Lessons from History

Extra historical rules for DBA 3.0

LESSONS FROM HISTORY: extra historical rules for DBA 3.0

...by Stevie and Primuspilus, 1st of August, 2019.

DBA 3.0 is a great set of Ancient Rules, being easy to learn, needing few actual figures so it's not costly to build and paint an army, and is quick to play making it ideal for tournaments and competitions where time is limited. Regrettably, in order to make it simple and quick to play, certain historical factors and events had to be omitted, making some of the troop classes behave and perform contrary to their real-life counterparts.

It's a pity that DBA 3.0 was not organised with the basic tournament rules in the front, the advanced historical rules at the back, and with a one page simple two-player set of campaign rules in-between.

And it is strange that players will often go to great lengths to ensure that their figures are historically correct and authentic looking, yet are completely indifferent to their actual historical behaviour on the wargames table.

So this booklet is an unofficial player generated attempt to add those historical rules that DBA 3.0 has left out.
Please note that these new historical rules do not alter the basic tournament rules in any way.
Consider them as just an extra layer to be placed on top of the basic rules, for more historical realism.

Contents

Acknowledgements

About the front cover: this shows Achilles fighting Hector. Astute readers might also notice in the edge mosaic the recurring P_P_P pattern for 'Primuspilus' along the top and the recurring S_S_S pattern for 'Stevie' along the bottom...

Introduction

The main function of a set of Ancient Rules is to simulate the behaviour and performance of real-life troops, so that our little metal soldiers on our wargames table behave and act in a similar manner to the way the ancient historians said they did. And the only way to test they are performing correctly is to re-fight the actual battles themselves and check that the historical outcome as stated by the ancient scholars is the most likely result.

If the historical outcome is likely, then fine, we can be reasonably sure that the rules are more or less correct. If the historical outcome as laid out by the ancient historians is *unlikely*, then something is missing or wrong.

And we do not believe in 'special rules' for single individual battles. If an event happened on one battlefield, then it can happen on *any* battlefield...if the conditions are the same. For example, there was nothing special or unique about Cannae in 216 BC. It was simply a 'hold-the-centre-and-envelop-both-wings' type of battle. The battles of Trebia in 218 BC, Ilipa in 206 BC, Zama in 202 BC, and Mons Graupius in 84 AD, also used this 'hold-the-centre-and-envelop-both-wings' type tactic...so it was hardly unique.

The DBA 3.0 basic rules do a pretty good job at simulating many ancient and medieval troops and situations, and we believe they get 70-80% of ancient battles right about 70-80% of the time. Unfortunately, some quite common events in history were omitted from the basic rules, plus a few troop types are not performing as the ancient writers said they did. So these additional historical rules are designed to improve the situation, making both historical and hypothetical what-if battles more in keeping with the writings of the ancient scholars.

To reinstate these missing historical rules we went back to the original accounts of the ancient battles to see just how troops way back then really did behave and perform. These were the "Lessons from History". And when a discrepancy was discovered, a new rule had to be found to correct it.

Now we should point out that none of these rules are along the lines of "Oh, wouldn't it be a good idea if....". No, it was the compete opposite...these historical rules were in fact **forced** upon us by those ancient writings. **Only** when DBA was unable to replicate or simulate an historical event or behaviour was a new rule considered.

Using these historical rules

Some players may only want to use these new rules to re-create a particular ancient or medieval engagement. But that is not what they were designed for. Indeed, we encourage players to use these rules in **every** battle. Otherwise, when playing a friendly one-off hypothetical what-if battle, you will never ever have night ending the fighting, and some of your troop types will not be behaving and performing as they should.

Other historical events that can only happen under certain circumstances, and not just when a player feels like it, are more appropriate in campaign settings and are covered in the sister "Event Card" booklet.

A short note on '*peltast*' terminology

The word originally derived from *'pelta'*, the name for the wicker crescent-shaped shield traditionally carried by light javelin armed skirmishing Thracians. Soon however it came to represent the throwing of javelins and the evading of heavy infantry charges style of fighting, and was used by medium foot capable of both hand-to-hand combat as well as being able to skirmish (those that DBA calls '3Ax', and in some cases 'Ps' in certain armies).

These early disorganised *peltasts* later became trained and drilled regulars with larger oval Celtic type *thureos* shields, and were called *thureophoroi* (the troops that DBA calls '4Ax'). But because of their javelin throwing ability they were still known as *peltasts*...or 'mercenaries' as they made up the bulk of Hellenistic hired foot. So we treat *thureophoroi, peltasts,* and mercenaries as interchangeable names for Hellenistic 4Ax troops.

Other nations that used similar undisciplined disorganised medium foot we also treat as 3Ax, while those medium foot that were just naturally stubborn (such as some Iberians, Samnites, later Illyrians, and some Thracian tribes) or trained and drilled regular medium foot (i.e. Imperial Roman Auxilia) are treated as 4Ax.

Note we are deliberately avoiding classifying auxiliary troops as '3Wb' or '4Wb', which under the DBA banner behave in very different ways. More specifically, *peltasts* were not primarily fierce hard-charging troops, nor were they as vulnerable to mounted as Warbands are, since they were more likely to have better anti-mounted spear or missile capabilities than the typical Warband.

Summary of all the new historical rules

Here is a quick summary of all the new historical rules all laid-out on a single page for easier reference.

Time Scale

> Night will fall and the battle will _end_ after each player has completed a fixed number of bounds.

Troop Definitions

> Unless already a Knight or Heavy Chariot, a mounted general may be deployed with _any_ foot element.

Deployment

> If players are allowing the use of the larger 20 BW tables, then the _Invader_ gets to choose the table size.

Shooting Priorities

> Bows and War Wagons must shoot at a _mounted_ target in their TZ.

Flank Support

> "Solid" _4Bows_ add +1 if supported by "Solid" Blades.

New Tactical Factor

> +1 to "Solid" Auxiliaries and "Solid" Bows when in close combat with any Blades, Spears, or supported Pikes
> (unless they are in bad going, or when assaulting or defending a city, fort or camp)

On an Equal Score

> African Elephants _flee_ from Indian Elephants and will _recoil_ from all other close combat troops.

If Light Horse doubled

> Destroyed in bad going, or by any mounted, Artillery shooting, _(remove Bows)_,
> _if shot in the rear_, or by Psiloi. If not, flee.

Recoiling

> "Fast" 3Ax, Ps, and 3Bw may choose to either recoil a base depth, or '_evade_' a full base width, like mounted.

Winning and Losing

> ...not including _African Elephant_s, Scythed Chariots, Hordes, camp followers or city denizens...

Our Rule Clarifications

* A Camp can _only_ be placed in your deployment zone, at least 4 BW or more from a table side edge.

* A road that ends at a BUA on a Waterway edge does _not_ fully cross the table, so invaders can ignore it.

* _For combat_, rivers are the going of the terrain they pass through (just like roads), but not _for movement_.

* PIP costs on page 8 of the rules should say "is currently _occupying_ a city, fort or camp", not _garrisoning_.

* Threat Zones only affect troops that are _inside_ them, or have their <u>front</u>-edge touching the TZ <u>far</u>-edge.

* Threat Zones also do not enter cities, forts or camps. They are blocked by the perimeter of these BUA's.

* Your own troops are treated as if 'sacking' your own recaptured city (representing prolonged street fighting).

Last of all, Joe Collins says that we have all been getting the Arable Region compulsory terrain selections wrong. Phil Barker had apparently intended that the 2 Plough should be _a single selection_, so you can have 1 BUA **plus** 2 Plough as your two compulsory choices (i.e. compulsory Plough comes as a pack of 2 for just _one_ solitary pick). (See http://fanaticus.boards.net/post/20874/ for a more detailed explanation)

All the above got worded badly and was not made entirely clear in the final published version of DBA 3.0.

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1. Historical 3Ax, Ps, & 3Bw recoiling and evading

Ancient light and medium missile foot often used their speed to evade and run from enemy heavy foot charges. Unfortunately, under the DBA 3.0 basic rules, they are denied the ability to break contact with heavy enemy foot and are reduced to fighting toe-to-toe with pursuing Blades, Pikes, and Warbands...a role they are usually not suited for. Hamstringing them in this way is contrary to the how they actually behaved in reality.
To correct this discrepancy, apply the following rule suggested by Joe Collins:-

(to be added to the page 12 paragraph 3 Recoiling rules)

> **"Fast" 3Ax, Ps, and 3Bw may choose to either recoil a base depth, or '*evade*' a full base width, like mounted.**

The effect of this rule
This allows these troops to break contact from pursuing heavy foot (although not from Hd, who pursue 1 BW), and helps them to survive for a bit longer. It will also prevent those enemy troops with a movement of 2 BW from 'hard flanking' or attacking recoiled 3Ax, Ps, and 3Bw in the side.

In effect it gives these troops some control over their own future...do they recoil their base depth and stay in contact with their pursuers in the following bound (which is the default basic rule), or 'evade' a full base width and disengage, forcing their opponents (even those that pursue ½ a base width) to spend PIPs to renew contact?

Historical examples and links to the sources:-

All the following quotes are from Duncan Head's "Armies of the Macedonian and Punic Wars", 2016 edition:-
https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=-7n8CwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Macedonian+Punic+wars&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjeyLm7xvLhAhXTWhUIHaWZAE4Q6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=Macedonian%20Punic%20wars&f=false

"**Peltasts** were traditionally skirmishers, evading when charged, and wearing their enemy down with a rain of javelins. Plutarch says that when the Achaians were armed in this way they did not fight in formed units, (they) skirmished from a distance but were ineffective at close quarters, and their tactics were *peltastikes*, peltast style."
       (Source: Duncan Head's "Macedonian and Punic Wars", page 113)

"**The Thracians** had been the originators of the peltast style of fighting which the Greeks adopted, and their infantry still relied heavily on javelin fire."
       (Source: Duncan Head's "Macedonian and Punic Wars", page 121)

"**Thracians** slung their *peltai* shields on their backs when evading an enemy charge."
       (Source: Duncan Head's "Macedonian and Punic Wars", page 205)

Early Illyrians: "In the 5th century BC Thcydides records that "they fight in no sort of order, they have no sense of shame about giving up a position under pressure. To run forwards and to run backwards are equally honourable in their eyes, each man fighting on his own". They would not press home an attack against an enemy that stood firm, and would retire at speed from vigorous charges, operating in fact like the traditional peltast and only closing with enemy weakened by missiles or by their fierce warcries."
       (Source: Duncan Head's "Macedonian and Punic Wars", page 122)

"**Spanish** equipment and tactics were famous for lightness and mobility, and Plutarch describes the swift attacks and retreats of a set of fleet mountaineers."
       (Source: Duncan Head's "Macedonian and Punic Wars", page 131)

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2. Historical solid 4Ax close combat improvements

Many players have for years complained that 4Ax troops are underpowered, not play-balanced, are too easy to kill, and are not behaving as the ancient writers said they did, thus distorting their actual real-life performance and their true function in battle.
To correct these discrepancies, apply the following rule suggested by Primuspilus:-

New Tactical Factor

+1 to "Solid" Auxiliaries and "Solid" Bows when in close combat with any Blades, Spears, or supported Pikes (unless they are in bad going, or when assaulting or defending a city, fort or camp)

(to be placed in the page 11 paragraph 3 Tactical Factors, between the "+1 if a general" and "+1 if uphill")

Historical justification

Justifications are really secondary; it's the effect that is important. Indeed, DBA gives no justification at all for why Solid Bows receive a +1 when side-supported by Solid Blades...Bows cannot form 'shield-walls' like Spears! No, it's just an excuse to give a weak troop type a much needed boost.

Nonetheless, here is our justification:-

Native disordered and untrained 3Ax fight in loose order, which is why they are unaffected by hindering terrain. But trained and drilled regular 4Ax, plus those native troops who were just naturally stubborn, would have the sense to temporarily form-up into close formation when facing heavy enemy foot. Against all other kinds of foot they stay in loose formation, because close order against Warbands would make them as brittle as Blades and Spears (and not able to 'roll-with-the-punch' to avoid being 'quick-killed'), they would be more vulnerable to Bows (all arrows would hit someone instead of half of them falling in the empty spaces between the men), and they need a loose formation to be able to make sudden short dashes to catch slippery evading Auxiliaries, Psiloi, and Fast Bows. Changing into a close formation is really quite simple for troops that have practised it:-

As for why 4Ax only get the +1 against supported Pikes...that is for both historical and play-balance reasons. Giving them a +1 against unsupported Pikes would distort the Pikes and 4Ax real-life behaviour in rough going.

The effect of this new rule

This new Tactical Factor will make solid 4Ax have a combat factor of 4, but only against Blades, Spears, and supported Pikes, and only when in rough or good going, with no knock-on effects against other troop types. When up a gentle hill or defending a riverbank, 4Ax will be equal with Sp and Bd...and why shouldn't they be? And should your opponent have no heavy foot (and most Book 1 armies don't) then it will have no effect at all.

But in addition to all the above, it will also give 4Ax just a little bit of 'punch', and causes opponents such as the Romans to keep some reserves in case a double result creates a gap in their battleline that will need filling.
At the moment, using only the basic rules, 4Ax are no threat whatsoever to Blades, so the Romans can simply form one long line with no reserves at all as if they were nothing more than bunch of Greek Hoplites.
This is not realistic.
Having this extra Tactical Factor not only improves the historical behaviour and performance of the 4Ax, it will also encourage their opponents to behave and deploy in an historical formation as well.

Alternatives

We tried other solutions to remedy this weakness of 4Ax when fighting heavy infantry, such as giving them side-support, or simply making their combat factor 4 against all foot, or giving them the 'evade 1 BW' ability. But these proved ineffective or made them more powerful against Ps, 3Ax, Wb, Bows, Hd, WWg, or caused them to act contrary to their real-life counterparts as they will shun rough going (where side-support is lost). The above solution, of giving them +1 when facing heavy foot, avoids all these undesirable knock-on effects.

Historical examples and links to the sources:-

Battle of Cannae 216 BC: Polybius' (115.5) and Livy's (47.4) account of the performance of Hannibal's 4Ax:-
"For a time the Spaniards and Celts kept their ranks and struggled bravely with the Romans, but soon, borne down by the weight of the legions, they gave way and fell back, breaking up the crescent. The Romans, however, following up the Celts and pressing on to the centre and that part of the enemy's line which was giving way, progressed so far that they now had the heavy-armed Africans on both of their flanks."
(Source: https://www.johndclare.net/AncientHistory/Hannibal_Sources6.html , Polybius section 115.5)

Battle of Zama 202 BC: Polybius' (13.1) and Livy's (34.2) account of the performance of Hannibal's Gauls and Ligurians:-
"The mercenaries at first prevailed by their courage and skill, wounding many of the Romans, but the latter still continued to advance, relying on their admirable order and on the superiority of their arms.
(Source: https://www.johndclare.net/AncientHistory/Hannibal_Sources8.html , Polybius section 13.1)

Iberian warfare, by Fernando Quesada, endorsed by Duncan Head, page 18:-
"A great deal of new information about Iberian and Celriberian warfare is now available (see Quesada) , which argues that the Celtiberians and Iberians did not favour guerilla tactics but pitched battles, where they fought in a flexible style not dissimilar to that of the Romans, but without Roman discipline and organisation."
(Source: "Macedonian and Punic Wars" by Duncan Head, page 18 of the 2016 edition)
(See also : Spanish Iberian warfare by Fernando Quesada:-
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238749568_Not_so_different_individual_fighting_techniques_and_battle_tactics_of_Roman_and_Iberian_armies_within_the_framework_of_warfare_in_the_Hellenistic_Age

All the following quotes are from Duncan Head's "Armies of the Macedonian and Punic Wars", 2016 edition:-
https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=-7n8CwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Macedonian+Punic+wars&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjeyLm7xvLhAhXTWhUIHaWZAE4Q6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=Macedonian%20Punic%20wars&f=false

Thureophoroi: "these and similar troops, such as Thracians and Illyrians, might also be deployed in battle to protect the vulnerable flanks of a phalanx...". "Asklepiodotos bases their organisation on files of eight, and this was probably their typical depth in battle. It seems likely they would skirmish in open order but close up to *pyknosis* for close combat".
(The Jewish Maccabees, and many others, were also armed and fought as Hellenistic thureophoroi).
(Source: "Macedonian and Punic Wars" by Duncan Head, page 114 of the 2016 edition)

Later Illyrians: "The good order and the willingness to hold firm and fight hand to hand, displayed by the Dardanoi in 200 BC, is seen as early as 358 BC...". "The Dardanoi in 200 BC are described as much steadier warriors - these troops do not leave their ranks impulsively but keep close order in both combat and withdrawl".
"The contrast between 5th century Illyrians fighting individually in no order and their 3rd century counterparts in formed *speirai* suggests a marked improvement in battlefield organisation".
(Source: "Macedonian and Punic Wars" by Duncan Head, page 122 of the 2016 edition)

The Spaniards: "did not despair if things went badly, but fought doggedly on...Their initial charge was often powerful enough to break through even a Roman line; if it was held, the Spaniards were still formidable with swords, but Roman discipline and armour would usually beat them."
(Source: "Macedonian and Punic Wars" by Duncan Head, page 130 of the 2016 edition)

The Samnites: "The Romans believed the first Samnite attack was the most dangerous, and after a while they would run out of missiles and their spirits would flag...Their infantry would usually charge fiercely and fight at close quarters rather than skirmish with their javelins; the Romans seem to have had a slight edge in such a contest, but Samnite troops worsted them more than once."
(Source: "Macedonian and Punic Wars" by Duncan Head, page 143 of the 2016 edition)

None of the above is likely using a combat factor of 3 against heavy foot with a combat factor of 5, unless lucky. But add a +1 to 4Ax when facing heavy foot, then all the above quotes *do* become more likely.

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3. **Historical solid Bow close combat improvements**

Like the 4Ax, many players over the years have complained that Bows are underpowered, not play-balanced, are too easy to kill, and they are not behaving as the ancient writers said they did, thus distorting their actual real-life behaviour in close combat and their true performance in battle.
To correct these discrepancies, again apply the following rule suggested by Primuspilus:-

New Tactical Factor (*repeated from Section: 2*)

> **+1** **to "Solid" Auxiliaries and "Solid" Bows when in close combat with any Blades, Spears, or supported Pikes (unless they are in bad going, or when assaulting or defending a city, fort or camp)**

(to be placed in the page 11 paragraph 3 Tactical Factors, between the "+1 if a general" and "+1 if uphill")

*(...and add the number "**4**" to the Flank Support factors, page 11 paragraph 2 , so that it reads as:-)*

> **"Solid" *4Bows* add +1 if supported by "Solid" Blades.**

Historical justification

Again the justifications are secondary; it's the effect that is important. But here are some if you need them. Solid Bows (who do not evade, so can concentrate on shooting more) have greater effect at very close range against relatively slow pondering heavy foot that are trying to maintain formation. And when they are fighting hand-to-hand, spears/swords/axes are far more effective killing devices than mere arrows...but only if your opponent is standing still and not dodging and weaving about like Psiloi, Auxiliaries and Warband warriors.

And the reason why 8Bw loses side-support is because they already have close fighters in their front rank, plus giving them a combat factor of 2, with +1 for being doubled-based, +1 for fighting heavy foot, *and* +1 for having side-support, would give a total CF of 5 (the same as Blades), which is not borne-out by the historical records.

The effect of this new rule

Strange as it may seem, the historical accounts say that those poorly armoured English longbowmen, with their tiny buckler shields, and armed only with swords, axes and mallets, could stand up to those French dismounted men-at-arms in their full plate armour. Likewise, those Persian 8Bw Sparabara, with their flimsy wicker shields, with no helmets, no armour, no greaves on their legs, armed only with short spears, could stand up to Greek Hoplites...at least for a time. These are the "Lessons from History".

Remember, in DBA the first sentence on page 3 says "Troops are defined by battlefield behaviour instead of weapons or armour", and unfortunately the basic rules do not reflect their true historical performance.

Here is a chart showing the full effects of this extra +1 when solid Bows are in *close combat* with heavy foot:-

	Basic Rules Combat Factor	Historical Combat Factor
3Bw, not allowed side-support	CF 2	CF 2 *(but can 'evade'...see Section 1 on page 4)*
4Bw, with **no** side-support	CF 2	CF 3
4Bw, with side-support	CF 3	CF 4
8Bw, with **no** side-support	CF 3	CF 4
8Bw, if allowed side-support	CF 4	~~CF 5~~ *(too high, so lose side-support)*

As you can see, all solid bows become a little bit stronger and more robust, so that they can finally behave and perform as the ancients said they did, and actually stand up to heavy infantry...at least for a short while. Even 8Bw benefits as well, as they will no longer be dependent upon adjacent friends for their combat factor (and the Persians don't have any Blades, so under the basic rules their 8Bw can never be CF 4 in close combat, unless they are uphill or defending a riverbank).

Historical examples and links to the sources:-

Battle Ephesus 498 BC, where the Persian Sparabara stood up to the hoplites for quite some time:-
"The rebelling Ionian Greeks of Ephesus, with Athenian allies, were pinned by the Persian Sparabara while the
 Persian cavalry broke through the light troops on the Greek right wing and enveloped the hoplite battleline."
  (Source: "Land battles in 5th century Greece" by Fred Eugene Ray, pages 33 to 36:-
*https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=NECnIjWtIMEC&pg=PA69&lpg=PA69&dq=herodotus+sparabara&source=bl&ots=g4S
h9__8jy&sig=ACfU3U1NZasqqe78_TpDLHKjuNuCJHpVGA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiz7e-
tz9zgAhWo1uAKHdf9Cu8Q6AEwC3oECAgQAQ#v=onepage&q=Cayster&f=false)*

Battle of Marathon 490 BC, where again the Persian Sparabara stood up to the Athenians for quite some time:-
"The fight at Marathon went on for a long time, and in the centre the barbarians won, where the Persian (Sparabara)
 themselves and the Sacae were stationed. At this point they won, and broke the Greeks, and pursued them inland.
 But on each wing the Athenians and the Plataeans were victorious, and, as they conquered, they let flee the part
 of the barbarian army they had routed, and, joining their two wings together, they fought the Persians who had
 broken their centre; and then the Athenians won the day. As the Persians fled, the Greeks followed them, hacking
 at them, until they came to the sea. Then the Greeks called for fire and laid hold of the ships."
  (Source: www.historyguide.org/ancient/marathon.html , by Herodotus, section 113)

Battle of Platea 479 BC, where yet again the Persian Sparabara stood up to the Spartans for quite some time:-
"As he offered his prayer, the Tegeans, advancing before the rest, rushed forward against the enemy; and the
 Lacedaemonians, who had obtained favourable omens the moment that Pausanias prayed, at length, after their
 long delay, advanced to the attack; while the Persians, on their side, left shooting, and prepared to meet them.
 And first the combat was at the wicker shields. Afterwards, when these were swept down, a fierce contest took
 place by the side of the temple of Ceres, which lasted long, and ended in a hand-to-hand struggle. The barbarians
 many times seized hold of the Greek spears and brake them; for in boldness and warlike spirit the Persians were
 not a whit inferior to the Greeks; but they were without bucklers, untrained, and far below the enemy in respect
 of skill in arms. Sometimes singly, sometimes in bodies of ten, now fewer and now more in number, they dashed
 upon the Spartan ranks, and so perished."
  (Source: mcadams.posc.mu.edu/txt/ah/Herodotus/Herodotus9.html , section [9.62])

Battle of Agincourt 1415 AD, during the Hundred Year's War:-
"The surviving French men-at-arms reached the front of the English line and pushed it back, with the longbowmen
 on the flanks continuing to shoot at point-blank range. When the archers ran out of arrows, they dropped their bows
 and using hatchets, swords and the mallets they had used to drive their stakes in, attacked the now disordered, fatigued
 and wounded French men-at-arms massed in front of them. The French could not cope with the thousands of lightly
 armoured longbowmen assailants (who were much less hindered by the mud and weight of their armour) combined
 with the English men-at-arms."
  (Sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Agincourt .
  *The Battle of Agincourt is well documented by at least seven contemporary accounts, with three of them
   being actual eyewitnesses. Two of the most frequently cited accounts come from Burgundian sources,
   one from Jean Le Fèvre de Saint-Remy who was present , and the other from Enguerrand de Monstrelet.
   The English eyewitness account comes from the anonymous Gesta Henrici Quinti, believed to be written
   by a chaplain in the King's household who would have been in the baggage train at the battle.)*

Does any of this sound like combat factor 3 troops being slaughtered like helpless sheep by combat factor 5?
No, it sounds more like a combat factor of 4 fighting against a combat factor of 5...

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4. **Historical shooting improvements**

The page 10 paragraph 4 shooting priorities in the basic rules, whereby a Bow or War Wagon must target an enemy in their Threat Zone, is seriously flawed and causes effects that are totally unhistorical and unrealistic. It forces shooters to shoot individually and prevents concentrated fire, thus making long range shooting far more deadly and more effective than short range shooting...which is contrary to logic, physics, ballistics, and even simple common sense. And as short range shooting is weak and ineffective, it creates a totally artificial 'shooting safe zone' in front of the shooters where heavy foot can stop, rest, and reform, knowing they are in no danger at all of being doubled (and only 6 chances out of 36 of even recoiling).
Being at short range in front of shooters should be somewhere to be avoided, not actively sort after!

Clearly this Threat Zone shooting priority was added to DBA 3.0 along the lines of "Oh, wouldn't it be a good idea if...", and has never been fully play-tested properly, or all the above flaws would have been spotted.

*(Add the word "***mounted***" to the page 10 paragraph 4 shooting priorities in the basic rules, so that is reads as:-)*

Bows and War Wagons must shoot at a _mounted_ target in their TZ.

*(And change "***Bows***" for "***if shot in the rear***" in the doubled Light Horse combat outcomes, so that it reads as:-)*

If Light Horse doubled :   Destroyed in bad going, or by any mounted, Artillery shooting, *(remove Bows)*, *if shot in the rear*, or by Psiloi. If not, flee.

Historical justification for the shooting priority

Imagine you are an eagle flying 100 meters over an ancient battlefield. When you look down you may well see a gap where the shooters cease to concentrate their shots and begin to individually target the nearest threat. Then imagine you are that same eagle flying not a 100 but a 1,000 meters above that very same battlefield. Now you can no longer see that gap...the shooters and their target appear to be almost touching each other. *That's* when the shooters must start targeting those directly in front of them...when they are in *close combat*. Mounted, due to their speed, are the greatest threats, so they are still a priority.

DBA is a large scale top down army level set of rules, not a set of trivial bottom up small scale skirmish rules. And just as an army general would not concern himself with how far his skirmishers were from the enemy, but just whether they were engaging or not, so he wouldn't be bothered about how far away the enemy is from his bows, just whether they were doing their job and actually shooting.

Historical examples and links to the sources:-

No accounts of Crécy, Poitiers, Agincourt, nor any other other Bow engagement ever mentions this 'shooting safe zone'. At Agincourt the French dismounted Knights would often shy-away from shooters at close range to avoid the arrow-storm. Still, it's not so surprising that there is no mention of it when you take into account the fact that it never existed!

Historical justification for *doubled* LH fleeing when shot at or in close combat with Bows

Three shooters targeting a single LH element has 21 chances out of 36 of scoring a double...which is a bit high. MedievalThomas suggests that doubled LH instead flee from Bows, and this does indeed more closely match the historical accounts, where light horse often fled rather than being slaughtered by arrows or crossbow bolts. If LH are doubled when shot in the *rear-edge*, usually after fleeing last bound, then they will be broken and lost. It's as if they were already shaken by the first flee move, and another double score turns the flight into a rout.

Note that playtesting shows that if LH were killed when doubled *in close combat* with Bows, bowmen would be encouraged to charge *at* the light horsemen...which is not at all realistic (doubled LH already flees from WWg).

You might ask why LH are killed by being doubled by Psiloi in close combat, but they will instead flee from Bows. Well, a Bow figure represent between 6 to 10 ranks, with the rear ranks having to shoot blindly overhead using 'barrage fire' as they can't even see the target, and half their arrows would fall into the empty spaces between the spread out open order light horsemen. Psiloi are a thin line of snipers, shooting directly as the target raises his shield to ward off an attack from another direction, or the Psiloi are deliberately aiming at vulnerable spots.

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5. Historical African expendable elephants

As the purpose of this booklet is to take "Lessons from History", we would be negligent if we ignored the historical behaviour and performance of the now extinct small African forest elephant in actual battles. These intelligent animals often reacted to loud noises and high pitched sounds, so could be unpredictable. Players would complain if 3Kn and 4Kn were identical to each other...well, it's the same with elephants. To simulate their true characteristics, apply the following:-

(to be added to the page 11 combat outcomes of the basic rules:-)

> **On an Equal Score**
> **African Elephants *flee* from Indian Elephants and will *recoil* from all other close combat troops.**

*(and add "**African Elephants**" to Winning and Losing on page 12 of the basic rules, so that it reads as:-)*

> **...not including *African Elephant*s, Scythed Chariots, Hordes, camp followers or city denizens...**

Historical justification

The justification for the smaller African elephants being slightly weaker in combat is borne out by Polybius.
As for them being expendable; they were often placed out in front on their own, and were expected to be lost.
Another consideration is that when re-creating the Battle of Zama, the Carthaginians are defeated too quickly.
Lose the two elephants and the two mounted on each wing, and the battle is over before the foot even engage!
By making African Elephants expendable, the battles of Bagradas and Zama can be re-created more accurately.
The loss of two elements, even if they don't count towards defeat, can still hurt as you will be outnumbered.
Losing Indian elephants, what with them being larger, stronger, and more expensive to import, does still count.
Note that on an equal score, African Elephants will recoil from any Scythed Chariots crashing into them, even though the chariots themselves are destroyed, and both side's African Elephants will recoil on an equal score.

Armies affected

The following armies have African Elephants: the I/58 Meroitic Kushites (an El general), II/32a Later Carthage, the II/40 Numidians, and the II/49 Marian Romans *(the II/20 Ptolemaic army has both Indian Elephants and African Elephants depending upon the period in question, but these are already mentioned in their Army List).*

Historical examples and links to the sources:-

African elephant behaviour at Raphia, 217 BC:-
"Most of Ptolemy's elephants, however, declined the combat, as is the habit of African elephants; for unable to stand the smell and the trumpeting of the Indian elephants, and terrified, I suppose, also by their great size and strength, they at once turn tail and take to flight before they get near them."
(Source: http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Polybius/5*.html#62%20Polybius page 207, section 84)

Deployment at Bagradas, 255 BC:-
"(Xanthippus) at once acted upon this authority. He ordered out the (100) elephants, and placed them in a single line in front of the whole army. The heavy phalanx of the Carthaginians he stationed at a moderate interval in the rear of these."
(Source: http://www.yorku.ca/inpar/polybius_one.pdf section 33)

Deployment at Zama, 202 BC:-
"Hannibal placed in front of his whole force his elephants, of which he had over eighty, and behind them the mercenaries numbering about twelve thousand. They were composed of Ligurians, Celts, Balearic Islanders, and Moors."
(Source: https://www.johndclare.net/AncientHistory/Hannibal_Sources8.html Polybius section 11.1 and Livy section 33.4)

Elephants were rarely killed but often captured after battle. Following Caesar's victory at the Battle of Thapsus in 46 BC:
"He then took sixty-four (captured African) elephants, equipped, armed and complete with towers and harness, and these he drew up in an array in front of the town: his object in doing so was to see if Vergilius and the others would surrender."
(Source: http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Caesar/African_War/E*.html section 86)

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6. **Historical time limit and nightfall**

The basic rules have no internal time limit, because tournaments dislike drawn battles (although they can still occur if the players run out of actual playing time). But having no time limit can severely distort a battle. To correct this and make things more realistic, add the following:-

(to be added to "Time Scale" on page 2 paragraph 11:-)

> **Night will fall and the battle will *end* after each player has completed a fixed number of bounds.**

Historical justification

Er...because every general and soldier in history knows that night is approaching? (even if wargamers don't). ☺

The effects of this new rule

One of the beauties of DBA is that it doesn't use any on-table markers, nor is there any fussy fiddly paperwork. But shooters never run out of ammunition (so the Normans can shoot the uphill Saxons to death at Hastings). And troops attempting to cross a river have all the time in the world to keep rolling and re-rolling their PIP dice until they get a '6' to maximize the number they can wade across (Alexander at the rivers Granicus and Issus). Plus delaying the enemy until nightfall was an essential strategy when outclassed or outnumbered (Crassus at the battle of Carrhae in 53 BC for example...desperately wishing for night to relieve his beleaguered legionaries from the relentless arrows of the Parthian horse archers).
A time limit prevents the first two items above from occurring, and makes the third item possible, simulating the tactics of Fabius Maximus 'The Delayer', whose aim when fighting against Hannibal was to avoid being routed and to merely survive until nightfall, thus denying Hannibal victory and eventually wearing him down.

But it also has another unexpected use.

It can actually make those weak Ax and Ps armies playable.

We are sure that many players have come across the situation where Ax or Ps armies refuse to leave their bad going while their Sp/Pk/mounted opponents refuse to go in, resulting in a rather unsatisfying stalemate. This is because DBA only concentrates on 'set piece' battles, the sort that mounted and heavy foot excel in, and not the 'guerrilla' type tactics that Ax and Ps armies are best at. Yet these lighter troops, even if they can't actually defeat the invaders, have still done their job of preventing the loss of territory by just surviving till nightfall. The Tribal Elders, Senate, Emperor, or King, would not be pleased with an invading general who fails to invade. Enemy morale would be boosted, allies begin to waver, and he would lose face and could even be replaced.

All that is needed is this approaching nightfall time limit along with the following new victory condition:-
---The invader must defeat the defenders, or at least sack their camp, before nightfall or the defender wins---

This gives the invader an incentive to attack with two possible objectives, and also allows light weak Ax and Ps armies to actually win a battle by using 'guerrilla' type tactics in bad going to ambush, harass, and delay their mounted or heavier opponents from reaching their camp before night-time ends the engagement.
(Remember that a common tactic throughout history when faced with an entrenched enemy is to go around them and cut their lines of supply, forcing them to either retreat and give up territory or eventually starve. Destroying the defender's camp simulates this)

Note that all this is entirely in keeping with Phil Barker's own thoughts, as he says near the bottom of page 14:-
"A drawn battle counts as a win to the defender, since he loses no territory."

All the above adds a whole new dimension to DBA that has so far been ignored, that of 'guerilla warfare'.
Ax and Ps armies may not be able to win a battle...but by avoiding defeat they can still win a defensive war.
Much like how the 1st century Roman invasion of Germania was ultimately called off as it was too much effort.
And why the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, 1979 to 1989, was also cancelled and the Russians finally withdrew.
You invade, but can't crush the defenders, and eventually the cost makes your leaders call the whole thing off.

You could just keep a note of the number of elapsed bounds or time periods on a piece of paper, or by using a stack of coins. But here is a more visual method:-

The Sun Clock
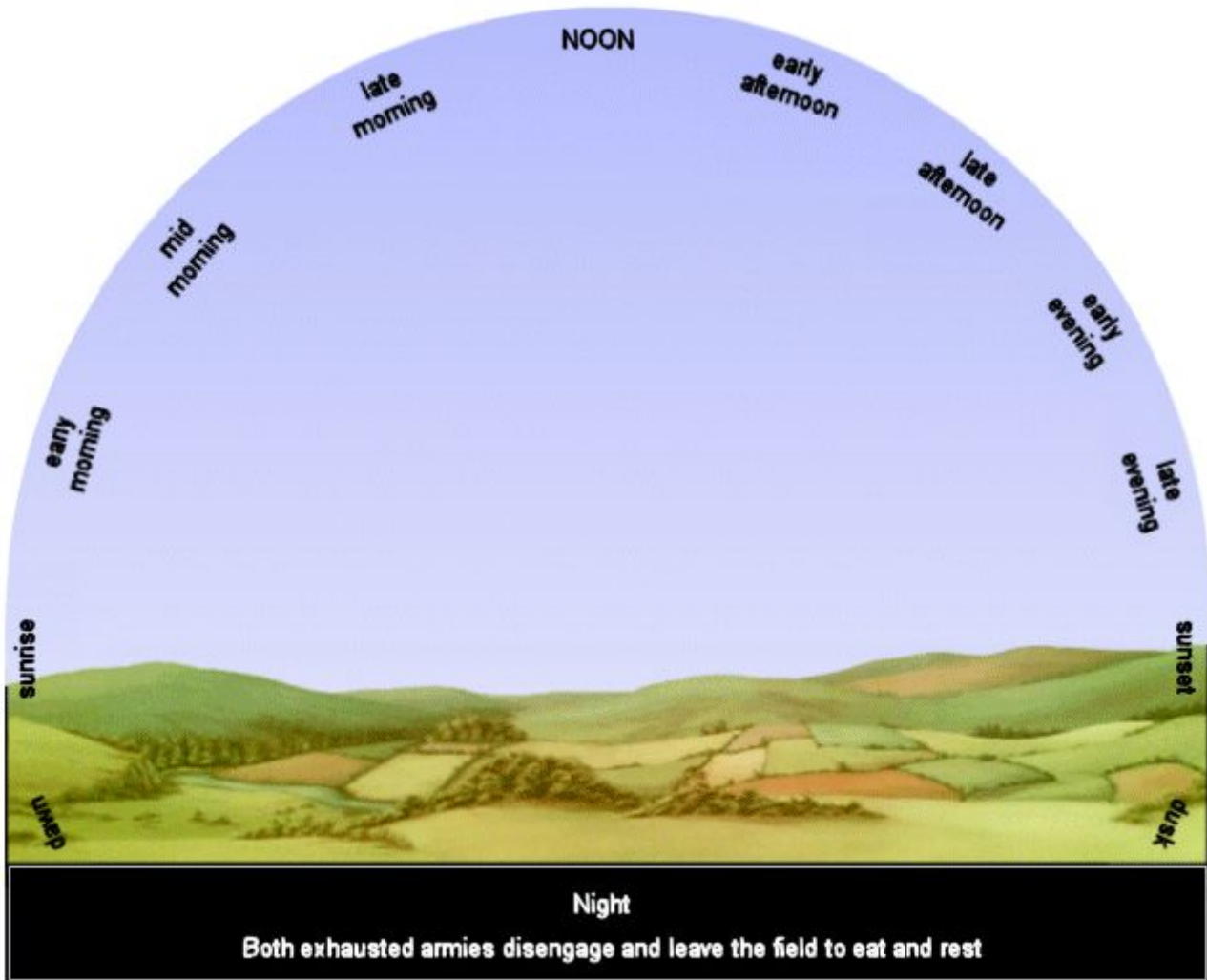
This is a simplified version of this: https://fanaticus-dba.fandom.com/wiki/File:TIME_OF_DAY_DISPLAY.pdf and is cheaper on colour printing costs *(you could print it in black & white, then colour it in by pencil or felt-tip)*. Just stick it to a piece of stiff card and use a small coin to represent the position of the sun throughout the day.

Using the Sun Clock
The sun marker is moved at the beginning of the defender's bound or at the end of the invader's bound.
The 1st period, *dawn*, is used for terrain placement (as the troops eat breakfast and prepare their equipment).
The 2nd period, *sunrise*, is used for deployment (the troops leave camp and take up their battlefield positions).
The 3rd period, *early morning*, is when a DBA **game** starts as the troops begin to manoeuvre (but the real start of the **battle**, actual close combat, may take longer, simulating engagements that started late in the day).

Night battles were rare, but if a player wishes a die roll of '**6**' means no time limit due to a bright full moon.

Alternatively
If you find that 10 bounds each is not enough and that night is falling too soon for your liking, try the following:-
All the terrain placement and army deployment happens **before** *dawn*, so both players will have 12 bounds or periods or 'hours' each, and have a DBA **game** beginning at *dawn*.

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7. Historical choice of table size

DBA 3.0 allows two sizes of battlefield, either 15 BW or 20 BW square. And although Phil Barker prefers the smaller size (because it makes games shorter for tournaments), such small tables can severely hamper and restrict mounted armies, denying them their true historical abilities and performance.
If players disagree about table size, we suggest letting the <u>invader</u> choose, as this helps mounted armies :-

(to be added to page 8 paragraph 1 of the basic rules)

> **If players are allowing the use of the larger 20 BW tables, then the *[Invader](#)* gets to choose the table size.**

Historical justification

The defender already gets to decide on the amount of terrain, its type, its size, its orientation and its placement. To allow them to also choose the table size as well gives defenders the ability to hamstring mounted opponents. If an army has high aggression, and many mounted armies do, then it is *they* who should have the initiative to decide what kind of battlefield they want to fight on, and from which direction they will approach it (remember that table edges are completely artificial do not exist in reality).

Aggressive foot armies, sometimes led by brilliant generals, also benefit from having the choice of table size. They may want a small battlefield to frustrate their opponent's mounted troops...but they could also want a wider field of battle to spread-out the defender's terrain, or to have many uncontested crossing points should a river be present. And having a long waterway makes it hard for the enemy to oppose or block Littoral Landings.

Alternative ways to simulate a larger table

Some players may not have the luxury or desire to play on a 20 BW table, and these do have a disadvantage as they can make it harder to reach the the enemy camp. So here are some alternatives to 'simulate' a larger table.

On small tables 15 BW deep, Cv and LH have to advance, or they risk not having enough room in which to flee. Therefore, all fleeing troops contacting *a table <u>base</u> edge* **halt** if they have already moved at least half of their flee move, otherwise they leave the table and are permanently lost. Those recoiling or pushed back are still lost.

When any '*wing troops*' (i.e. LH-LCm, Cv-LCh, Cm, Ax, Ps, and Mtd-Inf) recoil or are pushed back over *a table <u>side</u> edge*, they are placed beside that table side edge and can individually return (with any corner or edge touching that table edge and partially within 1 BW of where they left the table) for 2 PIPs, providing they do not make any kind of enemy contact, and they cannot move that bound. While off the table they do still count as being lost, have no Threat Zone, and cannot shoot or be shot at. Non '*wing troops*' are still permanently lost.

The basic rules already acknowledge that table edges are artificial and do not exist out there in the real world. That is why the new 'pivot-and-turn-to-flee-down-a-table-side-edge' rule was incorporated into DBA 3.0. The above suggestions merely extend this principle, and allows a small 15 BW table to have roughly the same effect as playing on a larger deeper 20 BW battlefield.

Historical examples and links to the sources:-

There are many accounts of mounted troops being deployed on the wings, where they can make use their extra speed and mobility, rather than being in the centre and limited to just making frontal charges like infantry...

Examples of simulating a larger table.

All wargames played on a table suffer from the effects of 'the table edge'...an artificial barrier that does not exist in reality. So here is an in-depth study of this to see how we can best simulate the freedoms of the large 20 BW table when restricted by the narrow confines of a small 15 BW battlefield.

Take the following scenario on a large 20 BW table (diagram 1):-
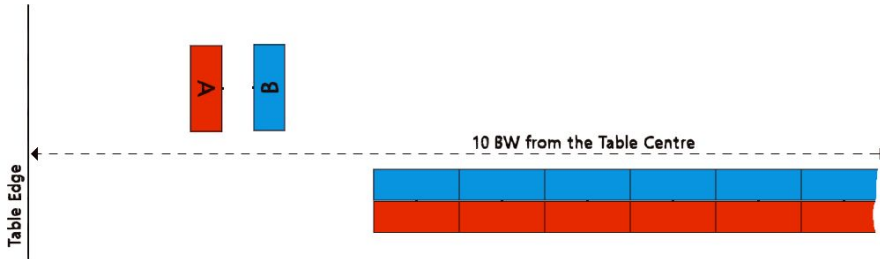
Here are the salient points of the above situation:-

   Element 'A' and 'B' are in each other's Threat Zone, so movement is limited.
   Element 'A' will be free to move if 'B' moves away, so 'B' is just as much out of the battle as 'A' is.
   Element 'A' will *probably* cost 2 PIPs to move, because it is *likely* to be so far from its general.
   If either element advances into contact, combat will be without any overlaps on either element.
   Both elements can still be shot at, if any shooters are in suitable range.

Now let's look at the same situation on a small 15 BW table using the proposed simulated rules (diagram 2):-
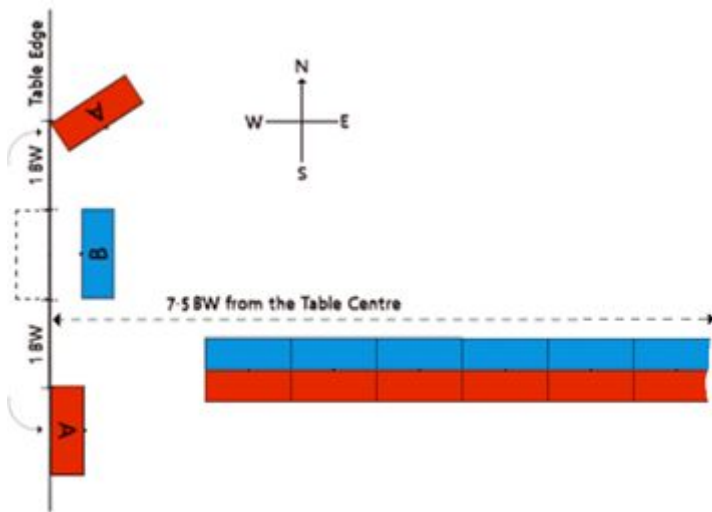
Here 'A' has left the table, and wants to return.
It could do so either to the north or south of element 'B' for 2 PIPs, but cannot move further that bound.
The position shown to the north has pinned element 'B' with its Threat Zone.
If 'B' does nothing, 'A' will be free to zoom off further north to harass the blue camp.
If 'B' attacks, 'A' has one front-corner less than 1 BW from a table edge ("Phantom Overlap"), so will be at -1.
Note that if 'A' recoils, it will again leave the table, but can return 1 BW further behind the blue battleline.
So 'B' is tied-up chasing after 'A' (just like on a 20 BW table), at least until a lucky die roll kills 'A' or help arrives.

Of course, if players are willing to have the invader choosing the table size, then it will be they who decide whether to play on an ordinary 15 BW table or a simulated-extended 15 BW table...or just use a 20 BW table. But remember that if table edges on a small 15 BW battlefield are artificial and don't exist in reality, then the same can be said of the table edges on a large 20 BW battlefield as well (although it is quite rare to have troops quite so close to a battlefield edge on a large 20 BW table, it can still happen sometimes).

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8. **Historical location of Generals**

DBA has generals tied to an element at deployment, usually a mounted element. But a look at the historical accounts of ancient battles shows this is not where many real-life generals actually were.
To be more historical, generals should have more freedom in their battlefield location:-

(To be added to "Troop Definitions" on page 3 of the basic rules:-)

> **Unless already a Knight or Heavy Chariot, a mounted general may be deployed with _any_ foot element.**

Historical justification

The army lists often have a general permanently attached to a mounted element, and this causes problems, as battles can end far too quickly by simply losing two mounted on the wings (one being the general) and a single foot element (a Psiloi would do)...and all this is before the main infantry battleline even comes into action!

The effect of this rule

If an army list gives a choice, then players have to decide on the location of their C-in-C.
If an army list says their C-in-C is on foot, then they have no choice and that is where the C-in-C will be.
If an army list says they are mounted, then players may attach them to a foot element, unless they are Knights.

The reason why Knight/HCh generals stay as knights is to simulate the Macedonian and Medieval practise of having the commander permanently surrounded by his own personal Companions, bodyguard, or royal retinue.

Note that generals cannot change their location during a fight (but they may be allowed to dismount in battle). Their location is decided during deployment, and is permanent for that engagement.

And rather than drawing up a list of which foot elements a non-knight general can or cannot be attached to, we think it is better to follow Phil Barker's thoughts when he once said "we should not make rules to prevent players from making mistakes". So although we can find no evidence of a general ever being permanently attached to a Horde, Psiloi, or an Artillery element, we cannot definitely say they never did either.
(Remember, generals only gain +1 when in close combat *or if shot at*...)

Historical examples and links to the sources:-

The location of Hannibal at Cannae, 216 BC:-
"Hasdrubal commanded the Carthaginian left, Hanno the right, and Hannibal himself with his brother Mago the centre."
(Source: https://www.johndclare.net/AncientHistory/Hannibal_Sources6.html section 114)

The location of both generals at Cannae, 216 BC:-
"Aemilius, though he had been on the right wing from the outset and had taken part in the cavalry action, was still safe and sound; but wishing to act up to what he had said in his address to the troops, and to be present himself at the fighting, and seeing that the decision of the battle lay mainly with the legions, he rode along to the centre of the whole line, where he not only threw himself personally into the combat and exchanged blows with the enemy but kept cheering on and exhorting his men. Hannibal, who had been in this part of the field since the commencement of the battle, did likewise. It was here that Lucius Aemilius fell in the thick of the fight after receiving several dreadful wounds."
(Source: https://www.johndclare.net/AncientHistory/Hannibal_Sources6.html section 116)

The location of both generals at Zama, 202 BC:-
At Zama Hannibal wasn't on his right with the Carthaginian cavalry, or he'd have routed off the field with them.
At Zama Scipio wasn't on his left with the Roman cavalry, or he'd have gone off on a wild chase with them.
(Source: https://www.johndclare.net/AncientHistory/Hannibal_Sources8.html for both Polybius' and Livy's accounts)

There are also many instances of generals deliberately killing their own horse before an engagement in order to boost the morale of their foot soldiers, thus demonstrating that they intend to fight on and not flee from the battle.

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9. **Historical Army List Adjustments**

As the basic Army Lists are meant for tournament play, it is sometimes necessary to adjust these for specific battles. So here are a few suggested adjustments to some of the army lists to make them a bit more historical.

Spartan Armies (**I/52a**, **II/5a**, **II/5k**, **II/31c**)
These armies may if they wish deploy *less than half* of their hoplites as 4Bd, one of which must be the general. The other Spears in these armies are ordinary Perioikoi, Peloponnesian, Ionian or mercenary hoplites.
(Not everyone in a so-called 'Spartan' army is an elite Spartiate, and their numbers declined over the centuries. Note that Cavalry merely flee when they are doubled by Spears, but they are destroyed when doubled by Blades)

II/7 Later Persians (420 BC - 329 BC)
...3 x kardakes (4Ax) or takabara (3Ax or 3Bw) or mercenary hoplites (Sp)...
(Some ancient historians say that Alexander faced an arrow-storm at the Battle of Issus in 333 BC)

II/12 Philip and Alexander (359 BC - 319 BC)
...1 x hypaspists (3Bd or 4Ax)...
(The hypaspists were the elite of the Macedonian army, and acting as 3Bd they are greatly superior to 4Ax)

II/15 Alexander Imperial (328 BC - 321 BC)
...1 x bolt-shooters (Art) or elephants (El) or local mercenaries (3/4Ax)...
(This army forces players to take either Art or El...neither of which were used in battle in the Indian campaign)

II/32c Hannibal's Carthaginian Army (216 BC - 202 BC)
...**2** x Libyan 'spearmen' (Sp or 4Bd veterans), **2** x Spanish scutari or Ligurians (4Ax)...
Arable, Aggression: 2.
(The Libyans used captured Roman equipment after 217 BC, and their behaviour was more like 4Bd than Sp. Giving Hannibal a lower aggression means he gets to choose the battlefield, and if using the "Defender wins at nightfall" rule, it will be up to the Romans to make rash attacks or lose the battle...which sounds realistic)

IV/62 100 Year's War English (1322 AD - 1455 AD)
Aggression: 2
(This gives them 4 chances out of 6 of being the defenders and picking the terrain, which is far more historical. Again, if using the "Sun Clock" it encourages the French to rashly attack, or as the defenders the English will win)

IV/64 Medieval French (1330 AD - 1445 AD)
Aggression: 3
(Note that if the French are the 'invaders' when fighting the English, that does not mean they have landed in England. It just means they are fighting in English held territories in France...or the English have invaded France but have picked the field of battle and are fighting defensively that day)

Weak Auxiliary-Psiloi Armies (notably the I/47 Illyrians, I/52h Aitolians, I/63 Panionians, and the II/54 Irish)
Aggression: 0...or armies with 7 Ax+Ps have an aggression *2 less* than that of their opponents (minimum zero).
(With relatively high aggression, these armies stand next to no chance if they are the invaders as the defenders will deny them anywhere to hide in, and they have very little punch'. So give 'em a chance to choose the terrain, and let the owners of weak Auxiliary-Psiloi armies decide for themselves whether to be slaughtered or not)

And Finally
Players may also be interested in the "House Rule Index" which can be found here:-

This contains many, many other player generated ideas and suggestions to enhance play.

COMBAT EFFECTS CHART

OPPONENT'S COMBAT FACTOR

(<--- Tactical Factors)   (Overlaps & Penalties --->)

YOUR COMBAT FACTOR

(Tactical Factors --->)   (<--- Overlaps & Penalties)

Legend (repeated for each row block):
- Opponent Doubled
- Opponent Recoils
- Equal Score
- You are Recoiled
- You are Doubled

The numbers above show the 36 possible outcomes, depending upon the initial combat factors, caused by both players rolling a die when using the DBA or HoTT two dice combat system. A recoil result can mean being destroyed, and an equal score is a destroyed result for Kn or Cm in close combat with Lb, Cb, or Bd. Likewise, a doubled result can mean the troops will flee.