



The Art of War

(in the SCA)

written for the
Drachenwald College of War
Instutited May 29 AS XXXIII
by
Earl Morgan de Grey

Kingdom of Drachenwald
(mka Europe)

Drachenwald College of War

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Introduction to the Art of War

First of all I would like to thank all of the fighting community of Drachenwald for contributing in their different ways to the creation of this document. It is my hope that it will inspire everyone interested in SCA melee fighting to develop their skills and their tactics in the participation of the wonderful Art of War.

In this document I have gathered my experiences from battlefields around both the SCA and the real world. There are thoughts here from experienced SCA- commanders like Duke Edmund (Middle), Master Feral von Halstern (East) and the fascinating Morgan Elandris (East) et al. There are experiences from famous fighting units from Kingdoms like Calontir, Outlands, East, Middle, Atlantia and across the lands, the West. There are inputs from generals and commanders like Napoleon of France, Alexander of Macedon, Rommel of Germany, Hannibal of Carthage and Epaminondas of Thebes. Men who brought new insights into the Art of War.

Now I can only wish you the best of luck. If you follow the following instructions you will probably win more often than lose. But you will lose, get used to it, learn, and most of all HAVE FUN !

To all the unsung heroes in the shieldwalls of Our Society
My deepest respect

Ravensmarch, June 1 AS XXXIII

Earl Morgan de Grey
Acting Dean, the College of War, Drachenwald

Views on Tactics

Tactics is one of the most underestimated aspects of the warfare in the SCA. Though we do hold warcouncils etc at the different wars, the average SCA commander generally has a very limited idea about what is happening once we reach the field of battle.

The major reason for this is lack of communication. Experience has showed that commanders that know the overall plan for their section of the battlefield generally perform better with the troops under their command.

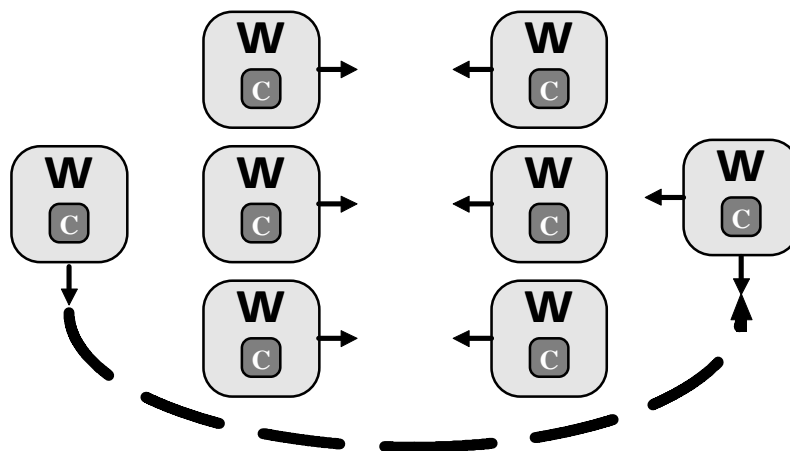
This of course raises a number of interesting questions. How far down the ranks should we drop the information ? How much of a command structure do we need ? How do we reach our units with information once battle has commenced ?

An old saying in military circles says "...no plan ever survives first contact with the enemy" another saying goes "...the side that can stick to their plan the longest wins." My opinion is that both sayings are both true and false. Any plan may have to change as a battle progresses, but on the other hand a plan might very well win you the entire battle without any changes.

5 Classic manouvres of war

Here follows 5 classical battle tactics used through-out the history of war by different commanders using different types of troops. I am sure that they can be used and adapted to function very well within the SCA.

Envelopment of a Single flank

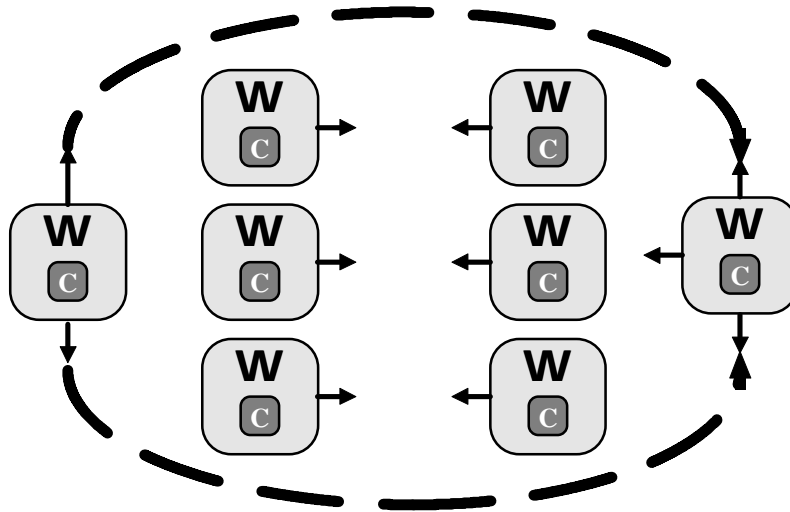


Pic. 1 Single flank envelopment

The single flank envelopment is a simple basic tactic. It was created as soon as a commander found out that some of his troops were considerably more mobile than the bulk of the army. The manouvre breaks up the enemy lines cohesion and gives you the opportunity to roll up his entire front.

It usually creates havoc in the enemy line. Men-at-arms in the front Battles have a tendency to start watching their rear and thereby loose part of their focus. It can also be a good way of driving an opponent out of a strong defensive position.

Envelopment of Both flanks

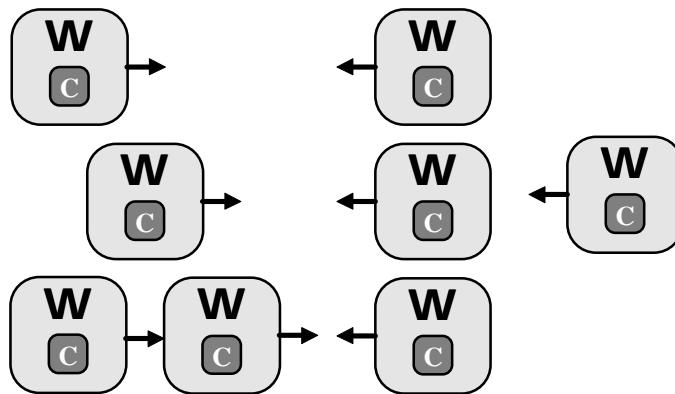


Pic. 2 Double flank envelopment

The double flank envelopment is a more complicated tactic that calls for coordination. It requires either very superior numbers or superior generalship. The goal is total annihilation of the enemy forces.

As with the single flank envelopment it makes use of highly mobile troops to get around the enemy flanks and pinning them in place. There are different approaches to this tactic. One is to make both flanking units hit simultaneously, the other is to have them strike in succession, one just after the other.

Attack in oblique order



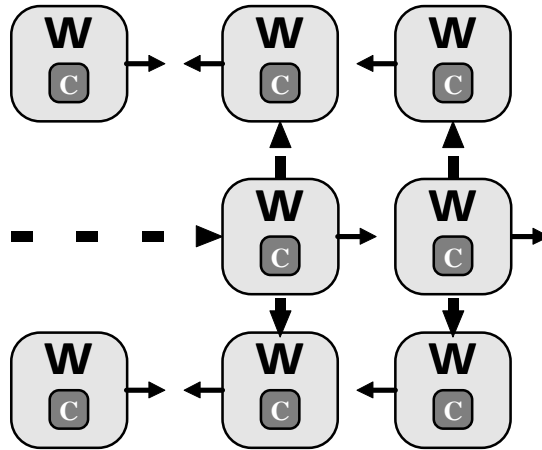
Pic. 3 Oblique attack

The Oblique attack is a fairly simple tactic that calls for a certain amount of coordination of troop movements. The centre and left Battle are only there to pin the enemy forces in place, including the enemy reserve. In the meantime the commander pushes more and more troops into his reenforced flank until the enemy units break.

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The commanders only choice with this tactic is which flank to re-enforce and use as the first to hit the enemy. Properly executed it destroys the enemy cohesion and will shatter the enemy line.

Penetration of the centre

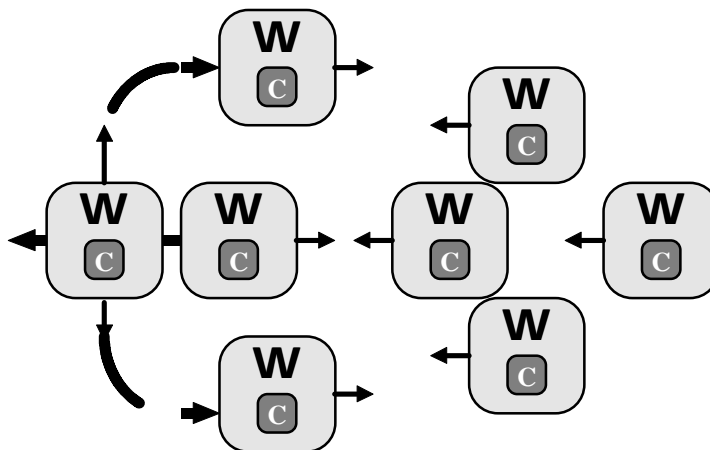


Pic. 4 Penetration of the centre

This is one of the oldest tactical manouvres of war. The penetration of the centre is a simple manouver that takes very good timing. It calls for coordination reserves with the rest of the army. The right and left Battles are mainly there to pin the enemy forces in place, including the enemy reserve.

As a commander the most important decision is when to commit the reserves to break through in the centre. This is a tactic that works well both in battles over larger areas where lines of communications are by runners and scouts only, no line of sight available. And congested battles without the possibility of real flank manouvres.

Feigned withdrawal



Pic. 5 Feigned withdrawal

The Feigned withdrawal of the centre is once again a complex manouver that takes very good timing. It calls for a great amount of coordination of troop movements. The right and left Battles are mainly there to pin the enemy forces in place, including the enemy reserve. The aim of this manouvre is to induce the enemy to leave a good position as the centre Battle withdraws pulling the unwary opponent into the trap.

The commanders most important decision is which units to use for the pinning manouvres on the flanks. This tactic works well against opponents that are known to have bad internal lines of communication or have a lack of dicipline. If done with care the enemy will not realize until it is too late what is going on.

Planning and execution of a battle

There are four very distinctive parts to the planning and execution of every battle :

1. Pre-planning in warcouncil
2. Arrange communications on the field of battle
3. Setting up forces on the battlefield
4. Execution of plans,

Let us briefly examine each part to see how we could handle it.

Pre-planning in warcouncil

First of all we have the planning. Get a good idea of what the battlefield looks like. Try to make maps of the area were the battle is to be fought. Then simply divide the battle-field into three sections, the Right, the Centre and the Left. This is actually a very in-period way of handling the planning.

Find out what the objectives are of the fight, holding flags, control buildings, kill all the enemies forces etc.

Make sure everyone gets to know any special rules pertaining to the battle, i.e resurrections, timelimits etc.

Then look at the forces at you disposal, also find out all you can about the enemy. spying is also very in-period by the way.

Decide how you can best achieve the objectives using the forces at your disposal. Once you have decided this all you have to do is divide you forces into the three different areas you have divided the filed into.

The three forces are an in-period way of using them. The term for this is Battles. Behind each Battle there should be a Secondary, a second line of troops for support. And in the rear there should be a Reserve.

In warcouncil there are a few things that are extremely important to take into account.

- Create a staff (see below)
- Make sure all your unit commanders are invited, even scout- and archer-commanders
- Make sure that they all get a good grasp of the objectives
- Make sure that the commanders get to know the terrain well
- Make sure that they understand your basic plan
- Listen to all ideas, there can be some really good things forth-

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- coming from unexpected places
- Be willing to modify your basic plan
- Make sure every commander has a good idea of the final plan

Your Staff

Your staff should consist of a selection of individuals that are not needed in their local units (i.e Housholds etc). The staff should have representatives for all branches of the army. Attached to the staff should be a number of messengers. The staff will remain with you on th battlefield, to be available for queries and tactical support. There should always be one messenger available by the commander at all times. Put a Herald on your staff. He will be able to help you identify enemy troops on the field.

Your Warcouncil

Your warcouncil should consist of a selection of commanders that command units down to a size of about 1/10th of your army or up to 100 men-at-arms I.e :

No of troops	No of commanders
1 - 100	>10
100 - 1000	10
1000 +	10+

Also invite Commanders of smaller units that can be useful for special missions like scouting, archery, capturing moveable banners, harass enemy commanders, act as bodyguards etc.

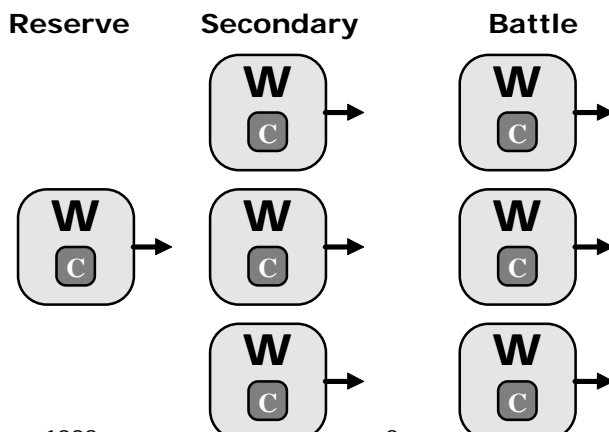
Arrange communications on the field of battle

Means of communication on the battlefield are vital to create a flexibility within your army. The best way of communication is through runners (scouts), but for them to be useful they have to know where to find different commanders on the filed of battle. The easiest way to do this is to make sure that commanders have a banner with them for easy spotting and communication.

Make sure you have arranged a number of simple signals for use during the battle. Have scouts on the field to help you out. Make sure the scouts know all the signals and that they know who the commanders are in the different Battles, Secondaries and Reserves.

Setting up forces on the battlefield

As mentioned before there are three forces that are all in an in-period way of using the terms - Battle, Secondary and Reserve. The Battles are decided first. Behind each Battle there should be a Secondary, a second line of troops for support. And in the rear there should be a Reserve.



Pic. 6 Army set-up

Troop types and their uses

When you look at how to dispose your forces on the battlefield, to reach your objectives, there are a number of things to take into consideration.

- Dicipline
- Skirmish or closeorder
- Fastmoving or slowmoving
- Weapon types

All these things should influence your choice of forces for different types of operations. Here are some suggestions for optimizing the usage of your forces.

- For defensive operations you want diciplined troops with good unitcommanders. Few but skilled shieldmen who will stay alive.
- For skirmish operations you need less dicipline but high mobility.
- For offensive operations you will need closeorder troops with plenty of shields.

Diciplined-w&s-Closeorder

To use for blocking operations. Support with small flanking units, backup with spears or greatweapons.

Diciplined-Great-/Pole-wepon-Closeorder

To use for quick striking operations against enemy flanks. Good for supporting flanks of other units.

Diciplined-Spears-Closeorder

To use for quick striking operations against enemy flanks. Good for supporting other Closeorder units.

Diciplined-w&s- Skirmish order

To use for skirmish and scouting operations. Useful for gathering information about enemypositions.

Diciplined-Great-/Pole-wepon- Skirmish order

To use for quick striking operations against enemy flanks. Good for harassing the flanks of enemy units.

Diciplined-Spears- Skirmish order

To use for quick striking operations against enemy flanks. Good for supporting own Closeorder units and for harassing the flanks of enemy units.

Diciplined-2-Swords-Skirmish order

To use for quick striking operations against enemy flanks. Good for supporting own Closeorder units.

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Un-Disciplined-w&s-Closeorder

To use for attrition operations. Plug holes in a shieldwall. Bunch together with similar units in less critical areas of the battlefield.

Un-Disciplined-Great-/Pole-wepon-Closeorder

To use for quick striking operations against enemy flanks. Do not use for flank support, cannot be trusted to carry out the operation. Can be used to support a shieldwall on the defence.

Un-Disciplined-Spears-Closeorder

To use for quick striking operations against enemy flanks. Do not use for flank support, cannot be trusted to carry out the operation. Can be used to support a shieldwall on the defence.

Un-Disciplined-w&s- Skirmish order

To use for harrassing enemy positions. Fire-and-forget. Send them out expecting them to die.

Un-Disciplined-Great-/Pole-wepon- Skirmish order

To use for harrassing enemy positions. Fire-and-forget. Send them out expecting them to die. Also good for harassing the flanks of enemy units. Do not trust them to support other units.

Un-Disciplined-Spears- Skirmish order

To use for harrassing enemy positions. Fire-and-forget. Send them out expecting them to die. Also good for harassing the flanks of enemy units. Do not trust them to support other units.

Un-Disciplined-2-Swords-Skirmish order

To use for harrassing enemy positions. Fire-and-forget. Send them out expecting them to die. Also good for harassing the flanks of enemy units. Do not trust them to support other units.

Execution of plans

You have held your warcouncil, chosen your staff, made clear the objectives and your battleplans. Now it is time to execute your plans on the battle field.

1. Gather information.
2. Send out skirmishers and scouts to recon enemy positions.
3. Back them up with small un-disciplined units, led by experienced sub-commanders.
4. Arrange your Battles, Secondaries and Reserves with enough space between units to make it possible for them to manouvre.
5. Make any minor adjustments necessary. Do not make any major adjustments, it will hurt you more than the enemy.
6. Go ahead with your plan.
7. Enjoy !!!

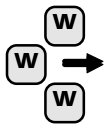
Basic Units of the Army

When you look at your troops you can usually divide them into different basic units depending on their size and type. To simplify this you should try to work with a number of simple basic formations. That way you can easier predict how they will work and what kind of per-formance you should expect. a number of Basic unit formations follow that you can use when training your troops. The basic unit is the 3 man Group. These can then be combined in different ways. I suggest the following organisation, partially based on in-period examples :

- Group = Basic 3 man team.
- Banner = Three x Groups form a Banner to which is added a Banner Commander(CO), giving a total of 10 fighters.
- Company = Three Banners formed together, giving us total of 30 fighters + 1 Knight-commander(CO) + 1 bannerholder = 32 men.
- Battalion = Three Companies formed together, giving us total of 90 fighters + 1 Marshal(CO) + 3 Knight-commanders + 4 banner-holders = 98 men.

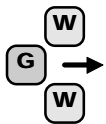
3 man Units table

3 W&S Basic unit

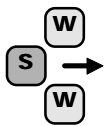


Basic 3 man team
(3 W&S)

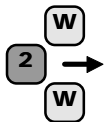
2 W&S + 1 Backup, 3 man unit



Variation 1 of 3 man team
(2 W&S + 1 Pole-/Great-weapon)

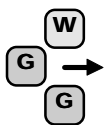


Variation 2 of 3 man team
(2 W&S + 1 Spear)

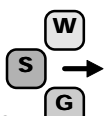


Variation 3 of 3 man team
(2 W&S + 1 2-weapons)

1 W&S + 2 Backup, 3 man unit

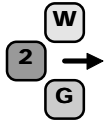


Variation 4 of 3 man team
(1 W&S + 2 Pole-/Great-weapon)



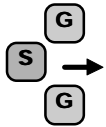
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Variation 5 of 3 man team
(1 W&S + 1 Pole-/Great-weapon + 1 Spear)

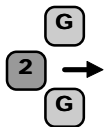


Variation 6 of 3 man team
(1 W&S + 1 Pole-/Great-weapon + 1 2-weapons)

2 Pole-/Great weapon + 1 Backup, 3 man unit

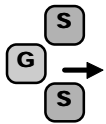


Variation 7 of 3 man team
(2 Pole-/Great-weapon + 1 Spear)

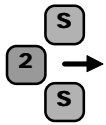


Variation 8 of 3 man team
(2 Pole-/Great-weapon + 1 2-weapons)

2 Spears + 1 Backup, 3 man unit

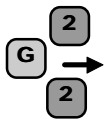


Variation 9 of 3 man team
(2 Spears + 1 Pole-/Great-weapon)

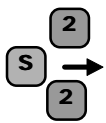


Variation 10 of 3 man team
(2 Spears + 1 2-weapons)

2-weapons + 1 Backup, 3 man unit

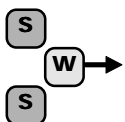


Variation 11 of 3 man team
(2 2-weapons + 1 Pole-/Great-weapon)

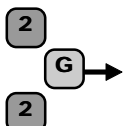


Variation 12 of 3 man team
(2 2-weapons + 1 Spear)

Other variations of basic 3 man units



Variation 13 of 3 man team
(1 W&S + 2 Spears)



Variation 14 of 3 man team
(1 Pole-/Greatweapon + 2 2-weapons)

W

G

S

2

C

→

G

S

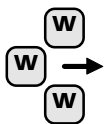
2

C

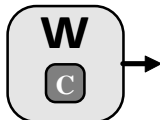
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Appendix A. Symbols table

Symbol	Explanation
W	Single fighter - Weapon & Shield
G	Single fighter - Pole-/Great-weapon
S	Single fighter - Spear
2	Single fighter - 2-weapons
C	Single fighter - Commander
→	Facing of unit



Unit of 3 fighters



Unit of 10 fighters incl. Commander and showing the majority of the troop type in the unit and direction

Appendix B. Cut-Out Symbols

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