



Cavalry Factors in the Dunnigan System

By Alan R. Arvold

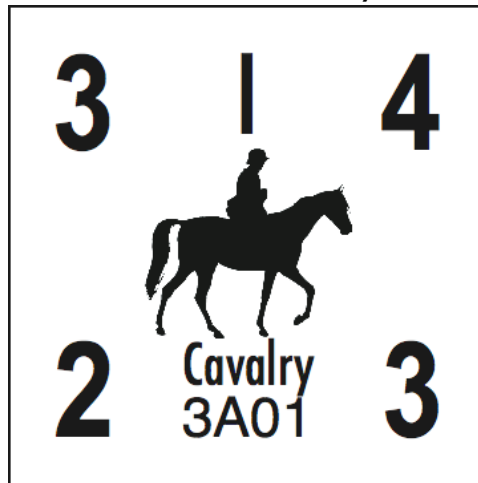
Cavalry is something of a weird animal in the Dunnigan System. It can close assault and direct fire like an infantry unit but it moves like a vehicle and a special one at that (it can cross green hexsides); yet, it cannot make overrun attacks. There is only one original cavalry unit in the system, the Russian one. The German and French ones I added because the Germans used cavalry units in the 1940 French Campaign and in the opening rounds of the Russian Campaign in 1941 before they converted them to mechanized or motorized forces the following year. The Russian cavalry unit has a good attack factor and a fair range factor, but has a defense factor that

puts it towards the lower end of the defense factor table in the infantry factor article. The German and French cavalry units are nothing more than Rifle platoons on horses, with a reduced but still good range factor (in PanzerBlitz for the Germans) and an abysmal defense factor. The German and French ones deserve mention because when I created them, I had to use the Dunnigan System precepts from

Panzer Leader to do it and then reverse engineer these precepts to PanzerBlitz to create the German Cavalry units for that game.

The attack factor was arrived at using the same system as that used to create the infantry attack factors. The Russian cavalry was trained in offensive tactics and this included fighting armor when they ran into it. Because they often operated deep in the enemy rear this was necessary. And since they rode on horses, they could carry plenty of infantry anti-tank weapons with them. This put them in the AF 4 category on the Infantry AF table in my previous article. The German cavalry on the other hand acted more as the

dragoons of old, equally well versed in both infantry and cavalry tactics. And since the German cavalry carried the same weapons as the infantry, it made sense to give them the same attack factor as the respective Rifle unit for each game, that being an AF of 3 for PanzerBlitz and an AF of 2 for Panzer Leader 1940. One will already see a contradiction in this last sentence as the French Rifle unit in Panzer Leader 1940



has an attack factor of 1. Well the French cavalry were the elite of the French Army in 1940. They were better trained than the infantry and they learned to be more independent and innovative in their tactics, compared to the infantry. They really were not better armed than the infantry, just better motivated. The attack factor of 2 is recognition of this.

A lot has been said about the cavalry charges (or the lack of them) during the Second World War. In truth, the German and French cavalry almost never used them, preferring to fight dismounted. The Russians made great use of them in the first year of the war, but only a few were successful and so they quickly adopted the German methodology of cavalry tactics. This is not to say that the Russian cavalry was not trained in dismounted tactics at the onset, they were. It's just that many of the commanding officers in the Russian cavalry in 1941 had cut their teeth as junior officers in the mass cavalry battles in the Russian Civil War and the Russo-Polish War that followed in the late 1910s and early 1920s and they wanted to relive some old glories. However the hard reality of war in the 1940s showed that their old ways were no longer valid and they had to adapt or die (most suffered the second option).

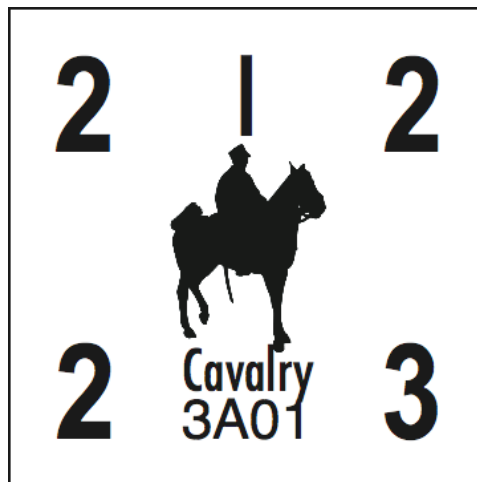
After 1941 cavalry charges still did happen but they were rare and used against an enemy position that had

been properly prepared beforehand. One note on these cavalry charges, they were not long the long drawn out affairs of Borodino and Balaklava fame. They were short charges from attack positions close to the target, in order to reduce the time they were exposed to enemy fire before they reach it. Thus a close assault that occurs after the cavalry has moved one hex could be thought of as either a dismounted or mounted attack by a cavalry unit, at the attacking player's discretion.

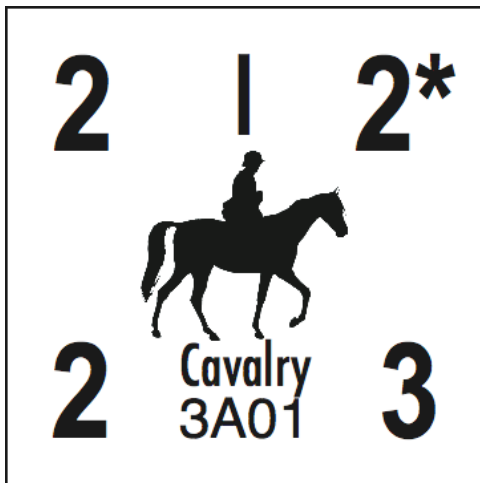
The range factor was based on the number and type of machine guns in the unit in question, just like with the infantry. Most of the Russian machine guns were light machine guns, there were only two or three medium machine guns which were mounted in horse carts and placed in positions to provide supporting fire. Thus this is why they have a range factor of 3. The German cavalry unit had 4 to 5 of their machine guns (depending on which platoon in the cavalry troop got the fifth machine gun).

Most of the time these were in light mode, but when the cavalry defended as infantry, the tripods (which were carried in the troop's baggage carts) came out and now they were in medium mode. Thus the 4 hex range in PanzerBlitz was something of a compromise

solution to this dilemma. In Panzer Leader 1940 they received a range factor of 2* for the same reason.



In case you are wondering why the German Cavalry units gets a RF of 2* and the German Rifle and Paratroop units get an RF of 2 in Panzer Leader 1940, consider this: the German infantry did not have all of its machine guns as required by their T. O. & E.s due to the rapid expansion of the German Army between Poland 1939 and France 1940. It would not be until the next year that the German infantry would have close to, if not all, of its required machine guns and thus qualify for the extended range in Panzer Leader. The German Cavalry still had powerful supporters in the German Army in the early part of the war and they made sure that the cavalry was up to full T. O. & E. requirements in each campaign.

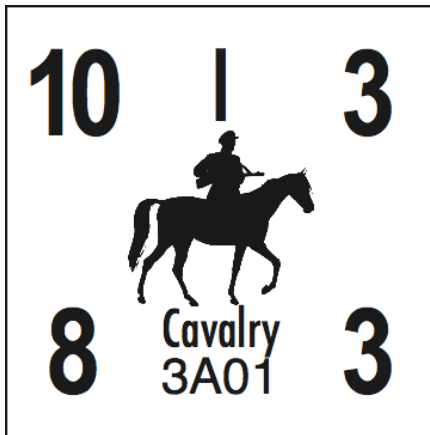


The defense factor was where the reverse engineering went into effect. In Panzer Leader it was decided that mounted troops (those units where individual troops rode their own transport vehicles, horses in cavalry and motorcycles in motorcycle units) would have an automatic defense factor of 2 to represent their vulnerability while mounted. Ironically

the defense factor of 2 was derived from the Russian cavalry unit in PanzerBlitz which has a defense factor of 8. Since the Russian cavalry unit had four platoons in it, it was a simple matter to divide the 8 by 4 to get the defense factor of 2. Thus this is why the German and French cavalry platoons have a defense factor of 2. The Russian cavalry unit was given a defense factor of 8 because using the infantry defense factor table it was found that the Russian unit fell into the DF 4 category. (It operated in platoon size groups within the hex.)

It seems the cavalry units are at a disadvantage when it comes to defense factors, especially since they did most of their fighting dismounted. It has been put forth over the years to provide a horse counter for the cavalry and have the defense factors increased to put them more on par with the other infantry units when dismounted. This was considered at the very beginning and rejected for several reasons. One, it would add a bunch a rules which would further complicate the game. Two, it would create a horse counter that players could use in an unhistorical manner. (The horses would have a few troops with them to keep them from running off, not to run them across the board like a herd of galloping stallions.) Furthermore, cavalrymen always kept their mounts close by when fighting dismounted, so they could mount up and retreat if they lost, or mount up and pursue if they won. Since cavalry spent most of the time mounted in combat situations, moving around to get into attack positions from which to assault from, it was decided that they

would get the mounted defense factor of 2. Besides, PanzerBlitz and Panzer Leader are not the proper tactical level games to show all of the intricacies in mounted and dismounted cavalry operations. These are better portrayed on a lower tactical level and it here where Advanced Squad Leader does this quite well.



For the movement factor it was decided early on that all units that used horses as their means of transport or locomotion would have a movement factor of 3 as this represented the average speed of horse mounted or horse driven units on the battlefield. Yes, horse units could get an extra burst of speed out of their steeds, whether it was in a cavalry charge or a horse driven artillery unit bringing its guns up to a critical point in the battlefield. But then the horses would be winded and would have to rest. Rather than making a bunch of extra rules for this, Dunnigan just went with an average speed for horse units in PanzerBlitz and Reed carried on the rule in Panzer Leader. Thus all cavalry units automatically get a movement factor of 3. (Sorry to disappoint those gamers who want a super fast cavalry

counter because they believe all those late night Westerns they used to watch on television where the horses appeared to run across the field all day long like they were at the Kentucky Derby and never, ever, got winded.)

© Alan R. Arvold

Publisher's Note:

Byron Henderson, well versed in the Arvold school of factoring, has created further cavalry units for other powers. These can be found scattered among the pdfs of Imaginative Strategist, but owe their inception to Alan's work, above.

