A Trench Too Far

This rules set builds upon previous experiences with game design, to provide a comprehensive set of rules for early 20th century low level combat, principally focused around The Great War 1914-18, but covering the period up to, and including, the Spanish Civil War.

WW1 is often viewed as playable only as a skirmish trench raid game, or as a game of regiments and divisions. This is quite a fallacy, as any in depth examination will reveal. The intended scale is that one base of miniatures represents one squad or section. Figures will be grouped together in larger formations to facilitate movement and combat.

Rules are intended to provide an easy, quick moving game, that presents as much detail as possible for the period.

All dice throws are standard 6 sided dice (D6)

Figure designations:
Units are classified based on their troop quality, weaponry, and any traits that are applicable to them. Weapons are further classified based on their range, attack dice thrown, and any special qualities that apply.
During play, there should be little need to extensively reference charts and tables.
Troop quality is primarily determined by morale. There are 5 levels of quality possible, each with an associated target number for any dice throws based on morale.

Shaky	6+
Uncertain	5+
Steady	4+
Determined	3+
Stubborn	2+

Organizing your figures:
The basic formation is the Platoon. A platoon consists of 4 squads or sections of infantry, possibly with various weapons stands attached to it.
During gameplay, platoons are organized together, to form companies. A typical company consists of 4 platoons, plus a command element.
Certain platoons may operate individually, as may some heavy weapons.

Note that the company structure may not match an actual historical company. There can be several reasons for this. Formations may be understrength from casualties and sickness, they may have additional men attached, weapons may be lost, destroyed or malfunctioned, or conversely borrowed, scavenged or outright stolen. In some situations, like the Russian civil war, formations can be highly irregular, and in large dependent on local conditions. In the end, the "company" is a construct for the ease of gameplay, rather than meticulous historical reflection.

Basing is up to the players to determine, depending on miniature scales and personal preferences I recommend 3 figures to a squad, with officers and heavy weapons based individually, crew figures added as appropriate.

Infantry types:
Infantry units can belong to a variety of types, and some designation is in order, to allow the variety of forces that fought in the Great War, Russia and Spain.
Infantry (Rifle) – The most common unit, this represents trained infantry with rifles and (when available) hand grenades.
Militia – Irregular and volunteer forces, armed with whatever is available, often older rifles and

shotguns.

Heavy Infantry – Modern forces with rifles, grenades as well as an automatic weapon, rifle grenade launcher or light mortar

Assault – Troops equipped with close quarter weapons such as submachine guns, grenades, carbines or pistols.

Game sequence:

During each turn, players take it in turns to activate a company. When activated, the company is assigned an order, which determines the overall direction of the company. Each individual platoon may then carry out actions permitted by the company orders.

Once all actions have been carried out, players perform rallying rolls, and prepares for the next turn of gameplay.

To determine who activates first, several options can be employed. The simplest is simply rolling a D6 each, with high roller getting the choice. If the scenario played has a distinct attacker/defender, give the attacker a +1 bonus to the roll. If a side consists mainly (roughly 2/3) of militia or irregular forces, that side receives a -1 penalty to initiative rolls.

Alternatively, a card system may be employed. Each company is represented by one card, and they are then drawn blindly. If this method is used, a Rally and an Artillery card can be added, or these can be performed before and after normal activations as desired.

Company organization:

On the tabletop, two levels of organization must be maintained. Company and Platoon.

Platoons must maintain their bases within 2 inches of each other.

Companies have a central command base, which each platoon and weapons team must remain within 12 inches of.

Any formations that are not fullfilling these 2 requirements are stranded. They may only move to restore a valid formation. Otherwise they must remain in place, and fire at the closest enemy in range.

Company orders:

When activated, a company may be given any of the following orders, as appropriate.

Move
Fire
Assault
Advance   This order may not be permitted to certain units. Check the army lists for detail
Defend
Recover

Move: Permits a company to move its component platoons, take advantage of faster movement rates, if its not close to enemy troops, and retreat from an unsustainable position.

While Moving, one platoon and one weapons team may remain stationary, firing.

Fire: The company remains in its current location, firing at full effectiveness. This permits attached weapons teams to utilize special firing abilities (indirect fire etc). One platoon and one weapons team may elect to forego firing, and move instead.

Assault: Fix bayonets and charge! The company surges forward to engage the enemy, and drive them from their position at close quarters. While assaulting, weapons teams may perform covering fire, or move to maintain integrity.

Advance: The Advance order reflects superior doctrines, and new tactical ideas developed during the war. A company undertaking Advance orders may move, as well as perform weapons fire, allthough at lower efficiency. The company may not march, retreat or use special firing abilities.

Defend: The company digs in, fighting defensively and trying to hold its ground at all costs.

Recover: This permits the company to restore its fighting spirits, rally scattered men, and try to reform some of its strength.

Movement:
Movement is performed by troops under certain orders, principally *Move* and *Advance* orders. Assaulting troops likewise may move, but we will cover this in the Assault section.

Each type of unit has a movement rate, which is how much ground it can cover in one turn's movement.

Unit type	Movement rate	March/Retreat
Infantry	4"	6"
Cavalry	8"	10"
Machine gun	2"	6"
Other heavy weapons	1"	4"

Going prone:
Any platoon may declare its going prone, before or after its movement. A platoon may not both emerge from prone, and go prone in the same turn. A platoon may move while remaining prone, but movement is limited to 1"

March move:
While under Move orders, any platoon that is not within 12" of any enemy troops may March. This increases the units movement rate as indicated by the movement chart below.

Retreat:
A platoon may declare its Retreating, permitting to move at the March rate, but only directly away from the enemy. Only platoons on Move orders may do so.

Cavalry:
Cavalry may elect to dismount during the game, prior to taking any action. They will then conduct the rest of the game as regular infantry. They may not later convert to cavalry again.

Fire:
Firing is conducted by platoon, with each platoon selecting one enemy platoon within weapons range to be targeted. Any successfull fire is spread evenly amongst the target platoon, with casualties removed from those bases closest to the firer.
Each base firing will generate a number of attack dice. The target score required for each die to inflict a "hit" is dependent on the type of action taken. Troops that are Advancing require a 6 to inflict a hit. Platoons firing under other circumstances require a 5-6 to inflict a hit.

For each hit inflicted, the target player makes a saving throw, based on the targets position. Each failed saving throw causes one base to be removed as casualties, the men being either dead or scattered.

Closed order infantry	No saving throw
Dispersed Infantry	6+
Prone	5+
Cover	4+
Entrenchments	3+

Snipers, scouts and remnant units (all are described later) are all considered to be Prone when fired upon. Heavy weapons teams are always considered to be in cover, unless actually entrenched.

Typical weapon ranges and fire dice are indicated below

Rifles	18"	1 attack	
Carbines	12"	1	
LMG	18"	2	
HMG	24"	4	
Trench mortar	15"	2	
Field artillery	36"	2	artillery is capable of far longer ranges, but not under tactical game conditions
Tank MG	12"	1	
Tank cannon	24"	1	
Militia	12"	1	
Anti tank gun	36"	1	

These are typical values, and specific weapons may vary in performance.

When firing, a platoon or weapons team may fire at any target in range, unless enemies are within 8", in which case the platoon must target the closest enemy.

Heavy weapon teams can only be targeted freely, if they are the closest target. If you wish to direct fire at a weapons team that is not the closest target, make an identification roll, requiring a 4+ to be able to target the team. Failure causes the platoon to default to the closest targets in sight.

Machine guns:
Heavy machine gun teams may not fire under Advance orders. If a company is ordered to Advance, any HMG's that do not move may fire normally. LMG's are treated as infantry and may move and fire normally, hitting on a 6, or may remain stationary, hitting on a 5+.
A HMG that rolls 3 or more 1's on its attack dice has jammed or malfunctioned critically, and is removed from play.
HMG's may perform harassing fire. This increases the range to 30", and permits the gun to fire over any intervening infantry units. Harassing fire only inflicts hits on a dice throw of 6, however.

Snipers:
A sniper may elect to fire at any target within his line of sight. A snipers attack hits only on a dice throw of 6. If hit, the target receives a saving throw only on a roll of 6, regardless of position or cover.

Indirect fire:
Mortars may fire at targets they cannot trace a line of sight to, as may artillery pieces, but only if firing at or above half the weapons maximum range. Due to the prevalence of airplanes, observation balloons and local scouting and raiding teams, no additional rules for spotters have been deemed nescesary.
When firing indirectly, troops in cover are treated as Prone, rather than Cover for saving throws, unless the cover provides overhead protection.

Heavy infantry:
Troops that are equipped to ww2 standards, with light machine gun, rifle grenades and possibly a submachine gun are considered Heavy Infantry. These are treated as infantry for most purposes. If firing at an enemy within 12" they may roll 2 dice.

Shock and Disruption:
When subjected to intense enemy fire, platoons may become Shocked, temporarily unable to function, except to defend themselves as best as possible.
A platoon has a Tolerance equal to the number of bases currently in the platoon. This is affected by the platoons morale, as well as other factors.

Outstanding Officer	+1
Determined morale	+1
Stubborn morale	+2
Veteran troops	+1
Currently in trenches, and with no enemy to flank or rear	+1 unless any attacks were from mortars or artillery
Defend orders	+2

If the amount of attack dice directed at a platoon exceeds its Tolerance, its Shocked. Untill regrouped, the platoon may not move, except to move directly away from all visible enemies, and if firing, must fire at the closest targets. Shocked troops require a dice throw of 6 to inflict hits.

Companies are fairly large formations in a game of this scale, and are more robust, though they can still suffer adverse effects.
A company can become Disrupted under the following circumstances:
Company commander is killed – Disrupted untill replaced.
Any platoons shocked – Roll 1D6 when company is activated. If roll is equal or under number of shocked platoons, company is Disrupted this turn.
Company targeted by heavy artillery or gas – Disrupted untill rallied.
Company targeted by medium artillery or under tank attack (within 8") - Disrupted on a throw of 5+

While Disrupted, a company is temporarily unable to pursue its orders effectively. This prevents the company commander from attempting to rally platoons. To issue orders other than Defend or Recover, a dice throw of 4+ must be taken. Companies that fail this roll will default to Defend.

Assaulting:
A company under assault orders may surge forward, to engage the enemy in close quarters fighting. This is usually the decisive moment of an attack. Any platoons that are Shocked may move at their standard movement rate, while platoons that are not Shocked may move at their March movement rate. Any platoons that get at least one base in contact with a base from an enemy platoon will fight a round of assault combat.

Assaulting is a daring endeavour, and the troops morale may falter. Any platoon that has not yet suffered any casualties is considered to be Fresh, and requires no dice throw to assault. Platoons that have sustained any losses (bases removed) must make a Morale test to perform an assault. Failure causes the platoon to remain where it is, though it may fire at enemies within 8", requiring 6's to hit.

If the target platoon is not in trenches, fortifications or buildings, they must make a Morale test when they are contacting, failure causing them to fall back a full move, and become Shocked.

If morale holds up, and contact is made, the assaulting detachment performs its attacks. Each base will throw a number of attack dice as indicated below

Standard infantry	1
Assault troops	+1 per base
Cavalry	2
Veteran unit	+1 per base
Outstanding Officer	+1 (added to total for platoon)
Grenades	+1 (added to total for platoon)

Heavy weapon teams involved in an assault add a single attack die, which is never modified.

Each throw of 5+ will destroy an opposing base. Engineers and troops with close combat weapons

(large numbers of submachine guns or rifle grenades) hit on a throw of 4+

If at least 2 bases are destroyed, the defending platoon is forced to fall back 8" and becomes Shocked. If only 1 or no casualties are inflicted, the defenders will counterattack. Any unengaged units within 6" may move towards the close combat, engaging if they make base contact. If the defenders fail to inflict 2 casualties, the attackers may then move in, and roll attacks again, alternating untill one side is driven off, or wiped out.

Advance:
As time progresses, doctrines are developed to produce more flexible approaches to battlefield movement, with units alternatingly providing covering fire and dashing forward. Army lists will indicate when Advance orders are possible. A company that is Advancing may move as well as fire with each platoon. Each platoon may either conduct its firing, then move, or move, then conducts its firing. The following limitations apply:
Attacks hit only on a throw of 6 and may not target vehicles.
March movement rates are not permitted. No special firing modes may be used (harassing fire f.x.)
The first attack die is disregarded when calculating if a platoon becomes Shocked from the fire.
Heavy Infantry units are well equipped for this type of warfare, and do not receive the fire penalties from Advance orders.

Defend:
Under some circumstances, its better to dig yourself in, and hold on to what you have. Platoons that are Defending may not move, even to counterattack during an assault, but may fire at the closest enemies in range. When fired upon, all platoons are considered to be Prone (5+ saving throw).
Further, since the focus is on holding ground, as indicated above, platoons have a +2 modifier to their Tolerance, and are thus harder to Shock.
It can be hard to motivate troops to leave a defended position, especially under fire. At the end of the company's activation, roll a die. On a throw of 1, the company must be issued Defend orders the following turn.

Recover:
When Recovering, the company attempts to regain its fighting composure, and re-establish itself. This has several effects. Each platoon that is Shocked may take a Morale test to recover from its status.
If the company commander has been killed, a new commander may be placed, within 2" of any platoon of the company. Replaced commanders are never rated as "Outstanding".
Any platoons or weapons teams may relocate 2" either towards the company commander, or away from the nearest enemy (as long as they remain within command distance)
If the company is Disrupted, it recovers from this status.
Lastly, count how many bases of infantry has been destroyed. Roll that number of dice. Each throw of 5+ permits you to place one Remnant infantry base on the table. The effects of these are discussed below. After doing this, any destroyed bases are neutralized completely, and cannot later be regrouped in this fashion, though subsequent casualties may. Note that Militia units cannot be regrouped in this fashion. Any survivors are assumed to have scattered.

End of turn:
When all companies have performed their actions, both players perform their End of Turn activities. These are:
Rally troops. First, roll for each platoon that is Shocked, in companies that are not disrupted. A throw of 5+ recovers them. Second, roll for each company that is disrupted. A 5+ will recover it.
This permits troops to regain their composure "under fire", as well as give an extra chance for platoons that failed to rally under Recover orders.

Determine victory conditions. These will be dependent on the scenario played, or players may simply wish to carry on operations, untill its clear one side is defeated, or both sides are exhausted.

Tanks:
The tank was an invention of the Great War, even though it would take a long time before these weapons came into their own, both due to doctrinal differences, as well as limitations of technology. On the gaming table, tanks fight in platoons of their own, often a platoon consists of a single vehicle, but up to 4 can be grouped together. Players may arrange tanks into companies of their own, or intersperse them with infantry companies as they see fit, representing temporary battlefield assignments.

In game terms, "tank" also covers armoured cars and similar vehicles.

Tanks interface with the normal game rules in the following ways:

Movement:
All tanks have a movement score, ranging from 4 to 12 inches. Unlike ground troops, vehicles are limited to their standard movement score, and may not move faster than this. There is no separate March or Retreat movement rates.

Tanks are rated in terms of their reliability as either Unreliable, Stable or Sturdy. Whenever a tank moves, after the first 2 turns of the game, it must make a reliability test.

Unreliable   3+
Stable   2+
Sturdy   1+

If crossing a trench or similar obstacle, a -1 penalty applies to the roll. A failed roll causes the tank to be immobilized from mechanical breakdown.

Firing:
Tanks perform fire in the same way as normal ground units, though even a single tank usually carry far more weaponry than a normal infantry platoon, making them extremely potent on the battlefield.

When firing at tanks, the system gets a little more detailed. Not all weapons are capable of performing antitank fire, as indicated by the following chart

Weapon	Range	Attacks	Save modifier	
HMG	8"	2	+1	
Trench mortar	15"	1	0	
Artillery	36"	2	-1	
Antitank rifle	8"	1	0	
Tank gun (shells)	24"	1	-1	
Tank gun (AP)	24"	1	-2	T26 main gun etc
Infantry/LMG	6"	1	+2	Militia cannot fire at tanks
Anti tank gun	36"	1	-2	post ww1 guns like PAK36
Heavy infantry	12"	1	+1	slightly better range due to rifle grenades

Hits are calculated as normal. Tanks receive saving throws based on vehicle type, rather than position.

Armoured car	5+
Light tank	4+
Medium tank	3+
Heavy tank	2+

This is modified by the weapon used. Failed saving throws result in a damage roll, to determine the extent of the damages.

1-2 indicates the vehicle is immobilized. A second immobilization or a throw of 3-4 indicates Damage (vehicle must roll 6's to hit). A second Damage or a 5-6 indicates the vehicle is destroyed.

Assault:
In close assault, tanks take hits as normal. Saving throws are without modification, except if assaulted by engineers or anti tank rifles (-1 modifier)
When attacking in assault, a tank rolls 1 attack for every machine gun carried (with a minimum of 1 die)
Tanks may not assault infantry on their own.

Morale effects:
Tank platoons become Shocked, if any tank suffers a damage result from enemy action (immobilized, damaged or destroyed)

End turn:
At the end of the turn, when rolling to rally, each immobilized vehicle may regain mobility by rolling a 6 on a die.

Unit types and weapons:
Now that the basic game rules have been defined, we can give more detail to, and summary of, different unit types available in the game.

Infantry (rifle) – Standard WW1 era infantry, armed with rifles. These form the baseline that other units are compared against.
Militia – Militia units cannot be regrouped into Remnant units. They cannot affect vehicles, except in close assault, in which case they are treated as normal Rifle infantry.
Remnant infantry – These represent a few scattered survivors rallied together into a rudimentary unit. Remnant units are treated as Militia for gaming purposes.

Antitank gun – This represents purpose built antitank weapons, such as the PAK36, 37mm Bofors and the likes. These weapons were inefficient against infantry, but extremely effective against the tanks of the period.

LMG – Light, air-cooled guns such as Lewis guns, Madsen, Soviet DP and similar. For guns less capable of sustained fire (Chauchat, BAR), simply assume that a base represents 2 or 3 such guns.
HMG – Heavy, water-cooled gun such as Vickers, Maxim or Hotchkiss guns. Also includes very rapid firing air-cooled weapons (MG34)

Unit traits:
The three wars we are mainly concerning ourselves with have displayed a bewildering variety of troops, weapons and situations. To give more weight to these, we use the concept of unit traits, which can be applied to any unit as appropriate.

Aggressive
Some units were particularly eager to get to grips with their opposition, or followed doctrines that emphasized the offensive. 1914 French and 1918 Americans f.x.
Aggressive units are considered to be Stubborn (2+) for morale purposes when assaulting or being assaulted. If the company commander is within 12" of enemy troops when the company is activated, it will automatically assume Assault orders, unless half the bases of the company are in trenches or cover, in which case it may select orders normally.

Close order
Troops fighting in close order do not receive a saving throw while in the open, and cannot go prone (except as dictated by Defend orders). Lastly, all artillery fire directed at them will inflict hits on a throw of 4+. On the upside, the closed ranks give a considerable morale boost, and any time the platoon would have become Shocked, roll a die. On a 5+, they shake off the effect, as long as they

have at least 2 bases left. They also receive a +1 bonus to assault motivation rolls.
When deployed in close order, all bases in a platoon must be touching.

Light infantry
Light infantry may disperse their bases up to 4" part and may operate up to 18" from their company commander.

Infiltration
After all troops have been deployed, any infiltrators may perform a double standard move.

Raider
Highly trained and motivated raiding units may both move normally, as well as fire normally. They may do this, as long as their parent company is under Move, Fire or Advance orders.

Rifle Drill
Units trained to particularly high standards of marksmanship and rate of fire can make a significant difference on the table. When on Fire orders, such platoons may roll 2 extra fire dice, if at full strength, or one extra fire die otherwise.

Veteran
Veteran units have extensive combat experience. They receive an extra attack die in close combat, as well as +1 Tolerance, making them harder to Shock.