



Hard-Men

Soldiers of Misfortune



A war that began in Bohemia in 1618 had engulfed Europe. For many these were the darkest of days with countless lives blighted by violence, starvation and disease. This was also a time of great opportunity for those willing to risk their lives in battle. Thousands of men from many different nationalities swarmed to the conflict to enlist as mercenary troops. It was during these terrible times that rumours began to emerge of the most fearsome of all mercenaries.

“ After the gate had been blown he was one of the first of the enemy cavalymen to enter the courtyard. Two of our best men, just to the right of me, fired at him. I swear I saw the bullets go through his buff-coat , but they did not hurt him. He then laid into our poor lads with a pole-axe, killing all that stood in his way. We fled for our lives. I am not a coward but I say this was no ordinary foe. He was shotte-free and I did not want to fight the Devil”.

Pikeman Leggitt, August 1635

It has been written* that some of the Croatian mercenaries were raised in a remote village where the Keepers of their Forests knew of a special herb, which they gave to selected youngsters to make their skin so tough it be ‘shotte-free’. After several years of rigorous and brutal training those that survived would become Hard-men.

Hard-Men - Veterans

Manoeuvre (on foot)	Easy 5, Tricky 4, Nasty 3
Manoeuvre Proximity (on foot)	Easy D3+3, Tricky D3 +3, Nasty D6
Take Aim Close	2+ (Shoot on the move 3+)
Take Aim Medium	3+ (Shoot on the move 4+)
Take Aim Long	4+ (Shoot on the move 5+)
Reload	2+
Fisticuffs Attack	D6 +3
Fisticuffs Defend	D6+3
Self Control	2 or higher on a D6
Constitution	2 points plus Hard-Man
Whats that noise?	5 or less on a D6
Senses	'5 on a 2'
Gumption	Grit & spit', lock pick D6 +5, expert forager, fingers and thumbs , ride, Slash & Gallop
Weapons	Two pistols, sword & pole-axe

Mounted hard-men manoeuvre as per cavalry (page 56)



Hard-man pole-axes Witchfinder.



Hard-Men (figures by Redoubt Enterprises)

* In the late 17th Century John Aubrey (1626 - 1697) wrote about an alleged hard-man, Captain Fantom, who had fought in the English Civil Wars.

Grit & Spit. Although unnaturally tough hard-men appreciate their mortality and if required are skilled at getting out of a fight. Hard-men have little regard for honour and will use any dirty trick to escape from unwanted combat. A hard-man that *is engaged in fisticuffs* can be issued with a Grit & Spit command.

One opponent. Roll a D6 and on a 2+ a hard-man can move their normal manoeuvre distance out of fisticuffs.

Two opponents. Roll a D6 and on a 3+ a hard-man can move their normal manoeuvre distance out of fisticuffs.

Three opponents. Roll a D6 and on a 4+ a hard-man can move their normal manoeuvre distance out of fisticuffs.

If the roll is less than required to escape the hard-man's attempt to leave the fight has failed and fisticuffs will occur (treat this the same as if the hard-man had been issued with a *resume fisticuffs* command). Deduct 1 from the hard-man's attack and defend score(s) during the ensuing bout of fisticuffs. His feint was foiled.

Expert Forager. Hard-men are adept at foraging. Add 1 to all rolls that are made for attempts to 'bag livestock' as per page 87 & 88 of the main rules.

Add 2 to all rolls that are made to locate hidden **family jewels*.

Pole-axe. Hard-men will often brandish the old fashioned pole-axe during close combat to crack enemy heads. A mounted hard-man using a pole-axe will add 2 to the first roll made on the fisticuffs injury chart against an opponent on foot. If their opponent is also mounted, or both combatants are on foot, or the hard-man is on foot against a mounted (or flying) opponent - only add 1 to the first roll made on the fisticuffs injury chart.

An enemy figure wearing a helmet does not receive an avoid harm roll against any blow from a pole-axe.

All is lost. If a force initially contained 25% or less hard-men at the start of the game then surviving hard-men do not take part in any rolls to determine if *All is Lost* (page 43) once the *casualty* limit has been reached. If their allies fail an *All is Lost* roll the hard-men will not lose any 'foraging points' (page 93) for retreating. The hard-men realised that the battle was lost a little earlier than their allies and were the first to make their retreat. Any livestock or goods that were placed on, or tethered to, an allied wagon are also exempt from any applicable deductions on a roll of 5+ on a D6. The hard-men escaped during the confusion of battle with the loot laden wagon(s) too.

In all other circumstances hard-men test for *self-control* as per the main rules.

Hard-Men have 2 constitution points. They are 'shotte-free' and to represent this have an avoid harm roll of 3+ on a D6 against all hits from an ordinary musket or pistol shot. This does not apply against blows made against them in fisticuffs. Hard-men ignore all injury rolls of 1 or 2 from aimed fire or fisticuffs.

Note.

The Hard-Men rules are still experimental.

Players can introduce hard-men to their games in a number of different ways. One or two hard-men can be used to replace 'Blinder Captains' or 'Blinder Cavaliers' in the encounters contained in the main Witchfinder General rulebook.

For some encounters players can also make them opponents of the forces of evil - perhaps the mercenary hard-man was in the wrong tavern at the wrong time. The Witchfinders would however take a very dim view of their temporary allies on discovering they were their 'shotte-free'. Hard-men could be quite horrid to the innocent civilian population too and their drunken & despicable behaviour off the field of battle would not enamour them with the Witchfinders either!

"I care not for your Cause: I come to fight for your half-crowne, and your handsome woemen"

Captain Fantom

* *Family Jewels*. A generic term that will shortly be introduced to the game to describe precious items that all kind of folk, when under attack will, try to hide in their homes. This could range from a humble farmer's small bag of coins to a lord's solid gold goblet. Hard-men are particularly good at finding such hidden items.