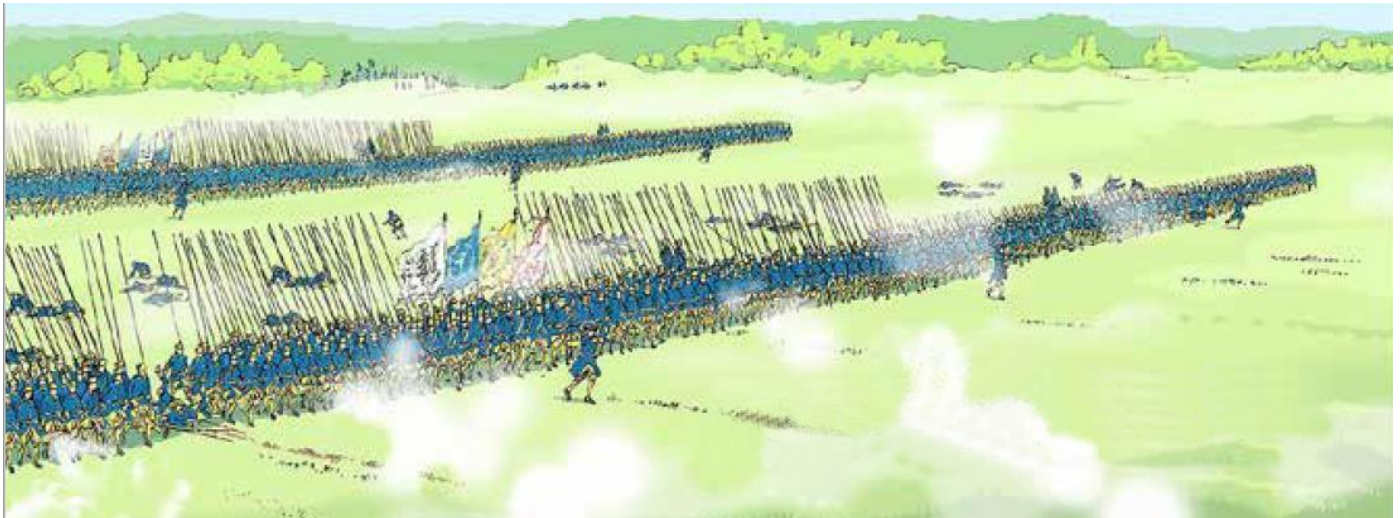


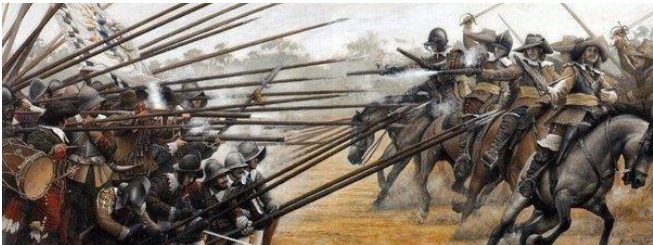
A Presentation of the Great Northern War Battles Game System



Historical Background

During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the world's armies had concluded that firepower beat cold steel and focused mainly on that aspect of warfare.

In the attack, cavalry rode caracole against infantry formations — riding in a line toward the defenders, firing their pistols at short range, then wheeling away to reload at the back of the line before repeating the procedure.



Infantry formations were all equipped with muskets and commonly marched to 70 paces before firing until one side had enough.

The Swedish army went in the opposing direction, concluding that cold steel, aggressiveness and initiative would still prove more decisive than raw firepower.

Cavalry were trained to ride knee-behind-knee rather than knee-to-knee (as done by other countries), forming the more compact signature arrow-shaped squadrons, concentrating



more blades into a tighter space and enhancing the shock effect of the charge. They were trained to fire pistols only once at most before riding shock into the enemy — and sometimes

instructed to skip firing the pistols entirely, as firing was thought to diminish the impact of the charge.

The infantry battalion consisted of 600 men in four lines. One third were equipped with pikes rather than muskets, enhancing the melee and shock aspects of the tactics. A tenth were grenadiers, further strengthening close combat capability.

The common tactic was a steady, silent march toward the enemy through cannon fire, then canister fire. At 70 paces the defenders would typically fire their muskets. Despite the losses, the Swedes continued forward in silence until at 30 paces they halted — the first two lines fired their muskets, then lines three and four advanced and fired. The musketeers then drew their rapiers, the pikemen lowered their pikes, and the whole formation charged into the enemy. The shock effect of this frequently caused a rapid collapse of the defense.

For several decades this Carolean way of fighting allowed Sweden, a smaller nation, to punch far above its weight and achieve spectacular victories despite poor positions and severe numerical disadvantage. Some highlights:

1700 Narva — Swedish army of 10,000 assault and defeat a Russian army of 38,000 defending a fortress

1701 Düna — Swedish army of 7,100 forces a river crossing against a Polish-Saxon army of 19,000 and defeats it

1703 Saladen — Swedish army of 1,300 defeats an entrenched Russian-Lithuanian army of 7,500

1705 Gemauerthof — Swedish army of 7,000 defeats a Russian army of 14,000

1706 Fraustadt — Swedish army of 10,000 destroys an entrenched Saxon-Russian army of 19,000

1708 Holowczyn — Swedish army of 12,000 forces a river crossing against a dug-in Russian army of 40,000 and quickly defeat it

A Presentation of the Great Northern War Battles Game System

However in the end, this string of spectacular successes would prove insufficient to win the Great Northern War against overwhelming odds, and Sweden's decline as a major European power began.

Purpose of the Game System

The Great Northern War has rarely been explored at the tactical level in games, and no existing titles capture the distinct fighting styles of the armies involved — their advantages and disadvantages. Many of the battles have never been simulated before and remain completely unexplored.

The game system places a strong emphasis on morale and the shock aspect of warfare, both central drivers of Carolean tactics. The order system forces players to commit to a plan and illustrates why changing that plan once fighting begins is nearly impossible. Orders also limit what types of actions subordinate units may execute.

Scale

- Units are battalions
- 1 hex = 110 yards
- 1 strength point = 33 men
- 2 artillery pieces per unit
- 1 turn = 10 minutes

- A typical battle takes 6 – 12 hours and smaller battles and scenarios exists that can be played in 1 – 2 hours.

Who is it for

The system is designed for players who want to explore in detail the armies, fighting styles and battles of the Great Northern War. Its complexity is comparable to systems such as *Battles in the Age of Reason* (BAR) and *La Bataille*.

While process-driven and detailed, the game uses consistent mechanics across different action types, making it intuitive after a little repetition. In exchange the system offers an immersive experience into eighteenth century combat, placing the players in the middle of the action on the battlefield.

GNWB is also well suited to team play, which makes managing the larger battles very practical.

Current battles in GNWB system

- Saladen 1703
- Gemauerthof 1705
- Fraustadt 1706
- Poltava 1709
- Helsingborg 1710
- Pälkäne 1713
- Napue 1714

Planned battles

- Düna 1701
- Hummelshof 1702
- Kliszow 1702
- Holowczyn 1708
- Lesnaja 1708
- Gadebusch 1712

