

## ADVANCED RULES FOR THE ALAMO

by  
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This article, in its final form after the editor got hold of it, was published in MOVES #92. Unfortunately it was severely cut back in length in order for it to fit into its allotted space in the magazine. Here is the original article as it was submitted.

In Fire & Movement #105, the game **THE ALAMO** (Decision Games) was reviewed by David Newport and he gave it an overall grade of C+. The thing that said it all was that the game was fun to play a few times and after that it becomes stale. I could not agree with him more. Many things out were left out for ease of play and simplicity. Because of this it is an introductory game and nothing more. But I wish to make something more of it. The following advanced rules are designed to bring **THE ALAMO** to a more sophisticated level and make it more of a challenge to play. Many of the things introduced in this article are historical in nature with an occasional item of cinematic effect for a little bit of chrome. Through out this article there will be references to certain types of counters, which are not included in the game. Players will have to craft them for themselves.

### INTENSIVE FIREPOWER

Historically the Texans in the Alamo were an overarmed bunch. Weapons seized from the Mexican garrison during the taking of the Alamo and San Antonio the previous year were stockpiled in the Alamo and used by the Texans during the siege. There were 300-400 extra muskets, 100+ pistols, and numerous swords and lances, which meant that many defenders, which were not manning a cannon, had three or four loaded weapons at their positions. This allowed the Texans to lay down a devastating defensive fire during the opening volleys of the assault. However after the initial volleys were fired the Mexicans were at the foot of the outside walls and the Texans were so busy trying to keep them from climbing the walls that they rarely had time to reload more than one weapon before having to fire again. Thus the firepower advantage the Texans had over the Mexicans was gone after a few minutes. To simulate this intensive firepower use the following rules:

1. After the Texan player has set up all of his units but before the Mexican player places his units, the Texan player chooses ten of his infantry counters to have an intensive firepower advantage. He writes down their designation and hex location on a spare sheet of paper for record purposes.
2. A Texan infantry unit with an intensive firepower advantage may fire twice during the Texan Combat Phase during any turn in the game. It may only do this once per game. During the turn which it uses intensive fire it may fire twice at the same Mexican unit or fire at two different Mexican units.
3. A Texan player may not choose any Texan infantry unit from Tennessee or Kentucky to have the intensive fire advantage. (These men were armed with rifles not muskets. These weapons took longer to reload and there were a limited supply of them, thus they were not given extra muskets.)
4. A Texan infantry unit, which has the intensive firepower, advantage which moves from its initial location before using this advantage loses it for the rest of the game. (During the battle when the Texans abandoned their initial positions they were usually in a hurry and did not have time to pick up their extra weapons.)

Although most players will usually use this firepower advantage in the first turn, some players may want to withhold using it with some of his units until later in the game when the situation gets desperate.

### ADDITIONAL ARTILLERY MARKER LOCATIONS

Different authorities on the Alamo do not totally agree on the location of all of the Texan cannons. The Artillery Set Up Hexes on the map are what most authorities agree on. However to give the Texan player more variety in his choice of where to put his artillery add the following hexes to the Texan player's list of where to place his artillery markers.

Hex 1807  
Hex 1106  
Hex 0807  
Hex 0708  
Hex 1321  
Hex 1123  
Hex 0924

The Texan player is not required to put his artillery markers in these hexes but he may if he wants to.

#### *Restrictions*

1. On the North Wall, a row of hexes from hex 0509 to 1106, the Texan player must place at least four and no more than five artillery markers.

2. At least one artillery marker must be set up in the artillery positions in the rear of the Church. Should one or two artillery markers be placed in the rear of the Church the infantry markers manning them may freely move them one hex each turn within the limits of the three hex platform that they are on. This is in exception to rule 10.2. (The artillery crews in the rear of the Church were pretty well protected and isolated from the fighting that they were able to do this.)

3. At least two artillery markers must be set up in the hexrow from hex 1321 to hex 1619. (Hex 1321 really should be down in the Cemetery with the other three Artillery Set Up Hexes as some sources have four cannons behind the wooden palisade between the Church and the Low Barracks. However the hex arrangement of the map does not allow this. Besides several movies about the Alamo have a cannon in this location on top of the Low Barracks.)

4. The Texan player may place up to three artillery markers outside the Main Gate in hexes 0924, 1023, or 1123. He may also choose not to put any artillery markers outside the main gate. However if he places any artillery markers in these hexes the first one must be placed in hex 1023 in order to guard the Main Gate. The Wooden Wall protecting hex 1023 is presumed to be extended to protect the second and third artillery markers should they be placed in the other two hexes. If no artillery markers are placed in any of those three hexes then the Wooden Wall is presumed to not exist for that game. (Sources disagree as to how many cannon were positioned outside the Main Gate, the numbers ranging from zero to three.)

## VARIABLE NUMBER OF CANNONS

Again different authorities disagree as the number and types of cannons that were in the Alamo during the siege. The numbers range from 11 to 21. Most experts agree on 17-18 cannons. Again to give more variety to the Texan set up the Texan player must roll on the table below to see how many and what type of artillery marker he gets for the game. He rolls two dice and consults the table before placing his artillery markers during the setting up of the game.

Dice Roll	Number and Type of Artillery Markers
2	(1) 18pdr, (2) 12pdr, (4) 8pdr, (2) 6pdr, (2) 4pdr
3	(1) 18pdr, (3) 12pdr, (4) 8pdr, (2) 6pdr, (2) 4pdr
4	(1) 18pdr, (3) 12pdr, (4) 8pdr, (2) 6pdr, (3) 4pdr
5	(1) 18pdr, (3) 12pdr, (4) 8pdr, (2) 6pdr, (4) 4pdr
6-8	(1) 18pdr, (3) 12pdr, (7) 8pdr, (2) 6pdr, (4) 4pdr
9	(1) 18pdr, (3) 12pdr, (7) 8pdr, (2) 6pdr, (5) 4pdr
10	(1) 18pdr, (3) 12pdr, (7) 8pdr, (2) 6pdr, (6) 4pdr
11	(1) 18pdr, (3) 12pdr, (7) 8pdr, (3) 6pdr, (6) 4pdr
12	(1) 18pdr, (4) 12pdr, (7) 8pdr, (3) 6pdr, (6) 4pdr

Players will have to craft their own extra artillery markers for this rule. Players may place their artillery markers in any of the printed and/or additional artillery set up hexes subject to the restrictions listed in the previous section.

## JIM BOWIE

Most modern historians agree that Bowie who was terminally ill with tuberculosis spent the final battle in his bed most likely in a coma thereby contributing nothing to his own defense, let alone that of the Alamo. Thus when the Mexican soldiers stormed into his room they used his body for bayonet and target practice before going on to look for other defenders. Traditionalists however insist that Bowie though bedridden was awake and shot two Mexicans with his pistols and skewered another with his knife before succumbing to bayonets. Hollywood has further hyped the legend, most notably in the movies *"Last Command"* and *"Thirteen Days to Glory"*, by having Bowie strong enough to get out of bed and tackling a dozen Mexicans before finally dying. If that is not bad enough, in the John Wayne movie *"The Alamo"* Bowie is strong enough to take his place outside defending his position on the wall at the start of the final battle. Thus there are many versions, both real and fictional, of Bowie's final minutes. In this rule the Texan gets to determine which version Bowie's end finally takes before the start of the game.

Before setting up the Texan counters the Texan player rolls two dice and takes the result and consults the following table to see what Bowie's status is in the game to be played. The last two results on the table are admittedly a bit of Hollywood chrome but are designed to give a little more variety to the Texan player.

Dice Roll	Bowie's Status
2-3	Bowie is lying in his bed unconscious (if not dead already) and does not awaken during the entire battle. Follow the normal rules for Bowie. For this game Bowie has a leadership rating of zero.
4-8	Bowie though bedridden is awake and at least able to give good account of himself when he is killed. Follow the normal rules for Bowie. In this game he has his normal leadership rating of one.
9-11	Bowie though confined to his quarters due to his illness is able to get out of his bed and give an even better account of himself when he is killed. Follow the normal rules for Bowie except that he may set in either hex 1717 or hex 1321 inside the building. (Hex 1321 was Bowie's normal quarters during most of the siege before he was moved to the Church.) In this game he has a leadership rating of two.
12	Not only is Bowie well enough to take his position outside on the wall, he is even armed with that fancy seven barrel shotgun he had in the John Wayne movie. Bowie may set up anywhere in the Alamo and follows the same rules as the other Texan leaders. In this game he has a leadership rating of three.

## LADDERS

During the assault on the Alamo, Mexican units used ladders to climb the outside walls to get to the roofs and firing platforms on top. This is reflected in the +4 movement point cost to cross an Outer Wall hexside. However in the first half hour of the assault the Mexicans were unable to climb the walls as Texan gunners were aiming for the soldiers who were carrying the ladders in the assault columns. It was not until Mexican musket volleys from the foot of the outside walls suppressed the Texan gunners that they were able to send soldier back to get the ladders from their dead comrades. To reflect this situation use the following rules:

1. When a Mexican unit attempts to cross an Outer Wall hexside and any unit(s) in its column have been fired at on this turn while it is still outside of the Alamo (not necessarily the unit attempting to cross), the Mexican player first rolls one die and takes the result and consults the table below.

Die Roll	Result
1-2	Unit successfully crosses the hexside.
3-4	Unit does not cross the hexside and is considered to have expended 4 movement points for its efforts. (Time wasted waiting for the ladders to show up.) It may continue its movement elsewhere if it has movement points left.
5-6	Unit does not cross the hexside and remains in the hex it attempted to cross the Outer Wall hexside from. (Troops are hiding from Texan gunners in the deadspace at the foot of the wall.)

2. When a Mexican unit successfully crosses an Outer Wall hexside the Mexican player places a ladder counter on that hexside. Any Mexican unit may now cross that hexside without having to roll on the above table. A Texan unit that moves or remains adjacent to that hexside may not remove that ladder counter. (Yes the Texans would push the ladders off the wall but then the ladders would be lying at the foot of the outer wall for the next Mexican unit to come up and use them.)

3. This ladder rules is not used on any other type of wall hexside. (The Church Walls are too high, the Wooden and Stone Walls can easily be climbed over, and the Mexicans would use the ladders, stairs, and ramps that are an inherent part of the Inner Walls to cross them.)

## DOORWAYS

Normally the doorways to the rooms in the Alamo were either open or unlocked. However the doorways to the rooms that faced the interior of the Alamo were specially prepared so that they could be locked and barricaded in case the Texans retreated to these rooms to make last stands in case the Mexicans had stormed the outer walls. General Santa Anna anticipated this and insured that all assault columns were each equipped with several crowbars and axes in order to break through them. When the Texans did indeed retreat to the rooms several Mexican units tried to break through the doors. While a couple did succeed in breaking in, most quickly gave up as musket fire was decimating the troops working on the doors and the Mexicans started using the captured cannons to blast the doors in instead. To recreate this situation use the following rules:

1. Doorways are normally considered to be open and the +1 movement point cost applies when crossing an open doorway hexside. However when a Texan unit crosses a doorway hexside into a room inside a building the Texan player may declare that doorway just crossed to be closed and mark that doorway with a closed counter to indicate that. The Texan player must declare this at the time the hexside is crossed, he can't wait until later in the turn to declare it just to see what happens outside. A Texan unit is not required to close the door if the Texan player does not want it to. Mexican units may not close doorways.

2. No unit may cross a closed door hexside to an inside room and Zones of Control do not extend across into the room either.

3. A Mexican unit which starts the Mexican movement phase adjacent to or moves adjacent to a closed doorway may attempt to break it down. To do so it expends two movement points and rolls one die. If the result is 1-2 the doorway has been broken through and the door is permanently open for the remainder of the game. Any other result means that they failed to break it down. If there is a Texan

infantry unit inside the room adjacent to the doorway add one to the die roll. A Mexican unit may repeat this operation as many times in a turn as it has movement points to expend to do so.

4. When the doorway is again open Zones of Control again extend across it and units may again cross the doorway hexside. The Mexican unit which breaks down the door would still have to expend the +1 movement cost to cross the doorway it just broke down if it moved into the room directly afterward.

5. If a Mexican shoots a cannon against a closed doorway and the shot succeeds, the hexside becomes a clear hexside.

6. A Texan unit which routs through a doorway hexside may cause that doorway to be closed. If a Texan unit routs out of a room through a closed door, the doorway again becomes open if there are no Texan units remaining in the room.

#### **Exceptions:**

**Main Gate:** The doorway in hexside 1022/1023 is the main gate to the Alamo. The Texan player must declare at the beginning of the game after setting up his units whether this doorway is open or closed. If the doorway is closed any Texan units outside the gate manning the artillery markers can not go through the doorway if they want to get inside the Alamo. They will have to climb over the wall. A Mexican unit which tries to break through the gate must roll a one in order to break it down and automatically fail if there is a Texan unit inside the room behind the gate. A Mexican unit which enters the room behind the gate from the other doorway may open the closed gate by expending two movement points to do so. (The main gate was of a sturdier construction than the doorways to the rooms in the Alamo.)

**Church:** The doorway in hexside 1618/1718, like the main gate, is of sturdier construction than all of the other doors. Thus when it closed the Mexicans must roll a one in order to break it down and may not break it down if there is a Texan unit directly behind it. The three doorways to the rooms inside the Church are always considered to be open. They may never be closed. (These rooms were not prepared for last stands like the rest of the rooms in the Alamo were.)

## **FIRES**

During the final assault on the Alamo the Mexicans set fire to two of the rooms on the West Wall. They did this by having a soldier throw in through a window a small incendiary device while the other Mexican soldiers gave him covering fire against the Texans in the room. (Thus the infamous hand grenade scene from the John Wayne movie is not a bunch of Hollywood hype, it really happened.) Like breaking down doorways however, the Mexican units started taking casualties while performing this operation and soon reverted to using cannons. To recreate this situation use the following rules:

1. Only the three Mexican units of the Zapadores battalion in the Reserve Column may perform this operation.
2. To perform this operation a Mexican unit must start the Mexican combat phase adjacent to a gunslit or open doorway hexside of the room to be firebombed. After resolving combat with that unit against the Texan unit inside the Mexican player may make an additional die roll with one die. A result of 1-3 means that a fire has started in the room in question and a result of 4-6 means that a fire failed to start. If a fire has started the Mexican player places a fire marker in the room hex directly behind the gunslit or doorway hexside he fired through.
3. When a fire starts inside a room all Texan units inside that room immediately make a Damage Check. A Texan unit in the same hex and the fire marker adds one to the dice roll of the Damage Check. Results are applied immediately.
4. At the beginning of each Mexican combat phase of all following turns the fire spreads to adjacent inside room hexes of the same room. Place fire markers in the effected hexes. All Texan units still inside the room on fire take another Damage Check, applying the results immediately before any Mexican units conduct combat. A fire does not spread beyond the confines of the room it started in.
5. No unit may enter into a room hex with a fire marker in it. A unit that starts its movement phase in a hex with a fire marker in it must leave that hex during that movement phase. If it can not move out of the hex that unit is eliminated.
6. Fires may not be started inside rooms that have no Texan units in them. Fires may not be started in any hex in the Church.

## **ARMORY**

The Texans had an armory set up in one of the rooms to store extra weapons that were not issued out to the troops on the walls. (These weapons were in addition to the extra ones used in the Intensive Fire rule.) There was also some extra small arms ammunition and powder stored there as well. Historically the armory was located in hex 1414. During the assault about 15 Texans held out in there for about 45 minutes and it was the last room to be cleared by Mexican troops who took about 50 casualties in doing so. To recreate this situation use the following rules:

1. Before setting up his counters the Texan player may secretly record the location of the Alamo armory. It may be located inside a room in either the Long Barracks, the Short Barracks, or the West Wall. It may not be located in the Church. When Mexican units first attack Texan units which are located in the room where the armory is located or move through the armory location hex, whichever occurs first, the Texan player announces that the armory is there.

2. Texan units which are in the same room as where the armory is located have the following advantages:
  - a. They subtract one from dice rolls when making a Damage Check on themselves. This is in addition to all other modifiers.
  - b. They each add one to their Fire and Melee strengths.
  - c. They may go berserk and perform a ferocious counterattack without being stacked with a leader. They are each considered to have a leadership rating of three when checking for the ferocious counterattack.
3. These advantages last only as long as the Texan units stay in that room.
4. When Mexican units moves through the room or a fire has consumed the whole room or the Mexicans have cleared all Texan units from the room then the armory has been destroyed and any Texan units which should later move into the room do not receive any benefits from the now destroyed armory.

## MAGAZINE

The Alamo's powder magazine, which is located in hex 1816, was where most of the gunpowder which was not being used was stored. Most of this gunpowder was of Mexican manufacture and thus of inferior quality which the Texans refused to use unless the rest of their good powder ran out. Several movies depict the magazine exploding from a lighted torch being thrown in there by a dieing Davy Crockett. Historically the magazine did not explode (and Davy Crockett never tried to blow it up) although one Texan named Robert Evans did make a mad dash with a lighted torch to reach the magazine room and throw in the torch. While he did manage to get to the Church from the West Wall running by many Mexican soldiers before they knew was happening, he was gunned down by Mexican soldiers guarding the magazine before he could throw in the torch.

Granted a rule for this event seems to be more chrome than anything else but an attempt was made and the Texan player in this game should be given the same chance as his historical counterpart had. Use the following rules:

1. In the Texan player turn after the Mexicans have eliminated the last Texan unit from inside the Church the Texan may attempt the blow up the magazine.
2. To do so the Texan player must have a leader counter still on the board. The Texan player can not use the Bowie leader counter unless Bowie has a leadership of three for that game. If there are no Texan leader counters left on the board or if only Bowie is left and stuck in his room then the Texan may not attempt to blow up the magazine.
3. To blow up the magazine the Texan must move the closest Texan leader counter from where ever it is to the magazine hex by the shortest possible route that it can legally move by the rules. In this case the leader counter is considered to have an unlimited amount of movement points with which to make his move. The Texan leader counter must move through hexes containing Mexican units and/or their Zones of Control if these hexes constitute the shortest route. If the Texan leader counter reaches the hex where the magazine is located then the magazine blows up.
4. Each time the Texan leader counter enters a hex containing a Mexican unit and/or its Zone of Control that Mexican unit may fire at the Texan Leader counter. This includes a Mexican unit in the same hex as the magazine. Each Mexican unit which does this may only fire once no matter how many hexes under that unit's control or occupation the Texan leader counter enters. The fire attack is treated as a normal fire attack. The Texan leader counter is considered to have a Morale Rating of 10 and may not use its leadership Rating to modify the Damage Check dice roll. When a Damage Check dice roll exceeds ten (after all modifications) the Texan leader counter is killed and the attempt to blow the magazine fails. A Mexican unit which fires at the Texan leader counter may still fire during its normal Combat Phase for that turn.
5. When the magazine blows up all units and artillery markers in that hex and all adjacent hexes are eliminated. In addition all wall hexides in the seven effected hexes are destroyed and considered to be clear hexsides for rest of the game. (If this does not seem a powerful enough blast for some players remember that this was Mexican gunpowder which was not very powerful in the first place.)

## TERRAIN CORRECTION

On the map the Wooden Wall that runs between the Long Barracks and North Wall is not high enough. Many authorities agree that the wall was as high as the Outer Wall. However this wall was a hasty repair job to seal a breach in the wall that existed since the previous year. The wooden slates in the wall had spaces between them that allowed Mexican troops to climb the wall like a ladder during the final assault. Thus the Mexican units should not be able to cross these Wooden Wall hexsides as fast as the normal game allows. To remedy this situation use the following rules:

1. The wooden wall in hexsides 1304/1305, 1204/1305, 1204/1205, and 1105/1205 are now considered to be Outer Wall hexes. This means that it now costs +4 movement points to cross those hexsides. However due to the construction of the wall, Mexican units do not have to roll to see if they have any ladders in order to climb the wall, they may cross at will.
2. There are no Inner Wall hexsides or Rooftop hexes behind this wall. However Mexican units may still enter the hexes behind the wall. (There was an earthen berm behind the wall reinforcing it which the Mexicans used to come down off the wall.) Mexican units

must still pay the +2 movement points to cross the Inner Wall hexsides adjacent to these hexes if they want to move to the Level 2 hexes adjacent to them.

## **EXTENDED GAME LENGTH**

The current twelve turns represents an hour of real time. Since the final assault lasted 90 minutes the Mexicans are getting short changed in terms of time. Granted after an hour the issue was no longer in doubt but the game's victory conditions are based on how well the Texans do versus their real life counterparts. With all of the advanced rules in this article the Mexican player will be hard pressed to win in twelve turns, considering that many of these rules favor the Texans. Thus it seems only fair to give the Mexicans all of the time that they had historically in order to complete their mission.

1. The game now lasts until turn 18.
2. Rule 16.6 is changed to read as follows: The Texan player wins automatically if he has any combat units or leaders alive at the end of game turn 18.
3. Rule 16.5 Victory Point Schedule is changed to read as follows:

<b>Texan VPS</b>	<b>Level of Victory</b>
17 or fewer	Decisive Mexican Victory
18	Substantial Mexican Victory
19	Marginal Mexican Victory
20	Marginal Texan Victory
21	Substantial Texan Victory
22 or more	Decisive Texan Victory

4. All other rules in Rules Section 16.0 remained unchanged.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is my hope that these rules increase the game's level of sophistication and the players' enjoyment of it too.