

Tactical Rules:

By Buck Surdu

1.0 Introduction:

Santa Anna Rules! (Tactical Set -- SAT) is a set of rules designed to fight tactical engagements during the Mexican American War, the War of Texas Independence, and the Maximillian Adventure. While the tactics are essentially Napoleonic, the sizes of the battles are significantly smaller. For this reason the application of a set of Napoleonic rules to this period often produces a somewhat disappointing game. SAT is designed for the following ground, time, and figure scales:

Most U.S. and French infantry regiments

Game Scale	
1 infantry or cavalry figure = 30 men 1 cannon casting = 2 guns 1 artillery figure = 10 men	Figure
1 inch = 15 yards	Ground
1 turn = 15 minutes	Time

Table 2 : Game Scales for SAT

consist of between 18 and 22 castings, and most Mexican infantry regiments consist of between 8 and 16 castings.

SAT was written for 25mm figures. Each infantryman, dismounted cavalryman, and artilleryman should be mounted on a 1"x1" base. Each mounted cavalryman should be mounted on a base 1" wide and 2" deep. It is not necessary to mount cannons; however, they can be mounted on any suitably sized base. If you are using 15mm figures, all base sizes should be reduced to two thirds of those stated above. Rather than try to modify the charts, we recommend that you photocopy a ruler so that an inch on the copied rules is two thirds of a real inch (this is what one of our playtest groups did).

SAT was designed so that each player would control approximately a brigade of troops, either Mexican or American. In most of the battles of the War with Mexico, for instance, a Mexican brigade consisted of between three and six regiments or battalions. In the American Army, a brigade generally consisted of two to three regiments. This fact helps give the U.S. forces better command and control.

2.0 Turn Sequence:

As shown on the chart card, each turn is divided into seven phases. Each of these phases must be executed in the order specified on the chart card. All actions within a phase are considered to be simultaneous; however, the results of actions in one phase must be applied before the next phase begins.

① Give orders: During this phase, each player determines the number of orders that his leader(s) may issue. The leaders issue orders to their subordinate units. Leaders issue orders by placing order chips, face down, behind the unit. After all orders have been issued, units without orders roll randomly to determine their actions. Once all units have orders, the players turn all order chips face up. This process is discussed in greater detail in **Command and Control** (Section 4.0).

② Declare Charges: During this phase, units with *Charge* orders announce which units they are charging.

③ First Fire: All units with *First Fire* orders fire during this phase, and all losses are applied to units.

④ All Moves: All units, including charging units, which have movement orders, roll for the maximum distance they can move. Then players move all their units up to this maximum distance.

⑤ Hold Fire: All units with *Hold Fire* orders fire during this phase, and all losses are applied to units.

⑥ Melee: In this phase units that have charged the enemy roll to determine whether their unit closes. If the unit closes, the charged unit must roll to stand in place and receive the charge. If the charging unit closes and the charged unit stands, melee occurs.

⑦ Rally: Units with *Rally* orders may attempt to do so during this phase.

After the rally phase, the turn is over. The next turn begins with the Give-Orders phase.

3.0 Units:

Units conduct all movement, fire, and morale in SAT. Generally a unit is a regiment, battalion, or battery. A unit may also be a skirmish company, artillery section, separate cavalry squadron, etc. Units are designated at the beginning of the game.

3.1 Experience Levels:

Units may be one of four experience levels: untrained, green, regular, or veteran. Generally, U.S. Regulars (including all artillery) are rated as veterans – which in fact they were, having fought for years in various Indian campaigns. U.S. Volunteers are generally rated as regulars; however, certain volunteer units might only be rated as green. Most Mexican

regulars should be rated as green; however, the more “elite” formations (e.g., the light regiments) might be rated as regulars in certain scenarios. Most Mexican *Activo* and militia regiments should be rated as untrained. Although there might be exceptions, Mexican artillery are generally rated as green.

3.2 Breaking Units into Sub-Units:

The owning player may break this unit into multiple separate units by issuing it more than one order during the Orders Phase. *The player must commit to breaking the unit into sub-units during the Order Phase.* Sub-units each keep a portion of the total unit’s stragglers proportional to the sub-unit’s size. If the sub-units are of equal size, they get an equal portion of the stragglers. If one sub-unit is a third the size of the original unit, it keeps a third of the unit’s stragglers.

Once broken into separate units, the sub-units may reform into a single unit. To do this the player issues each of the sub-units a *Form* order. The sub-units must be touching when they receive the order.

3.3 Larger Formations:

The basic maneuver element in SAT is the regiment/battalion. These regiments and battalions are grouped into brigades. SAT was designed for each player to control a brigade. U.S. brigades in the Mexican-American War consisted of two or three regiments/battalions and Mexican brigades consisted of three to six regiments/battalions. When designing scenarios, players should attempt to maintain this relationship; the greater number of units in a Mexican brigade makes their command and control more difficult.

4.0 Command and Control:

Were I made God, I should wish to be something more. – Antonio López de Santa Anna

4.1 The Order Process:

In SAT, all units must be under the command of a leader. Generally, all brigade, division, and Army leaders are represented as castings on the table. Leaders issue orders only to the units within their command.

In SAT, all leaders have a leader rating (LR). This LR is used to determine how many orders a leader can give during a given turn. Each turn during the Give-Orders phase, players roll a 1d4 for each leader. This roll is added to the leader’s LR. This sum (leader points) is the total number of orders that the leader can issue for the upcoming turn.

Leaders who are attached to units may only issue one order, and that must be to the unit to which the leader is attached. All other units under that leader’s command must roll randomly.

Each leader then issues orders to the units under his command. Players do this by placing an order chip, face down, behind the unit. Regardless of how many orders a leader may issue, units may only receive one order per turn; excess orders are lost.

It costs an additional leader point to issue an order to a unit that is greater than 24 inches from the leader.

Leaders do not need orders. They may move as cavalry in column, regardless of the number of orders they were able to issue during the Give-Orders phase.

4.2 Orders:

Orders that leaders may give their units are:

●*Move*: The unit may move between zero and the maximum inches rolled on movement dice by the owning player. Units may use their movement allowance to change facing. U.S. units may use a portion of their movement allowance to change formation.

●*Charge*: The unit charges toward the enemy, attempting to close into melee. The unit must move the maximum amount rolled on the movement dice or until it contacts the enemy, whichever is shorter.

●*First Fire*: The unit must fire during the First Fire phase or not at all.

●*Hold Fire*: The unit may fire during the Hold Fire phase, but it does not have to fire.

●*Hold*: The unit may not move, and it may only fire if it is charged. The unit is engaged in reordering and recovering stragglers.

●*Rally*: The unit is broken and is attempting to regain control of itself.

●*Form*: The unit may change formation, but it may not move in any other manner.

We slept all night, under arms, where we were when sundown ended the fighting the day before. I hadn't finished packin [sic] my equipments when gen'l Worth rode up to the colonel. They had some anxious words with lots of pointing and gesturing. After the gen'l rode away, the colonel started barkn [sic] orders. A few minutes later, the sergeants and lieutenants started hollerin' for us to get in line and dress our ranks. — Corporal Buck, Buena Vista

All moves should be prorated, including the movements of charging units. It is possible for moving units to get in the way of a charging unit. The charging unit stops at the first formed, enemy unit with which it makes contact during the turn.

7.1 Formation Changes:

For Mexican units in the Mexican-American War and for all units in the War of Texas Independence, it requires the entire turn and a *Form* order to change formation. For U.S. units and many of the foreign contingents during the Maximillian Adventure, this requires five inches of the unit's movement distance. U.S. units put a move order on their units and spend the five inches to change formation as part of their move. If the unit has movement distance remaining, it can move also. The unit may change formation at any point during the movement. If the result of the die rolling for a U.S. unit is less than five inches, the unit may not change formation; it may only move. A unit that changes formation may not charge! U.S. units may also use *Form* orders if they do not also desire to move or if they want to ensure they will be able to change formation.

Formation changes are made on the center, front of the unit. No facing changes are allowed as part of the formation change.

Regardless of the movement allowance available, units may not conduct more than one formation change in a turn. Cavalry, which is issued a *Form* order, may mount or dismount or it may change formation in its current circumstance, but not both in the same turn.

To detach one or two companies as skirmishers, the play follows the procedure described for splitting a unit into sub-units. During the All-Moves phase the skirmisher companies roll their dice. From that point until they reform with their parent unit, *each skirmisher company* is considered a separate unit for purposes of issuing orders; each skirmisher company must be issued a separate order. Skirmisher companies that are issued *Form* orders may either reform into their parent unit or they may form into an independent line. Skirmishers may not voluntarily move within close range of an enemy unit.

7.2 Changing Facing:

Units change facing by actually wheeling or turning the unit. No casting may move farther than the maximum distance allowed. Changing the facing of a unit 180 degrees costs 2 inches. Changing facing is a move function for an artillery unit.

7.3 Oblique Moves:

Units may conduct oblique movement (movement at an angle but in which facing remains the same). This may be done at no movement penalty. The oblique movement can be at most forty-five degrees from straight-ahead, as shown in Figure 4.

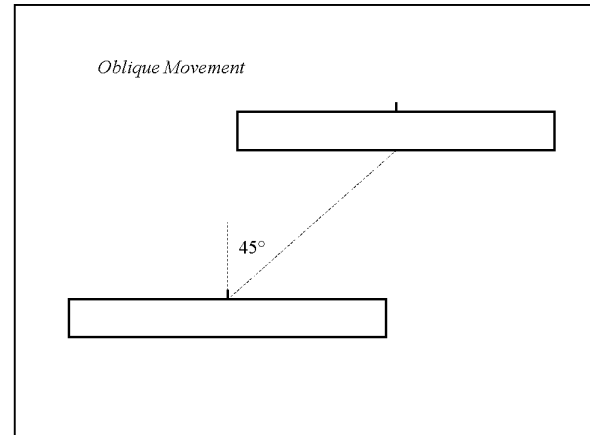


Figure 4: Oblique Movement

7.4 Passing Through Other Units:

A unit may not pass through a formed, enemy unit. Units may pass through friendly units with several caveats. A formed unit that is not charging may pass through an unformed unit with no penalty. A formed unit that is charging may pass through an unformed unit, but the unformed unit accrues 1d4 stragglers. Unformed units may pass through each other with no penalty. If any portion of a formed unit passes through any portion of a friendly, formed unit, both units accrue 1d4 stragglers (each unit rolls separately). If an unformed unit passes through a friendly, formed unit, the formed unit accrues 1d4 stragglers. Broken units (in mob formation) count as formed units (in mob formations) for purposes of this rule. These rules are summarized on the chart card.

8.0 Firing:

The infantry under General Taylor was armed with flint-lock muskets, and paper cartridges charged with powder, buck-shot and ball. At the distance of a few hundred yards a man might fire at you all day without your finding it out. – Ulysses S. Grant, Memoirs

Firing can be done in one of two phases, First Fire and Hold Fire, depending on the order that was issued to the unit. Regardless of when fire is conducted, the procedure is the same. The procedure is outlined on the chart card.

All formed units have a thirty-degree arc of fire (fifteen degrees left and right of center). Artillery has a forty-five degree arc of fire (twenty-two-and-a-half degrees left and right of center). Skirmisher companies have a one-hundred-eighty-degree arc of fire (ninety degrees left and right of center).

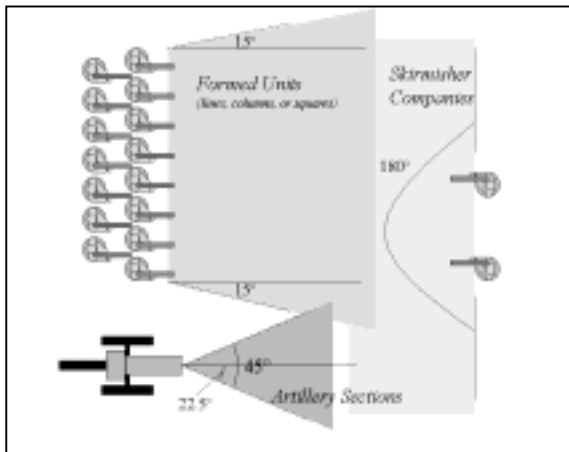


Figure 5: Maximum Firing Arcs for Formed Units, Skirmisher Companies,

Skirmishers do not block line of sight. Units may fire through skirmishers (as discussed below). Stragglers do not block line of sight. They may not be fired at, but they may be freely fired through.

Units may not fire at units that are engaged in melee.

A unit conducts all fire at a single target unit. Any soldiers in the firing unit who cannot hit the target unit (e.g., out of firing arc or out of range) may not fire at all in the current turn. (The owning player may break this unit into multiple, separate units in order to fire at more than one target. This (along with the resultant command and control penalty) is described in the section, Units.)

All weapons have designated short, medium, and long ranges. These are shown on the **Weapon Ranges** chart on the chart card.

Ad hoc weapons are collections of shotguns, muskets, worn-out flintlocks, pistols, etc. Many militia units, including many of the Texans at San Jacinto were armed with *ad hoc* weapons.

I was looking at the shoes of the man next to me, wishing that I had some like that when the firing started. I looked up at the sound, in time to see the American line disappear in the smoke of their muskets. When I reached into my cartridge pouch, I saw that the man next to me was dead. I bit off the end of the cartridge, and I poured the powder and the copper ball into the barrel. The firing went on for an hour. My tongue was withered from the taste of powder, and my throat was so dry I couldn't swallow. — Cabo Pedro at Buena Vista

The players can use tape measures to determine range, or they can mark the ranges from this chart onto sticks, with each range band a different color. We use sticks, because the wide color bands are easy to see from across the table. Range is measured from the center of all eligible firing castings to the center of all eligible target castings. Eligible castings must be within the legal firing arcs as described previously, not blocked by terrain, and within maximum range.

① First, the player determines the starting column for the **Combat Effects Chart**. For infantry or cavalry units in short range, this is two times the number of castings firing. For units in medium range, this is the number of castings firing. For units at long range, this is one-fourth the number of castings firing. This range is measured from the center of the firing unit to the center of the target unit. If the firing unit is also mounted, the number of figures is multiplied by ¼.

For artillery, range and the poundage of the gun determine the initial column used. For artillery in short range, the column used is three times the gun's poundage. At medium range it is one times the poundage of the gun. At long range it is one third of the gun's poundage. Each cannon casting fires separately.

The initial columns are numbered zero through sixteen. These numbers have no meaning except to help players apply modifiers. All fire and melee modifiers are read as column shifts.

② Once this initial column is determined, this *column* may be modified as indicated in row ② of the **Firing Procedure** chart. All modifiers are *column shifts*; a negative modifier shifts the column one to the left (e.g., from 4 to 3), and a positive modifier shifts the column one to the right. Any shifts left of column 0 are treated as column 0, and any shifts right of column 16 are treated as column 16.

Units may fire at skirmishers (-4 modifier), or they may fire at the unit behind the skirmishers (-2 modifier), but not both.

③ Once the final column is determined, the player rolls 1d20, cross-indexing this roll with the final column. The resultant number is the total number of losses inflicted on the target unit.