

ECW Combined Unit Pike & Shotte Rules Amendments

Many years ago (in 2010 to be exact) long before Pike & Shotte rules were published I played ECW games with their forerunner rules Black Powder, and initially I simply made each sub unit of pike and shot separate units as per the rules. This gave a decent game but I was never truly happy with the way that close combat worked out as a lot of 'silly' situations can occur when the units are divided up such as opposite pikes attacking just the musket armed sections of a battalia, or the musketeer wings deciding to move to another part of the battlefield without the pikes and other such nonsense. After many games I eventually settled on the more intuitive combined units which gave a much better game for the ECW period. When Pike & Shotte came along I thought that the combined unit approach would be taken up in this rule set but to my dismay it wasn't and so I decided to make my own rule amendments to cover this and to build upon what I had already started earlier. Personally I don't like the idea of separate units of pike or shot for the ECW period, although I can fully understand why the author opted for this approach especially for the earlier periods covered by the rule set. I have to say though that I think that playing ECW as combined pike and shot units is much better than playing them as split units, especially for actions larger than a skirmish or very small battle.

My own 28mm ECW armies are arranged in smaller mixed units averaging about 20 figures in 2 ranks for foot or 10 figures in 1 rank for the horse both occupying the same frontage which is approximately 9 inches. Obviously I don't expect anyone else to follow my unit sizes but needless to say so long as the units are more or less the same frontage as each other it doesn't really matter what frontage you actually use. Large units are one third wider or 12 inches instead of 9 inches wide and smaller units are one third narrower or 6 inches instead of 9 inches wide. Tiny units where used are reserved for small platoons of musketeers or small troops of lifeguard cavalry and are one third of the width of a normal unit or 3 inches wide. The rationale I use for the unit frontages is that pike and shot units were 6 ranks deep and an average 500-600 man regiment would have an approximate frontage of 150 yards and an average squadron of approximately 250-300 cavalry would be in 3 ranks and again have a frontage of around 150 yards. Obviously this is based on the normal unit size and large units would represent 700-800 infantry or 350-400 cavalry, small units would represent 300-400 infantry or 150-200 cavalry, and tiny units would represent 100-200 infantry or 50-100 cavalry.

I use the following system for the fighting qualities which I feel give a really good game and don't adversely affect the effectiveness of either arm as the frontages and combat qualities have been adjusted to take into account the original relationships within the rules.

Infantry Rules & Stats

Pike & Shot (Small)	HTH = 4, Shooting = 2, Morale = 4+, Stamina = 2, Points 28
Pike & Shot (Normal)	HTH = 6, Shooting = 3, Morale = 4+, Stamina = 3, Points 36
Pike & Shot (Large)	HTH = 8, Shooting = 4, Morale = 4+, Stamina = 4, Points 44
Shot only (Tiny)	HTH = 1, Shooting = 2, Morale = 5+, Stamina = 1, Points 17
Shot only (Small)	HTH = 2, Shooting = 4, Morale = 5+, Stamina = 2, Points 26
Shot only (Normal)	HTH = 3, Shooting = 6, Morale = 5+, Stamina = 3, Points 35
Pike only (Tiny)	HTH = 3, Shooting = 0, Morale = 4+, Stamina = 1, Points 19
Pike only (Small)	HTH = 6, Shooting = 0, Morale = 4+, Stamina = 2, Points 26
Pike only (Normal)	HTH = 9, Shooting = 0, Morale = 4+, Stamina = 3, Points 33
Storming Parties (Small)	HTH = 4, Shooting = 2, Morale = 4+, Stamina = 2, Points 28
Siege Engineers (Tiny)	HTH = 1, Shooting = 0, Morale = 5+, Stamina = 1, Points 13
Clubmen (Small)	HTH = 2, Shooting = 0, Morale = 6+, Stamina = 2, Points 14
Clubmen (Normal)	HTH = 3, Shooting = 1, Morale = 6+, Stamina = 3, Points 21
Clubmen (Large)	HTH = 4, Shooting = 2, Morale = 6+, Stamina = 4, Points 28
Highlanders (Small)	HTH = 4, Shooting = 1, Morale = 5+, Stamina = 2, Points 17
Highlanders (Normal)	HTH = 6, Shooting = 2, Morale = 5+, Stamina = 3, Points 24
Highlanders (Large)	HTH = 8, Shooting = 3, Morale = 5+, Stamina = 4, Points 31
Kilponts Archers (Small)	HTH = 2, Shooting = 2, Morale = 5+, Stamina = 2, Points 18
Kilponts Archers (Normal)	HTH = 3, Shooting = 3, Morale = 5+, Stamina = 3, Points 25

Special Rules

For extra colour and variety you can also add different ratios of pike to shot, without exchanging the actual figures. Pike Heavy units add 1 to their HTH number and subtract 1 from the Shooting number. Shot Heavy units subtract 1 from their HTH number and add 1 to their Shooting number.

Morale can also be varied to reflect better or worse armour or status such as: 5+ for units with really poor armour (basically just normal clothing) - 4pts, or 3+ for unusually well armoured or elite status units (although this I would use very rarely) +4pts.

Stamina can be adjusted to reflect the fighting experience of units by giving veteran units an extra Stamina point +4 pts, or raw or particularly fragile units subtracting a Stamina point -4 pts.

Highlanders are assumed to be mostly pistol armed so have a shorter shooting range of 6 inches.

Any special rules that you wish to add are used as per the rule book and the points are applied as usual.

Units shoot as a whole and only in exceptional circumstances are you to allow a unit to split its fire, such as when straddled at close range by 2 units or when in 'Hedgehog' formation.

With regards to 'Hedgehog' this is a matter of debate as to whether or not this actually ever existed as there is no hard proof that this was ever used in the ECW so its omission from your games will not detract from the game at all. Cavalry should be disallowed from charging pike and shot frontally and if you want to implement a 'Hedgehog' rule for pike and shot being charged in the flank or rear by cavalry then it is easy to do so. Simply make a successful command roll as a result of a charge by cavalry and place a suitable marker next to the unit to say that it is in 'Hedgehog' formation, arranging your figures in a suitable way and counting it as a frontal pike and shot unit from all directions for the purposes of cavalry attacking them. The cavalry charging them can either choose to flow round and charge past the infantry, halt their charge and rally on the spot or even rally back their remaining charge move, but they may never contact the pike and shot unit. If the command roll is unsuccessful the cavalry are assumed to have made contact with the flank or rear of the pike and shot unit and the usual rules apply for such circumstances. Once in 'Hedgehog' the pike and shot unit has its shooting dice halved but may shoot from two different directions in the same turn although not at the same enemy unit, and if shot at by artillery the rules as written in the Pike & Shotte rule book apply. If a 'Hedgehog' is subsequently charge by a unit of foot then it is deemed to be disordered in the ensuing melee.