



By Fire and Sword – a historical wargame is the name of a battle system developed by the Wargamer Company. We wanted to create a realistic, playable and dynamic wargame which recreates the 17th century wars fought by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth against Turkey, Muscovy, Sweden, Crimean Khanate and Cossacks. The period between 1640 and 1676, on which the game focuses, is a time of almost constant warfare waged by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on all fronts, in many cases with several enemies at the same time. Supplements planned for the game will be dedicated to specific wars and campaigns in which the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth took part during the entire 17th century.

The *By Fire and Sword* wargame is a comprehensive system including game rules, historical background for the forces of all the combatants, battle group creation rules and scenarios, but most of all a huge number of wargaming figures representing all the military formations of the warring parties.

Game rules

Game rules allow to recreate the behavior various military formations on a battlefield in a dynamic and realistic way – be it the thundering charges of Polish winged hussars, the fire-breathing squares of Swedish infantry, the flying units of Tatars or the stubborn monoliths of Muscovite *streltsy*. The rules system allows for the use of a variety of tactics, formations and ways of warfare used during the 17th century and takes into account the differences in training, arms, armor and morale of the various types of units. We have placed particular emphasis on the issue of command on the battlefield and its effectiveness in various armies.

Depending on the experience of gamers and number of available figures, as well as time and space for the game, *By Fire and Sword* battles can be played on 4 different levels. The choice of the game level influences the available units for the gamer's force. The basic level of the game – called "The Foray" – is a short skirmish, completed in less than an hour. The highest level – called "The Field Army" enables recreating huge and truly epic battles.

By Fire and Sword includes a unique scenario creation system allowing for realistic recreation of historical battles, as well as balanced rules for gaming "What if..." scenarios.

For the creation of the rules we used a wide array of historical sources, the consultations of historians, own research and hands-on experience with 17th century arms and armor.

Figures

From a modeller's point of view the system will surely provide gamers with a huge range of figures for all the units of the armies of countries engaged in military operations. The Gaming figures are made of metal in the 15mm scale (figures are 15mm tall from base to eyes). We have made every effort so the figures are historically correct and true to every represented formation. In order to achieve this, just like in the case of rules, we conducted comprehensive research based on historical sources, supported by experts on 17th century military history, whose expertise helped us in many cases.

Models of buildings, fortifications and scenery are made in an appropriate scale and are elements of the game. Models of buildings were designed according to drawings from the period and later descriptions.

Sets of banners were designed according to preserved original specimens, drawings from the period, source descriptions and other historical sources supplement the range of figures.

The last element of the system are gadgets – markers and dice – made in the style of the period.

Scale of the game

One thing we tried to remember during the creation of the game, was that wargaming is most of all, good fun. For this reason the information on scale of the game given below should be considered as an approximation. Our aim was to design a historical wargame which would foremost be fun to play. This means that our priority was to make *By Fire and Sword* easy to learn, for people new to wargaming, as well as interesting and dynamic for experienced games. In situations where a choice had to be made between extreme historical realism and “playability”, the decision was made in favor of a gamer’s and not a historian’s point of view.

Time scale: One turn is about 10-15 minutes of real time.

Figure and unit scale: 1 figure resembles 15-18 real soldiers. This means that an average *banner* of Polish horse will number 9 figures grouped on 3 bases (about 120 -150 soldiers in reality).

If you want to play bigger games 1 figure should be counted as 50 men, this will allow to treat one base with three figures as a full *banner* of cavalry.

Terrain scale: 1cm reflects about 10 paces (c. 7m) in reality. Of course this scale is for weapons ranges and movement and should not be considered in reference to the scale of figures.

Wargamer Company is the producer of all the elements of *By Fire and Sword* system.