were recent or from the same unit as the enemy. Destroyed vehicles do not count, although wounded/dead crew members do if they are visible.

Calculating Morale Numbers

Basic Morale

Basic morale factors for depend on training and experience. This is modified by the level of medical and logistical support and their expectations of the mission ahead of them. The lower the base morale number the better a unit's morale state. The morale number can never be less than 1 or more than 9 at the start of a scenario.

Cross reference the training and experience in the table below to get the basic morale number that the factors are applied to.

Training	Raw	Novice	Experienced	Seasoned	Veteran
Civilian	6	-	7	-	-
Recruits	5	-	6	7	8
Trained	-	4	5	6	7
Regular	-	3	4	5	5
Special Forces	-	2	3	4	5

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Factors Affecting Morale

Basic thrust is that things that make a unit feel they are less likely to become a casualty make morale go up, as does evidence that they will be speedily evacuated and well treated if they did get hit. Units with strong esprit de corps also get a bonus to morale. The reverse situations also make for poorer morale.

Situation	Mod	Situation	Mod
In HMA/MA	-1	No medical support	+1
In Tanks/Hoverbus	-2	Poor officers	+1
Excellent medical sp	-1	Enemy air superiority	+1
Excellent officers	-1	Scratch unit	+1
Elite unit	-1	No armour	+1
Enemy can't kill	-2	Can't kill enemy	+2
Well supplied	-1	Poorly equipped	+1
Regular leave/mail	-1	Out of contact	+1
Religious fanatics	-2	Enemy treats PW well	+1

Firing

All firing uses 1d10 per stand firing. Officers (and other individually based figures) provide a positive modifier to a stand they are grouped with rather than an additional dice.

Order of Fire

All stationary units fire before moving ones. Within that the more experienced fire before the less experienced and the better trained before the less well trained.

E.g. Two units are engaged in a fire fight, neither are moving. The Veteran Trained militia will fire before the Experienced Regulars.

Firing Modifiers

Firer Situation	Mod	Target Situation	Mod	Target Situation	Mod
Moving infantry ⁷	-4	Seasoned/Veterans/SF	-1	In HMA	-3
Recruits/Civilians	-2	Recruits/Civilians	+1	In LTA	-1
Trained	-1	in cover	-1	Blast against unarmoured inf	+2
Each officer ⁸	+1	hull-down/bunker	-2	Unarmoured moving in open	+2
Special Forces	+1	non-tactical	+4	Using Chaff/Flares	-1
Seasoned/Veteran	+1	Stationary Vehicle	+1	Locked on (against air)	+3
<i>All modifications are applied to the dice roll rather than the number required.</i>				Air evasive action	-3

All modifications are applied to the dice roll rather than the number required.

Weapon Range Bands

Score the hit number or more to inflict damage on the enemy. Multiple hits can be scored by rolling multiples of the hit number.

Range	Hit score on 1d10 (penetration in brackets)							Blast?
	cm	5	10	15	30	60	120	
SLA Support squad		2 (2)	4 (2)	4 (2)	8 (-)	-	-	YES
Veh Cannon		2 (4)	4 (2)	4 (2)	4 (2)	4 (2)	-	
SLA Squad		2 (2)	4 (2)	4 (2)	4 (-)	4 (-)	-	
HE Missile		4 (-)	4 (-)	4 (-)	4 (-)	4 (-)	4 (-)	YES
AT Missile		4 (4)	4 (4)	4 (4)	4 (4)	4 (4)	4 (4)	
Rifles		4 (0)	6 (-)	8 (-)	8 (-)	-	-	
Veh LMG		6 (-)	6 (-)	6 (-)	6 (-)	6 (-)	-	
Light Small Arms		8 (-)	9 (-)	9 (-)	-	-	-	
Veh HMG		4 (-)	6 (-)	8 (-)	8 (-)	9 (-)	-	
Tank Gun		2 (4)	4 (2)	6 (1)	8 (0)	9 (-2)	-	YES
Hovertank Gun		2 (4)	2 (4)	4 (2)	4 (2)	8 (0)	9 (-2)	YES
Marine SCA		4 (-)	-	-	-	-	-	YES

Air Defence

This covers both Air to Air and Surface to Air. Orbital to Air is not allowed except for *very slow* aircraft. The probability of an aircraft being hit depends on its speed and manoeuvrability.

Aircraft Speed

Aircraft have one of three speeds *Fast*, *Slow*, *Very Slow*. Some aircraft types may be capable of

⁷ Except in HMA

⁸ i.e. an individually based figure, includes specialists

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more than one speed, if so this should be specified when their posture is chosen. The speed an aircraft is moving at determines how hard it is to hit when fired at.

Aircraft Manoeuvrability

Like speed there are three versions of this, *Good*, *Medium* and *Poor*. This determines how easy it is to get a targeting lock onto the aircraft. This also wraps up ECM systems that an aircraft has fitted.

Air Defence Systems

Provided an aircraft is within the range indicated in the table below the firing follows a two stage process. The first stage, for those firers with an appropriate targeting system, is to achieve lock-on. The second stage, regardless of lock on being achieved (although the player can opt not to fire if lock on is not achieved), uses the normal firing mechanisms.

AD System	Range	Locks	Firing	Notes
Heavy SAM	50 Km	Yes	Normal	
Vehicle SAM / Air to Air Missile	20 Km	Yes	Normal	Heavy SAM line on firing chart
ManPAD	10 Km	Yes	Normal	Light SAM on firing chart
Multi-Cannon	2 Km	At -2	Normal	Light SAM on firing chart
Other guided weapons	2 Km	At -4	Normal	Other AD on firing chart
HMA infantry	2 Km	At -4	At -1	Other AD on firing chart
LTA Infantry	2 Km	No	At -2	Other AD on firing chart
Other Infantry	300 m	No	At -4	Other AD on firing chart

Where there are multiple air units on '*Air Defence*' then the order of firing is by manoeuvrability, then pilot ability, speed, or highest die roll if all factors are identical.

Lock-on

This uses 1d10 with all the normal firing modifiers applying plus any modifier from the AD systems table above. Aircraft attempting to land/take-off count as 'none' on manoeuvrability. Aircraft which are on the ground cannot be engaged as air targets and instead count as ground vehicles and are engaged in the normal way for that type of target. Roll the hit number or more to achieve a successful lock on.

	Landing	Very Slow	Slow	Fast
Heavy SAM	-	2	4	6
Light SAM	2	4	6	8
Other AD	4	6	8	9

Air to Air Combat

Air combat uses a slightly different system. Each player (both firer and target) rolls 1d10 and adds their manoeuvrability score (using the table above). Normal firing modifiers are also added. The higher roll achieves lock on if desired.

Air to Ground Attack

To get a 'good shot' an aircraft makes a hit roll in the same way as other weapons systems. Fast aircraft count as medium range, Slow as Close range and Very Slow as Very Close. Air to ground fire works the same as ground to ground fire. Hit effect depends on the sort of weapon system mounted on the aircraft. Aircraft taking evasive action cannot fire.

Strafing

Aircraft fitted with multi-cannon can strafe a straight line of ground targets. Roll for each target in the line in turn, if the first target is hit then the second target can be engaged. If it is a miss then all targets in the line are deemed to have been missed. Carry on down the line of up to six targets until either all six have been rolled for or one has been missed.

Hit Effects

Infantry

Infantry stands can take multiple hits before they become ineffective. The number of hits is dependent on their initial size and training level. Usually they stop operating before they run out of people. On becoming 'ineffective' a stand will take its casualties and withdraw to where the nearest friendly aid post is established.

'Ineffective' units can still be engaged and may suffer additional casualties.

Once at the aid post they can be grouped with other similar ineffective stands to become a single effective stand (i.e. The survivors from the stands will form a single new unit provided that the number of hits remaining is at least the same as the number of hits to be destroyed. e.g. HMA troops have four people, so two HMA stands with two hits each can become a single effective HMA stand). For some units this doctrine may not be possible.

Unit type	Hits to become 'ineffective'	Hits to be destroyed	Re-groups?
Civilians	10	50	No
Recruits	10	30	No
Militia	3	8	Yes
LTA	2	4	Yes
HMA	2	4	Yes
Marines	4	4	Yes
Special Forces	2	2	Yes
Vehicle crews	2	4	No

In a campaign setting it may be important to know how badly affected infantry casualties are. In that case use the following table for each casualty when they make it to an aid point.

Infantry Casualties (1d10)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Unarmoured	Scratch	Light wound	Light wound	Serious	Mortal	Mortal	Dead	Dead	Dead	Dead
Flak vest	Scratch	Light wound	Light wound	Light wound	Serious	Mortal	Mortal	Dead	Dead	Dead
LTA	Unharmd	Scratch	Scratch	Light wound	Light wound	Light wound	Serious	Mortal	Dead	Dead
HMA/MA	Unharmd	Unharmd	Scratch	Scratch	Scratch	Light wound	Light wound	Serious	Mortal	Dead

Vehicles

Cross reference the weapon system that inflicted the hit to type of vehicle hit on the table below. The result gives the modifier on the hit effect table which should be added to 1d10. If the weapon has an armour piercing effect (in bold on the Penetration table) there is also a range modifier in addition to the number in the table. This is shown on the weapon range bands. This should also be added as a dice modifier when rolling on the vehicle hit effects table.