

Brink of Battle: Skirmish Gaming through the Ages Force Building Tutorial

How do I build my Battle Force?

The central concept to Brink of Battle is the Battle Force. All players will need to build their own Force in order to play the game. For veteran gamers, this is usually an easy task, but for new gamers the idea can be daunting. This tutorial will take you step by step through the process of building a Battle Force.

First things First

To begin, we must turn to the Brink of Battle rulebook and go to the Building Your Battle Force chapter on page 15. This is where we learn how to put all of the parts and pieces together on paper.

There are four steps to building a Battle Force:

1. Choose a Setting;
2. Agree on the game size;
3. Pick a Force Organization Type;
4. Purchase models with Supply Points

The Setting is the Period and Specific year we are going to play the game. This is very important as it determines the types of weapons and armor our models will be able to use.

For this example, Drew & I are going to play in Period 2 – Early Modern, in the year 1632 during the Thirty Years' War. Drew will play the Swedish Protestants and I will play some Habsburg Catholic Imperials. We place the battle somewhere in near Lutzen.

Now that we've decided on the Setting, we agree on a point value for our Game Size. We decide to have a quick game, so we build our Forces with 500 Supply Points each.

Now comes a decision on what type of Force Organization we want to use. Each type has its Pros and Cons. Do we want a small, Elite force with Veterans who have multiple Traits? Or does a Horde sound better to swamp the enemy with numbers, and delay a Rout Check with a larger number of models that have to be Wounded?

Drew decides he wants some Swedish Cavalrymen who have dismounted to act as a storming party on Foot. Elite Force Organization sounds good to him, since he can start with all Veterans and give some of them more than one Trait.

I decide I want a more balanced group, and pick the Standard Force Organization. It gives me the ability to increase my numbers should we play Campaign games, and also keeps me from making expensive models that reduce my numbers.

Now that we've both decided on our Force Organization Types, we move on to buying our models with Supply Points.

Force Organization Table

With 500 points to spend we go to the Force Organization Table to give us our build parameters. This is critical, since BoB doesn't use army lists. This shifts the focus back on to the imagination of the players to create historically accurate warriors.

For this example, we will focus on building my Imperialist defenders of Faustburg. Already I'm starting to get an idea about the Theme I will use. Let's say that this will be an ad hoc group of pikemen and musketeers who have been left behind to guard a small hamlet.

Since every Battle Force must have a Commander, we'll build him first. Because this is Period 2, there is an even balance of ranged shooting and close fighting. I want my Commander to be relatively competent in both areas. I look at the Force Organization Table and it tells me that I can spend up to 20% of my Supply Points on my Commander. This comes to a maximum of 100 Supply Points.

Looking at my models, I see one that will fit the bill. He is equipped with a buff coat & breast plate for Armor, has a Wheellock Pistol in his left hand, and a Sword in his right. He wears a

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broad brimmed hat appropriate for the time, and I know from my research that small metal skull-caps were often worn to protect the head and were covered by the hat. In the rules this is covered by paying 2 additional Supply Points to the cost of the Helmet.

I decide my Commander will have a Combat Rating of 5, a Command Rating of 7, and a Constitution of 4. The Ratings Supply Point Table shows a cost of 15 SP's for a 5 CBT, 24 SP's for a 7 CMD, and 8 SP's for a 4 CON. Adding these together, my total Ratings cost is 47 Supply Points.

Now that the Ratings are finished, I move on to his Traits. Commander models all start the game with the Commander Trait for free. So I jot this down on his Profile. I want his high Command to go to good use, as I will need to have the Edge as often as possible should I end up with more models than his Command Rating will generate Action Tokens. So I purchase the Tactician Trait to allow me to win a draw on Strategy Checks, and also to let me re-roll my Strategy Check if I don't like the result.

Finally, I have one remaining slot for a Trait, since Commanders get a maximum of three Traits to start. The Commander Trait counts against this total, even though it doesn't cost points. So, I see he has a Sword and Wheellock Pistol and I want him to benefit from that style of fighting. I purchase the Two Weapon Fighting Trait for 10 Supply Points.

My total for Traits is 15 Supply Points. This adds to my Ratings cost for a total of 62 Supply Points, well below my maximum of 100. And finally, it's time to buy the last part of this model, his Gear.

The model is equipped as mentioned earlier, so now I just pay the points for his Gear. The Sword costs 5 SP's, the Helmet costs 3 +2 for not being visible for What You See Is What You Get rules, the Wheellock Pistol costs 15 SP's and the buff coat & breast plate I'm calling Light Armor for another 10 SP's. This brings his Gear total to 35 Supply Points.

My totals for my Commander are Ratings: 47 SP; Traits: 15 SP; Gear: 35 SP. His total cost is 97 Supply Points, just three under my maximum!

With only around 80% of my points remaining I must purchase the rest of my warriors. At this point, I decide that only one Veteran would be necessary, as I'm hoping to have a few more models than Drew's Swedes. So with this in mind, I look to my Force Organization Table and build my Veteran.

I can use up to 30% of my Supply Points on Veteran models, and can only have a maximum of three total. I don't have to take any since the tables shows 0-3. I decide I want one model who is really good in Close combat, to protect my Commander, or shore up my Troopers.

I want him to have the highest Combat Rating he can have. Being a Veteran, he can have Ratings that go no higher than a 6. So I buy him a CBT 6 for 22 SP's. His Command Rating doesn't need to be high, but I don't want him panicking too easily if a friendly model is Wounded from shooting, so I pick a 4 CMD for 8 SP's. Finally, I want him to be a big bastard, but not too expensive, so I give him a CON of 5 for 13 SP's. His total for Ratings is 43 Supply Points.

For Traits I decide he'll need Myrmidon to allow him to fight without penalty from being Engaged with Multiple Attackers. This will cost 15 SP's. Keeping with the experienced fighter motif, I give him the Man-at-Arms Trait. This is Stackable, so I can buy it at either a +1, +2, or +3 level. The +2 level is good enough, and costs 15 SP's. This will make his Attack & Defense for Close combat a modified value of CBT 8. Oh, yeah! Totaling the costs we find him coming in at 30 SP's for his Traits.

Now for Gear, I want something appropriate to the period, but not the same as the Pikemen I'll be adding later. My available miniatures show a Halberdier ready to go, so I pick him to work from. So I buy him a Helmet, Light Armor for his buff coat and breast plate, and a Halberd. While the model has a Sword, called a 'hanger' during

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this time, I don't need to pay for it, because I will only be using the Halberd in a fight. This all adds up to 28 Supply Points.

Now that I have purchased all three components of the Veteran model I add them up. The total is 101 Supply Points. He comes in below the Maximum of 30% of my total points, so he is all set.

The Force Organization Table shows that a Standard Force must have 4 or more Trooper models. So with this in mind, I decide that I will split the remaining points out for another five or six models, hopefully. At this stage, I have 302 Supply Points remaining. This is also above the 50+% mark designated by my Force Organization Table to be spend on Troopers.

I want to have at least a couple of Musketeers for some distance combat, and looking at my options decide I'm going to try for, wait for it, three musketeers.....

I can make each Trooper completely different from the others. That is one of the best features about Brink of Battle's design. I am not stuck with Rank & File copy cat troops if I don't want them. However, in this case, I want some consistency on the battlefield when it comes to my shooting. So I'm going to build three Troopers all equipped the same and with the same Trait.

Since I will keep these guys behind my Pikemen and Feldwebel with the Halberd, I don't have to worry about having high Ratings. I decide that a CBT of 4 is sufficient, and historically in the right ball park, for a cost of 10 SP's. Their CMD and CON Ratings are going to be below average since they are shooty types. I buy them up at a 3 each for 4 SP's apiece. This brings my total for the Ratings for one Trooper to 18 Supply Points.

Troopers can have up to one Trait, but no one is required to have any if you don't want them to. However, I want musketeers who can hit what they aim at most of the time, so I take the Marksman+2 Trait for 15 SP's. This means they

will have a modified CBT of 6 for Ranged combat Attacks.

Finally, the Gear is pretty straight forward. I have Matchlock Musket down for 20 SP's since that is the historical firearm available for the Setting. This will be assisted by a 'hanger' Sword in case Close combat finds them later. That is all I want to buy for this model. It totals up to 25 SP's.

So, the total cost for one musketeer is 58 Supply Points. Now, since I want three of them I multiply accordingly and get a total of 174 SP's for my three musketeers.

I repeat this same process for my Pikemen, who will both be identical in their Profile. They have a CBT 4, CMD 3, CON 4 Ratings Profile. I give them Man-at-Arms+1, a Helmet, Light Armor, Pike, and Sword. The total cost for each Pikeman is 57 SP's. Multiplied by two and my Pikemen cost 114 SP's.

This leaves me with some points left over. What to do with them? Well, I want to try to squeeze in another model if possible. However, with only 14 points remaining it's going to be tight!

I have a model of a butcher with his blood stained apron and axe in hand. Perfect! He's now Scrote the Butcher, defending his daughters from the damn dirty Swedes!

I give Scrote a CBT 2, CMD 2, CON 3 and a Cleaver for a whopping total of 14 SP's.

Now my points have all been spent and my Force is ready for battle. I have a Theme in mind already, and just need to name all of my models appropriately. They are all painted, as well, so I qualify for the Theme Bonus of +25 SP's. I decide to just leave them in my Supply Point Bank for later.

And that's how you build a Battle Force. I hope this has been helpful. Please feel free to contact me with questions at sitrep@brinkofbattle.com

Noch Weiter!

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Imperialist Defenders of Faustburg – Standard Force Organization 500 Supply Points

Hauptman Viktor Rosenkreutz - Commander **Ratings:** Combat **5** / Command **7** / Constitution **4**
Traits: Commander, Tactician, Two Weapon Fighting **Armor Rating:** 2
Gear: Light Armor, Sword, Wheel-lock Pistol, Helmet **Supply Points:** 97

Feldwebel Stoltz - Veteran **Ratings:** Combat **6** / Command **4** / Constitution **5**
Traits: Myrmidon, Man-at-Arms+2 **Armor Rating:** 2
Gear: Light Armor, Halberd, Helmet **Supply Points:** 101

Werner, Kurtz, & Hans – Troopers **Ratings:** Combat **4** / Command **3** / Constitution **3**
Traits: Marksman+2 **Armor Rating:** 0
Gear: Matchlock Musket, Sword **Supply Points:** 174

Luther & Matthias – Troopers **Ratings:** Combat **4** / Command **3** / Constitution **4**
Traits: Man-at-Arms+1 **Armor Rating:** 2
Gear: Light Armor, Pike, Sword, Helmet **Supply Points:** 114

Scrote the Butcher – Trooper **Ratings:** Combat **2** / Command **2** / Constitution **3**
Traits: None **Armor Rating:** 0
Gear: Cleaver **Supply Points:** 14

SP Bank – 25