

Soldateska

By Jean du Poël

62 cards:

10 Daggers

10 Pistols

10 Rapiers

10 Sabers

10 Tobacco

10 Special Cards

- General
- Oberst
- Major
- Hauptman
- Lieutenant
- Flag
- Deserter
- Spy
- Kokette
- Bomb

2 Duel Cards

60 Ducats

6 Character Cards

6 wooden bases

2 special dice (0-4)

1 set of rules

Card Distribution

3 players: 32 cards – remove Daggers, Rapiers & Tobacco

4 players: 42 cards – remove Daggers & Rapiers

5 players: 52 cards – Remove Daggers

6 players: 62 cards – Use all cards

Money

3 players: 30 gold

4 players: 40 gold

5 players: 50 gold

6 players: 60 gold (all)

First Round – The Recruitment Round

At the start no one has a position. Each player throws a die. Whoever rolls the highest will shuffle and deal the cards. This player will also play the first card of the hand. Each player should receive 10 cards. 2 cards are left over. In the recruitment round they will not be used.

For this first round no cards will be traded, and only Officers are trump. The trump order is:

G – General
O – Oberst
M – Major
H – Hauptman
L – Lieutenant
F – Flag
S – Spy

In addition, the two Duel cards count as Jokers.

Game Idea

Soldateska plays somewhat like Skat. For example if a 10 of Sabres is led then the other players must follow suit and play Sabre cards if possible. The player with the highest valued Sabre card wins the trick. If a player does not have the suit led, then he may trump to take the trick, or he may sluff off any other card from his hand. In addition, a Duel card may be played to cause a dice battle for the trick. If trump is led, all other players must play trump if possible. If a player does not have trump he may either sluff or play a Duel card (if he has one).

Game Personalities

For 3 players: General, Major, Deserter

For 4 players: General, Major, Hauptman, Deserter

For 5 players: General, Oberst, Hauptman, Lieutenant, Deserter

For 6 players: (all) General, Oberst, Major, Hauptman, Lieutenant, Deserter

Other combinations are possible, but the General and the Deserter must always be used. After the recruitment round each player sums his won cards. Only the weapon cards (daggers, pistols, rapiers, sabres and tobacco) are considered. Officers and all other special cards have no value. The player with the highest summed card value claims the rank of General, second highest claims Oberst, etc. Ties are resolved by a die roll.

IMPORTANT: However, whoever captured the Deserter card claims the Deserter role. His card values are ignored.

Now the Officers are paid their wages (this is also marked on the role card):

General: 5 ducats
Oberst: 4 ducats
Major: 3 ducats
Hauptman: 2 ducats

Lieutenant: 1 ducat

Deserter: Must pay 1 ducat per trick taken to the bank

However, the Deserter need not pay the bank after the recruitment round.

Whoever holds the Spy rolls the die and receives 0-4 ducats as indicated by the die.

Each Medal holder receives 1 ducat. (Each '10' in every suit has a medal upon it.)

Finally the lowest ranking officer (not the Deserter) collects and shuffles the cards. The Deserter will play the first card of the next round.

The 2nd Round and On

Beginning with the second round the 2 bonus cards are used. The General claims the 2 bonus cards and temporarily adds them to his hand. The General then selects trump. He may declare that only Officers are trump. (General, Oberst, Major, Hauptman, Lieutenant, Flag, Spy) Or he may declare a weapon suit as an additional trump. A weapon suit fits under the flag and above the Spy in rank. Thus: (General, Oberst, Major, Hauptman, Lieutenant, Flag, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Spy)

After the General declares trump he passes 2 cards down to the next ranking officer (Oberst). That officer then passes 2 cards down to the next rank. Etc. Eventually 2 cards are passed down to the Deserter. He places 2 cards of his choice aside. These 2 cards, known only by him, will count for his score.

Weapons

Only the 40 cards with daggers, pistols, rapiers and sabres count as positive points. For each of these suits the '10' has a medal depicted upon it. Medals are worth 1 ducat at the end of the round.

Flag

The flag is the sixth highest trump. Whoever captures the flag will receive 1 better rank than he would otherwise attain (unless he turns out to be the Deserter).

Spy

The Spy is the lowest trump in the game. Whoever holds the Spy at the end of the round rolls a die (0-4) and receives that number of ducats.

Tobacco (Snuff)

Tobacco cards count as negative points. The -10 is the highest card, and the -1 is the lowest card. Players should attempt to take none, or very few of these cards.

Kokette

Whoever holds Kokette at the end of the round rolls a die (0-4) and spends this number of ducats upon her.

Deserter

Whoever holds this card at the end of the round becomes the Deserter. The Deserter ignores the value of his tricks, as he cannot attain a higher rank. But the Deserter must count how many tricks he took in that round, and pay 1 ducat per trick won to the bank.

Note: The Deserter at the start of the round will advance to some rank of officer so long as he does not get the Deserter card in the tricks he wins.

The Deserter always plays the first card of a round.

Bomb

Whoever holds the bomb at the end of the round must roll a die:

- 0 – roll again
- 1 – Dud
- 2 –Blow Up
- 3 – Dud
- 4 –Dud

If a bomb blows up, that officer's fortune is returned to the bank. That player reenters the next round as a new penniless Lieutenant.

Duels

There are 2 Duel cards in the game that act as Jokers. You may play a Duel card against the highest trump. If a Duel card is played, the player who otherwise would win the trick ND THE PLAYER OF THE Duel card hold a dice battle for the trick. High roller wins. If both Duel cards are played in the same trick then 3 players battle for the trick.

End of the Round

1. Resolve the Bomb: (0=reroll, 2=blow up, rest are duds)
2. Resolve the Deserter: (assign Deserter role to holder of Deserter card. He pays 1 ducat per trick taken)
3. Kokette: Maintain her in the style she is accustomed. (0-4 ducats per die roll)
4. Medals: Award 1 ducat per medal held
5. Spy: Receive 0-4 ducats (die roll) for his information.
6. Assign new ranks: Based on value of tricks taken. (The Deserter cannot advance.) The Flag holder if given one better rank than normal.

End of the Game

The game ends when all game money is removed from the bank. It is normal that lower ranked officers are not paid in the final game round. Whoever has the most ducats wins the game.

Game Variants

- In a game for 3, 4 or 5 players, you can use all 62 cards. Each player takes only 10 cards. Since only some cards are used no one will know which cards are in the mix. If the Deserter card is not in the mix an additional officer must be used.
- In a game for 3, 4 or 5 players, you can use all 5 weapon suits, but set out an appropriate number of low value cards of each suit:
 - With 5 players – sort out the 1's and 2's.
 - With 4 players – sort out the 1's through 4's.
 - With 3 players – sort out the 1's through 6's.
- In a 5 or 6 player game, Kokette's cost can be increased to the cost of rolling both special dice (0 – 8) with an average cost of 4.
- The game length can be adjusted by varying how much game money is used.