

Shire of St Florian Division

TACTICAL OPERATIONS MANUAL

For Heavy and Light Infantry Units

Version 1.3 February AS XXXIV (2000) [Items in Bold are changes from Version 1.2]

I. Introduction

THE Objective of the St Florian Division is to form an elite tactical unit amongst the fighting units of the Principality of Lochac. Despite our lances being widely disparate in skill and temperament, being drawn from regular main line households (*Vent Barre, Bangor*), a superior impetuous household (*White Company*), a regular skirmish/reserve line household (*St Sebastian*) and various irregular or impetuous allies (the *Shire of Ildbafn* and the *Barony of Southron Gaard*, amongst others), the core group of fighters have remained committed to the advancement of SCA fighting tactics for many years.

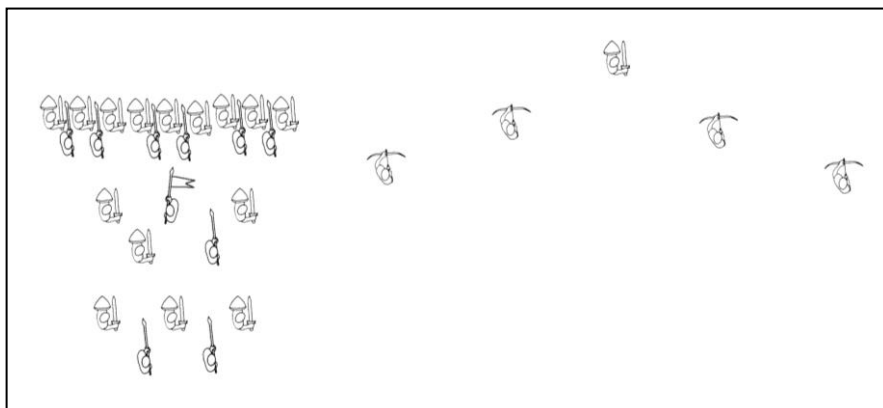
It is my intention as St Florian Division Commander for AS XXXIV-XXXV to let the senior lance commanders command their lances as they see fit. All of them are knowledgeable and experienced, some far more than I, and I see no reason to tell them how to run their lances. What I want is to command the lance commanders. I want to wield the St Florian Division as an organic whole. I want us to go onto the field at Rowany with suitable and knowingly executable

battle plans; that is, plans we have practised before, that we can execute again, and that will kick arse. St Florian, in various guises, has a proud and glorious history of victory at Rowany.

However, St Florian has an even prouder history of honour on the field, despite who wins and who loses. I urge all fighters in the division to be mindful of the tenets of Chivalry, both for ourselves and for others. Seek prowess, and be honest and honourable in your fighting; be loyal to your fellow St Florians; and be courteous to the Marshallate, our allies and our enemies on the field, for they are here for the same reasons we are. Let all enjoy the wars we fight, for tomorrow we may die!

As a final note, I am looking for volunteers for the St Florian Division standard bearer, and possibly one or two messengers to join Lord Courtain de Bond on my staff. You will need to have your own armour and weapons, and be fit and fast, as we will probably be doing a good deal of running around, but you do not necessarily need to be an experienced fighter. Yet.

*Lord Stefano d'Urbino (Alistair Ramsden), 2 December AS XXXIV (1999)
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T Formation. This example shows three lances in line, one lance skirmishing on the right flank and two in reserve.

II. Major Concerns

Mass

K EEP The main body of advancing troops (*or 'sberpunkt'*) intact and inflicting casualties.

Retain command and control after the lay on, and be able to reform command and control after heavy combat. Lance commanders need to be able to reform their own troops after a victorious combat.

Reserves

K EEP Part of the division in reserve to repel flank attacks, **perform *coup-de-grace* flanking attacks on opponents once the main line has closed**, and exploit gaps in the enemy's line.

Preferably, keep part of the division in reserve until the enemy's plan is revealed, and then use that reserve to counter it.

Proactivity

A LWAYS Have a positive and active plan, preferably advancing, and aim for local superiority wherever our *sberpunkt* is directed. This also has the added benefit of being good for morale.

Have standard, established tactical doctrines when facing heavy or light superiority or inferiority (See Basic Formations).

Surprise

B E Able to shift our mass of attack quickly *directly* before heavy combat.

Be able to commit reserves quickly and as required.

Orders

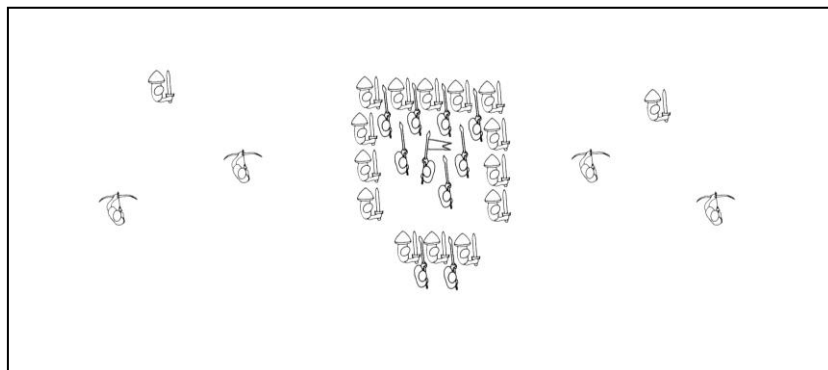
P RE-BATTLE Planning by divisional commander and lance commanders based on one of our basic formations.

Mid-battle change of orders will be kept simple, such as you (unit) go there (location or enemy force).

Communication

A LL Fighters of the St Florian Division are encouraged to report *new* information on enemy units, but please do so appropriately. Do not overwhelm your lance commander or the divisional commander with information they already know or can see for themselves.

Orders will be passed from the division commander, or his messenger, to lance commanders, prefaced with their name or the name of their lance. An affirmative response, such as 'yes', 'oui' or 'aye' is expected from the lance commander to confirm the order has been received and will be carried out. Shield sergeants and other senior fighters will be expected to use their initiative to carry out those orders if the lance commander is slain.



Square Formation. This example shows four lances in square, one lance skirmishing split between both flanks and one in reserve.

III. Standard Tactical Assumptions

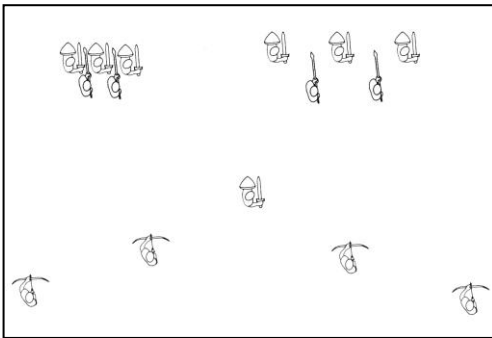
Formation Assumptions

UNITS May also be described as being in *close formation* (= shields overlapping for defence, which causes them to move slowly), *medium formation* (= close together but still able to move freely, about one pace apart), or *loose formation* (= three to five paces between each person).

Formations may also be described as being in *column* (= units behind one another), or *in line* (= units side by side).

At least one-sixth of the division will skirmish in loose formation on the flanks of, or the open flank of, the main line to drive away enemy archery. The open flank means the flank furthest away from the centre of the field.

At least one-sixth of the division will follow behind the main line in medium formation, as our reserve, to repel counterattacks on our flanks, and to pin & flank the objective enemy force.



Above left – close formation. Above right – medium formation.
Below – loose or skirmish formation.

The Pin and Flank

THIS Is an extremely important manoeuvre to comprehend. The *pinning* force positions itself to the front of the enemy to *pin* them, meaning to make them stop moving. The *flanking* force then *enfilades* the enemy, meaning to attacking the enemy in the side.

The pinning force should distract the enemy's attention away from the flanking force by positioning themselves directly in front of the enemy. The flanking force should then commit to a wheeling charge into the enemy's flank.

The pinning force should also commit a charge as soon as they see the flanking force charge. In this way the enemy must break formation to defend on two fronts simultaneously, or suffer an attack through an undefended area.

The flanking force should push their attack aggressively. This will create good killing opportunities at the front of the enemy unit, and if desired, kill-from-behind opportunities at the back of the enemy unit.

A mixed formation performing a pin & flank should use their light forces as the flanking unit. In this case the pinning force should conduct themselves in a threatening manner without actually charging for as long as possible, preferably just outside pike range, to allow the lights to do their work.

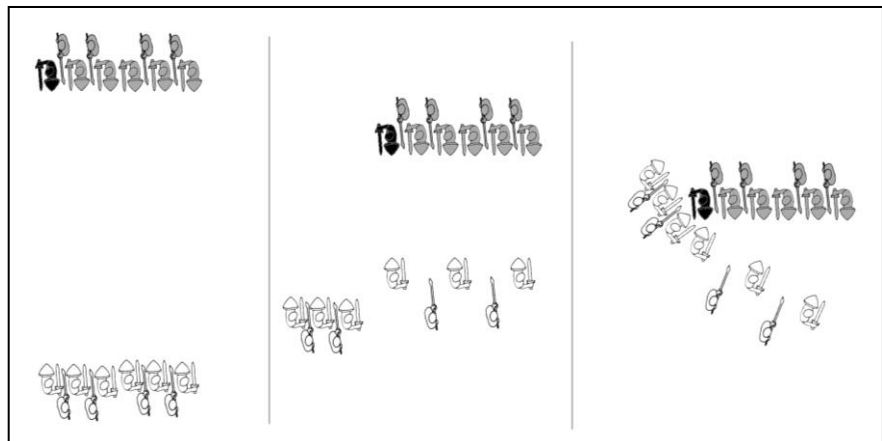
The black fighter is the primary target of white's *shwertpunkt* in this example of a Pin and Flank.

Left – two lines approach.

Centre – white pins grey with its right hand lance and prepares to flank with its left.

Right – white's flanking lance attacks grey's right flank, with support from white's pinning lance.

White has the better tactical position in the ensuing general melee.



IV. Basic Formations

T Formation

T HE Main line advances in close formation.

This is a general purpose formation used to provide command flexibility in the open field.

Square Formation

T HE Main column advances in close formation, shields to the front and flanks to protect against archery. Shields must allow poles room to manoeuvre inside the 'box'.

This is a mass-based formation used to concentrate our combat power at the expense of manoeuvrability.

Skirmish Formation

T HE Main line advances *at the jog* in medium formation, skirmishers *ahead* of, or *ahead* of the open flank of the main line.

This is a movement-based formation used to move to a good field position, or defensible terrain, at the expense of immediate combat power.



Skirmish Formation. This example shows three lances in line, one lance skirmishing ahead and two in reserve.

Standard Tactical Doctrine

I DEAS On tactical doctrine differ, however the following ideas are the results of the divisional tactical meeting 10th February As XXXIV (2000).

Versus superior heavies, we will advance in T formation and close as soon as is practicable, using superior numbers to flank and/or overwhelm the opposition before their superior skill and/or manoeuvrability may be brought to bear.

Versus inferior heavies, we will advance and perform pinning manoeuvres on any isolated or irresolute sections of the opposition, the objective being to pin part of the enemy force whilst attacking the rest, subsequently defeating the whole in detail by killing each part separately.

Versus superior lights, we will advance and overrun them.

Versus inferior lights, we will advance skirmishers to overrun them, enabling the main unit to ignore them.

When on the bridge, we will stand our ground in square formation, until we have killed a sufficiency of the opposition poles, at which point a charge will be called. Flank and reserve shields will filter forwards to protect poles if front shields are slain.

When in skirmish formation and heavy combat appears imminent, skirmishers should withdraw to the flanks of, or the open flank of, the main line. The main line itself should change into close formation, thereby reverting the division to T Formation.