

The Russian Army in the Russo - Japanese War

After the Napoleonic wars the Russian Army fought two major wars in the 19th century. The Crimean War and the Russo Turkish War. They lost the Crimean War but won against the Turks.

The Russians had a standing army of about 1 million soldiers but the army could easily be increased to 3.5 million soldiers. This vast numbers and a proud military history probably made them believe to beat the Japanese easily.

The Russian conscript soldier followed the confidence of the superiors and was convinced to win the war in a relative short time. This enthusiasm was quickly shattered.

There were many reasons why the Russian Army failed in this campaign. It was not only that mostly second rate troops had to fight the Japanese while the better troops were kept home to secure the Tsarist government.

An important consideration was the fighting prowess of the Japanese army which was wantonly underestimated by the Russians. It seemed to be impossible that a Japanese army with little tradition and experience could harm the Russian Bear.

Another reason was the ill condition of the Russian Army.

Old fashioned command structures and bureaucracy slowed down army decisions and even more important: The supplies.



In contrast to the Japanese Army there was no bond between the conscript soldier and the officers.

Lacking leadership qualities the Russian officers often had an aristocratic background or came from the gentry and therefore looked down at the Russian conscript who was drafted from the rural population.

The payment was low and service conditions were usually harsh.

While the Japanese soldier saw conscription as an honorable deed the Russian conscript saw his service as an inevitable burden.

Common special rules

Any Russian infantry unit may use the Tough Special Rule

Unit Quality

Due to ill morale - resulting from bad supply in food and equipment - plus the disordered relationship between officers and conscripts all Russian infantry units in your force may be of "Raw" or "Trained" quality. However you are allowed to field one "Veteran" infantry unit in your force.

Cavalry units may be of "Raw" or "Trained" quality.

Unit Size and Organization

Infantry units consist of a minimum of 5 figures and may include a maximum of 12 figures per unit.



Cavalry units consist of a minimum of 4 figures and may include a maximum of 6 figures.

For every 10 figures in your force you may upgrade a single figure to Leader status, which is either an NCO or an Officer.

Basic Units

Regular Army Units

RUSSIAN OFFICERS are equipped with a pistol or revolver and a sword.



RUSSIAN NCOs and infantrymen are equipped with a rifle and bayonet.

Cavalry Units

Most cavalry units of the Russo – Japanese War were Cossacks.

However other cavalry units involved were Dragoons and Mounted Frontier Guards.

Dragoons have their origin as mounted infantry. Troops that are able to ride and fight using infantry skills.

You can class them as light infantry on horseback.

Russian Cavalry units are equipped with carbines and swords.

Cossacks

The Tsarist government relied heavily on the Cossacks. Yet they had a reputation of being badly trained with poor morale and discipline.

This probably resulted of the fierce image they generated during their own history.

With few exceptions (ambush and raiding missions) Cossack units were used for scouting and reconnaissance but mainly had to protect the Russian line of communication.

Cossacks are equipped with carbines, swords and lances.

When you read about Cossacks in the Russo – Japanese War you don't see much of the flamboyant wild and brave horsemen with a long tradition of a warrior.

It might be that this is correct but for game purposes we make them a bit more colourful. To represent the Cossacks ferocity every Cossack unit receives one additional combat die in the first round of close combat. It does not matter if they are the charger or defender.

Naval Troops

Naval Troops are either a troop of armed sailors or marines used in support of army regiments or as a temporary ad hoc force until army regiments can be brought to the theatre.

The Russian Naval Troops units may be of "Raw" or "Trained" quality.

Naval units consist of a minimum of 5 figures and may include a maximum of 12 figures per unit.

Naval Troops are equipped with rifles and bayonets .

Your force may include one or more Naval Infantry units or none at all.



Support Units

You may add heavy weapon support to any Russian force.

For every three infantry or cavalry units or part thereof, you may include a single piece of artillery or an automatic gun.

Example: If your force includes three infantry units, you may add a single artillery piece as a support unit.

If your force included three infantry units and a cavalry unit, you may include a second piece.



Artillery

All artillery pieces are field guns and should be organised in a single unit (battery). Each gun must have a crew of 4 to 5 men. Artillery units may be of “Trained” quality.

The gun crew may be armed with, rifles. If the crew has an officer as leader you can equip the model with a pistol or revolver and a sword.

Machine Guns

Russian machine gun units are of “Trained” quality. The crew consists of 4 to 5 men.

The crew may be armed with rifles. If the crew has an officer as leader you can equip the model with a pistol or revolver and a sword.

Historical note :

Modern machine guns were widely used during the Russo Japanese War and the amount of casualty they caused was nearly 50 percent.

The Russian machine gun was used as a defensive weapon. It was fitted on a limber and had a gun shield to protect the crew.

Protection

Designer`s note: The following is an optional rule which should be agreed upon by the players before the game starts.

If the Russian machine gun is hit by small arms fire (rifle, carbine, pistol) all Damage Rolls are modified by +1 to represent the additional protection for the crew.

Auxiliaries

The Russian army used Chinese troops as auxiliaries. Those units were mostly used for guard duties.

The quality of those infantry units are of “Raw” status.

You can field one Chinese infantry unit in your force.

This unit is equipped with rifles and bayonet and must contain a leader.

Special Rules

Tough :

Russian soldiers always proved themselves as tough warriors when it came to hand-to-hand combat.

Every Russian unit ignores any wounded result in the first round of close combat. Which means that wounded results are treated as suppression results.

The Japanese Army in the Russo - Japanese War

With the beginning of the Meiji Restoration in the year 1868 Japan was undergoing many changes and reformations. One of these reformations was the birth of a conscript army.



Before the Meiji Restoration Japan's society was based on strict social ranks and it was impossible for a farmer to be a soldier. This right was reserved for the Ashigaru and the Samurai.

However the Meiji Restoration changed this tradition and within years Japan formed a conscript army. The first successful combat experience was made during the Civil War of 1877 and next in the war against China and the Boxer Rebellion.

Foreign observers rated the quality of the Japanese infantry close to European standard.

At the time of the Russo - Japanese war the Japanese Army numbered about 400,000 soldiers.

The common soldier was provided with sufficient food, clothing, free time and pay. The soldiers were led by well educated officers.

The Japanese officer was endowed with endurance, self-discipline and most important the spirit of the Samurai.

Those officers were anxious to assign this spirit and codex to the common soldier to gain the optimum during battle.

When war broke out Russia had to face a Japanese army, that was well trained, well equipped, well led and highly motivated.

Common special rules

Any Japanese infantry unit may use the Ban-zai Special Rule.

Unit Quality

All Japanese infantry units in your force may be "Trained" or "Veteran" units.

You are not obliged to include "Raw" Japanese infantry units unless playing a historical scenario which would require such units to be present.

Cavalry units may be of "Raw" or "Trained" quality.

Unit Size and Organization

Infantry units consist of a minimum of 5 figures and may include a maximum of 12 figures per unit.

Cavalry units consist of a minimum of 4 figures and may include a maximum of 6 figures.



For every 10 figures in your force you may upgrade a single figure to Leader status, which is either an NCO or an Officer.

Basic Units

Regular Army Units

Japanese Officers are equipped with pistol or revolver and a sword.

Japanese NCOs and infantrymen are equipped with rifle and bayonet.

Japanese Cavalry are equipped with carbines and swords.

Naval Troops

Naval Troops are either a troop of armed sailors or Marines used in support of army regiments or as a temporary force until army regiments can be brought to the theatre.

Naval Troops units may be “Trained” or “Veteran”.



Naval units consist of a minimum of 5 figures and may include a maximum of 12 figures per unit.

Naval Troops are equipped with a rifle and bayonets .

Your force may include one or more Naval Infantry units or none at all.

Support Units

You may add heavy weapon support to any Japanese force.

For every three infantry or cavalry units or part thereof, you may include a single piece of artillery or an automatic gun.

Example: If your force includes three infantry units, you may add a single artillery piece as a support unit.

If your force included three infantry units and a cavalry unit, you may include a second piece.

Artillery

All artillery pieces are field guns and should be organised in a single unit (battery). Each gun must have a crew of 4 to 5 men.

Artillery units may be of “Trained” or “Veteran” quality.

The gun crew may be armed with a handgun, rifles or carbines.

Machine Guns

Japanese machine gun units are either of “Trained” or “Veteran” quality.

The crew consists of 4 to 5 men.

The crew may be armed with a handgun, rifles or carbines.

Historical note :

Modern machine guns were widely used during the Russo Japanese War and the amount of casualty they caused was nearly 50 percent.

The machine gun primarily used as a defensive weapon was first and foremost used as an attack weapon by the Japanese.

The air cooled and light Hotchkiss machine gun was easier to move and favoured this new tactic.



May fire on the move

Designer`s note: The following is an optional rule which should be agreed upon by the players before the game starts.



If the Japanese machine gun unit consist of 4 or 5 men and is equipped with a Hotchkiss machine gun the unit is treated as a light machine gun when moving.

Please use the light machine gun stat line but reduce the 4 shots down to 3 shots.

All other rules apply.

Auxiliaries

The Japanese army used Chinese troops as auxiliaries to operate behind Russian lines.

The quality of those infantry or cavalry troops are either of "Raw" or "Trained" status.

You can field one Chinese infantry or cavalry unit in your force to harass the Russian army.

These units are equipped with rifles or carbines and must contain a Leader.

Special Rules

Banzai attack

The Banzai attack had its origin in the Samurai tradition. It was more dishonourable to surrender than to die.

As a consequence a suicide attack was a reasonable alternative to retain honour!

For rule purposes this means that Japanese units will always try to finish the charge.

When a Japanese unit has to check for pinning before it has completed the charge the unit can ignore the roll for pinning and goes right into close combat if the charge distance is sufficient.

However the unit has to allow pinned markers as modifiers for close combat.

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