

British infantry storm across the Bladensburg bridge over the East Branch River.

# WAR OF 1812 SCENARIO

## BATTLE OF BLADENSBURG

### August 24, 1814

#### The Scenario

The scenario covers the entire battle. It can be played by two British and two American players, takes about three hours to play, and requires a 4-ft. wide by 6-ft. deep gaming area when using 15mm figures. The scenario uses the larger 50-men per stand scale.

#### Terrain

Terrain should be laid out as shown in the scenario map. Terrain effects for the scenario are as follows:

**Elevation.** Most of the battlefield is on a single-level elevation that extends west of the East Branch River. This high ground forms two ridge lines separated by a wooded ravine, through

which Bloody Run flows. The first ridge between the river and ravine, has a continuous slope from the base of the elevation up to the crest line along the top of the ridge. The ridge rises to a second-level hill that runs off the west table edge. The crest line blocks line of sight for a stand located on lower ground and over 1" beyond the crest line. The wide and gentle slope facing the river does not provide a defensive modifier in charge combat. A defender on the reverse slope facing the ravine receives a +1 for favorable ground against an attacker charging up the slope.

The west side of the ravine separating the two ridges forms a bluff along the first 3" of slope. Units must move at the rough-ground rate to move up or down this bluff, and it is impassable to artillery. A unit or leader located west of the ravine must be aligned on the top edge of the bluff to see into the ravine or to be seen by a unit down in the ravine. The slope bordering the east side of the ravine does not block line of sight.

Above the bluff, the second ridge has a continuous slope that rises towards two second-level hills along the west table edge. These hills also are marked by crest lines that block line of sight for a stand located on lower ground and over 1" beyond the crest line. A defender receives a +1 for favorable ground against an attacker charging up the bluff or slope.



**Woods and Thickets.** Woods are rated broken ground for movement. The dense thickets bordering the East Branch are rated rough ground. Line of sight through woods and thickets is reduced to 4". In fire combat, the firing stands suffer a -1 modifier for partial cover when firing through woods or thickets, or a -2 for full cover if the target is in open order. In charge combat, a unit defending in woods or thickets receives a +1 modifier for favorable ground.

**Orchard.** The orchard is a minor wooded terrain feature that does not block line of sight. It is rated broken ground for movement. Firing stands suffer a -2 modifier only when firing at a target in open order located in the orchard. The orchard does not provide a cover modifier for units in other formations, and has no modifier in charge combat.

**East Branch.** The East Branch flowing south from the bridge over the river is impassable. Starting on turn 2, the river can be forded north of the bridge, and is divided into a segment of deep fording closer the bridge, and shallow fording further upstream. A unit may cross the river in any formation. Fording is at the rough-ground rate. The unit must end movement in mid stream when crossing at the deep ford segment. The river fords are impassable to artillery. In charge combat, a unit defending unit receives a +2 modifier for strong position against an attacker charging through the deep ford, or only a +1 modifier for favorable ground if charging across the shallow ford. A unit forced to retreat through a river ford, must lose formation and full-retreat broken.

**Streams.** All streams are rated broken ground to cross. In charge combat a defending unit receives a +1 modifier for favorable ground if the attacker charged across a stream. The modifier is not cumulative when also defending in woods or on high ground. The Tournecliff Bridge passes over a stream aptly named in later years "Bloody Run", for the small, secluded clearing below the bridge used as a dueling ground.

**Mill Pond.** The mill pond is impassable. A unit forced to retreat through the pond, must lose formation and full-retreat broken around it.

**Fences.** Wood fences are rated broken ground to cross. A fence line equal to the width of the formation may be dismantled after a unit in line or field column passes through it. A unit in open order cannot dismantle a fence. Once dismantled, a fence does not affect movement or fire combat. Fences do not block line of sight. In a maneuver check, a unit in line or open order aligned behind a fence receives a +1 modifier. Firing stands suffer a -2 if the target is in open order aligned behind a fence. Fences do not provide a defensive modifier in charge combat. Note, the battery in the barbette may pass through a gate adjacent to the barn.

**Roads.** All roads are in good condition. Units in march column, limbered guns, and leaders may move at the road-movement rate.

**Bridge and Causeway over the East Branch.** The road out of Bladensburg crosses over the East Branch on a wood bridge and stone causeway. A unit in march or assault column or moving by the flank in line, a limbered gun, or leader may

move along the bridge and causeway at the road-movement rate. It must move at the broken-ground rate if it exits through the side of the causeway. The bridge and causeway is a defile (see special scenario rule). They do not affect line of sight.

**Barbette.** An American battery is unlimbered in a **barbette** overlooking the East Branch bridge and causeway. A barbette has raised gun platforms to fire over an earthen parapet. Unfortunately, the newly constructed fieldwork was built for bigger cannons than the smaller guns currently occupying it. The 6-pounders could not depress their barrels low enough to fire at targets within the 12" canister range. They only may fire at targets beyond canister range, which limits their fire to targets across or in the river, or on the bridge. The barbette is rated broken ground for troops to cross and does not block line of sight. Guns cannot cross the barbette. In a maneuver check, a unit in the barbette receives a +1 modifier for linear cover. In fire combat, the firing stands suffer a -2 modifier for full cover when firing at any target aligned behind the barbette. Guns in the barbette only have the standard 15-degree arc of fire. In charge combat, a defending unit aligned behind the barbette only receives a +1 for favorable ground.

**Bladensburg.** The town is divided into 4 town blocks. Each town block can be represented by one building. Each block can be garrisoned by one infantry unit or battery and any number of leaders.

The controlling player should state if a leader located inside a town block is attached to a unit garrisoning the same block. A leader in a town block does not exert a command radius outside the block. Also, a leader located outside a block does not exert his command radius into the block.

A unit with a Well Handled maneuver can move half and then change formation to garrison an adjacent block. To exit, it must change formation adjacent to the block and move half. A unit with a Tardy maneuver must start adjacent to garrison a block, or it can only change formation adjacent to the block and hold position to exit.

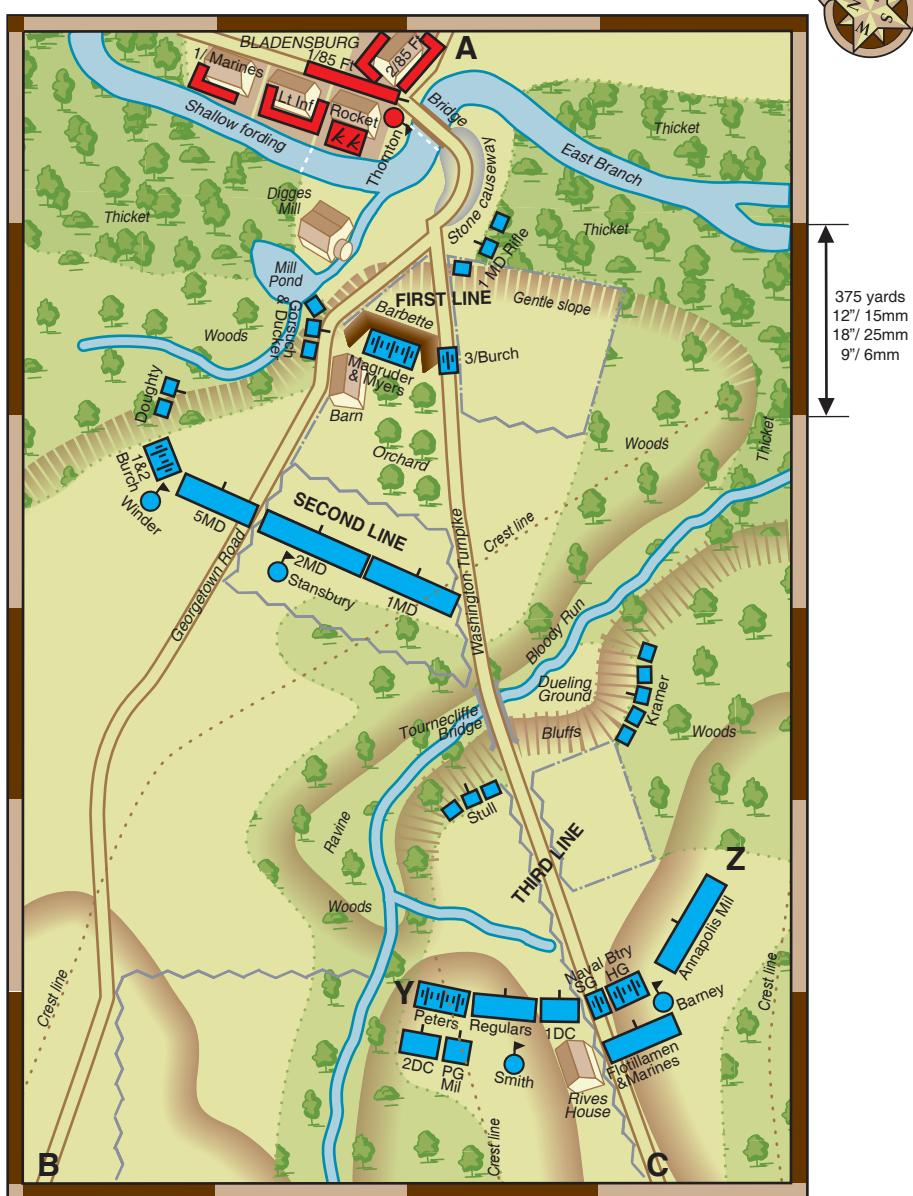
The buildings in the town were mostly wood structures of minor defensive value. Town blocks block line of sight. In fire combat, the firing stands suffer a -1 for partial cover when firing at infantry or artillery garrisoning a town block, or -2 for full cover if half or more of the fire points are from artillery plunging fire. A battery that unlimbered in a town block must align along the edge of the block and has only the standard artillery 15-degree arc of fire.

**Buildings.** The mill, barn and Rives House are separate buildings that cannot be occupied. Buildings are rated broken ground for movement and do not block line of sight. In fire combat, the firing stands suffer a -1 modifier for partial cover when firing through a building, or a -2 for full cover when firing through a building at a target in open order. Buildings do not provide a defensive modifier in charge combat.

**Friendly Table Edge.** Broken American units east of Bloody Run must retreat away from the enemy and toward the Georgetown Road. Broken units west of the stream must retreat away from the enemy and toward the Washington Road.



## Bladensburg Scenario Map



Units may retreat around enemy units blocking their retreat path to a road. Once they reach the road their retreat path must follow the road to where it exits the west table edge. A unit retreating on the road must surrender if it reaches a point where the road is blocked by an enemy unit.

Broken British units must retreat away from the enemy and towards the bridge over the East Branch or across the fords up river, whichever is closer, and toward the east table edge. If a broken unit at the table edge fails to reform in the following Maneuver Phase, its remaining stands are removed and count toward heavy casualties.

## Order of Battle

The following number of stands is needed:

STAND	AMERICAN	BRITISH
Infantry	72	73
Infantry command	14	8
Artillery (gun with limber)	12	2
Rockets	0	1
Army leader	1	1
Brigade leader	3	3
Total	102	88

**American Forces.** Total stands represent a force of 4,700 men and 10 guns. All leaders and units start on the table. All units and leaders, with the exception of the army commander



2nd Line

**AMERICAN** 2  
XXXX 12  
10th Military District Winder Poor

### Bladensburg Scenario

#### American Order of Battle

1st Line

**Winder** 2  
MD Mil Bde Stansbury Poor

<b>1,4</b> 5	<b>1,4</b> 8	<b>1,7</b> 8	<b>1,7</b> 8	<b>1,7</b> 8	<b>1,7</b> 8
(Stansbury) Pinkney 1 MD Rifle Lt Trn 3-/2 mM	(Stansbury) Gorsuch & Ducker Lt Raw 3-/2 M	(Stansbury) 1/ Magruder & Myers/ 6-pdr Trn IcLG	(Stansbury) 2/ Magruder & Myers/ 6-pdr Trn IcLG	(Stansbury) 3/ Magruder & Myers/ 6-pdr Trn IcLG	Detached from DC Brigade 3/ Burch 6-pdr Trn IcLG

2nd Line

<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2,4</b> 5	<b>2,7</b> 10,11	<b>2,7</b> 10
(Stansbury) 1 MD Mil Raw 11/10/9 M	(Stansbury) 2 MD Mil Raw 13/12/11 M	(Stansbury) 5 MD Mil Raw 10/9/7 M	Doughty DC Rifle Lt Trn 2-/1 mM	1/ Burch 6-pdr Trn Half-IcLG	2/ Burch 6-pdr Trn IcLG

3rd Line

**Winder** 3  
DC Mil Bde Smith Poor

<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3,4</b> 5	<b>3,7</b>	<b>3,7</b>	<b>3,7</b>
(Smith) 1 DC Mil Raw 6-/5 M	(Smith) 2 DC Mil Raw 6-/5 M	(Smith) Stull DC Rifle & Davidson Lt Inf Trn 3-/2 mM	(Smith) 1/ Peters 6-pdr Trn IcLG	(Smith) 2/ Peters 6-pdr Trn IcLG	(Smith) 3/ Peters 6-pdr Trn IcLG

## Detachments

<b>3,6</b>	<b>3,4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1,3</b>
36 & 38 US Regulars Trn 7/6/4 M	Kramer MD Mil Lt Raw 5-/4 M	Pr George Mil Raw 3-/2 M	Annapolis Mil Raw 14/13/12 M

3rd Line

**US Navy** 3,6  
Barney Gallant

<b>3,6</b>	<b>3,8</b>	<b>3,8</b>	<b>3,8</b>
(Barney) Flotillamen & Marines Vet 10/7/4 M	(Barney) 1/ Naval Bty 18-pdr Vet hcSG	(Barney) 2/ Naval Bty 12-pdr Vet hcHG	(Barney) 3/ Naval Bty 12-pdr Vet Half-hcHG

XXXX a,e

Ross Gallant

## British Order of Battle

**ROSS** a  
(Ross) 1 Lt Bde Thornton Gallant

<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>
(Thornton) Lt Cos Elt 6/4/2 M	(Thornton) 1/ 85 Ft Lt Vet 9/6/4 M	(Thornton) 2/ 85 Ft Lt Vet 9/6/4 M	(Thornton) 1/ Marine Trn 4/2/1 M	

**ROSS** a  
(Ross) 2 Bde Brooke Able

<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>
(Brooke) 4 Ft Vet 13/9/6 M	(Brooke) 44 Ft Vet 13/9/6 M	

**ROSS** a  
(Ross) 3 Bde Patterson Able

<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>
(Patterson) 21 Ft Vet 15/11/7 M	(Patterson) 2/ Marine Trn 12/9/6 M	

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Winder, have movement restrictions (see special scenario rule):

1) Units in the first line:

1 rifle battalion (1 MD Rifle) and 1 militia detachment (combined Gorsuch & Ducker) in open order, and 1 unlimbered battery (combined Magruder & Myers) in the barbette

1 unlimbered gun section (3/Burch) from Smith's DC Brigade

2) Units in the second line:

Army leader Winder

Maryland Militia Brigade leader Stansbury with 3 militia regiments (1 MD Mil, 2 MD Mil, and 5 MD Mil) in line

1 rifle company (Doughty) in open order and 1 unlimbered battery (1/ and 2/Burch) from Smith's DC Brigade

3) Units in the third line:

DC Militia Brigade leader Smith with 2 militia regiments (1 DC and 2 DC) and 2 militia battalions (Prince George Mil and Annapolis Mil) in line, 1 infantry battalion (combined 32 & 38 Regulars) in line, 1 militia battalion (Kramer) and 1 combined militia rifle & light infantry detachment (Stull & Davidson) in open order, and 1 unlimbered battery (Peters)

Naval Brigade leader Barney with 1 naval battalion (combined Flotillamen & Marines) in line, and 1 unlimbered battery (Naval)

4) Only the five units rated as light infantry (1 MD Rifle, Stull, Doughty, Kramer, and combined Gorsuch & Ducker) may deploy in open order. Small two-stand and three-stand light infantry units can remain on the table when reduced to one stand (see special scenario rule).

5) The three rifle battalions (Pinkney, Stull, and Doughty) are rated as marksmen, but are armed with smoothbore muskets (mM).

6) All troops are armed with muskets with bayonets, however, only the US Regulars and the combined Flotillamen & Marines may charge with cold steel. All troops cannot fire buck and ball when charging or being charged.

7) All guns in Peters, Burch, and combined Magruder & Myers batteries are equipped with light carriage light guns (lcLG).

8) The Naval Battery is equipped with heavy carriage siege guns (hcSG) and heavy guns (hcHG).

9) Magruder's & Myers' Battery occupy a barbette built for bigger guns, so its light guns cannot fire at targets within canister range. They may only fire at target crossing over or east of the river. Also, the battery were not issued canister ammunition and only may fire shot at all ranges.

10) The two unlimbered gun sections of Burch's Battery on the left of Stansbury Brigade do not have a clear line of sight into the low ground on both sides of the river, that include the town, bridge and causeway. The guns only may perform

plunging fire at targets in this area. Plunging fire applies a -2 modifier for full cover and cannot combine their fire points with other firing units.

11) One light gun stand in Burch's Battery and one heavy gun stand in the Naval Battery are at half-strength.

12) Winder, Smith, and Stansbury are rated poor. Also, the militia leaders cannot command Naval Brigade units.

13) Barney is rated gallant, but may only command units in the Naval Brigade.

**British Forces.** Total British stands represent a force of 4,150 men, 3 guns, and a rocket detachment.

a) Starting units and leaders: Brigade leader Thornton with 1 infantry battalion (1/85 Ft) in an assault column on the road; 1 light infantry battalion (converged Light Companies), 1 regulars battalion (2/85 Ft) and 1 marine detachment (1/ Marines) in garrison, and 1 unlimbered marine rocket detachment (Lawrence) in garrison.

b) Enter on the road at A on turn 4: Army leader Ross and brigade leader Brooke, with 2 infantry regiments (4 Ft and 44 Ft) in march column.

c) Enter on the road at A on turn 7: Brigade leader Patterson, with 1 infantry regiment (21 Ft) and 1 marine battalion (2/Marine) in march column, and 1 limbered battery (Harrison).

d) On turn 1, the 1/85th must launch an attack over the bridge in an assault column (see special scenario rules).

e) Only the four units in Thornton's Light Infantry Brigade may deploy in open order (see special scenario rule).

f) All troops are armed with muskets with bayonets. They may charge with cold steel, but cannot fire buck and ball when charging or being charged.

g) The light gun stand in Harrison's Battery is at half-strength.

h) Ross and Thornton are rated gallant.

## Game Length

Each game turn represents 10 minutes. There are 15 turns, starting with the British player turn at 1:00 PM, and ends after the American player turn at 3:20 PM.

## Victory Conditions

One side must achieve more victory conditions than its opponent to claim victory. Victory conditions are achieved by inflicting heavy casualties and greater losses on the enemy, and occupying the key position, as follows:

**Heavy Casualties.** The American threshold for heavy casualties is determined separately for two higher commands. The British player achieves one victory condition after both American commands reach their threshold. After Stansbury's command, consisting of all units in the first and second lines, reach its threshold after losing 10 (20%) troop or gun stands; and after the third line, consisting of Smith's and Barney's commands, reach a separate threshold after losing 15 (25%)



troop or gun stands.

The American player achieves one victory condition after the British reach their threshold of 30% losses. The threshold starts at only 9 troop or gun stands lost before reinforcements arrive. The threshold increases to 17 stands after the second brigade arrives on turn 3, and 26 stands lost after the 3rd brigade enters on turn 6.

**Greater Losses.** An army is at greater losses when its total troop and gun stands lost exceed the total stands lost by the enemy army. The modifier for heavy casualties increases to a -2 for each higher command in the army that is currently at greater losses. The side that inflicts greater losses on the enemy at the end of the game achieves an additional victory condition.

**Key Position.** The high ground occupied by the American third line between points at Y and Z is a key position. The American player achieves one victory condition if at least one friendly unit occupies Y-Z at the end of the game. The British player achieves one victory condition if no American units occupy the key position at the end of the game.

In addition to this victory condition, for each turn no American units occupy Y-Z, all American units receive a -1 modifier for key position lost in subsequent maneuver checks.

## Special Scenario Rules

**Storming the East Branch Bridge.** Colonel Thornton,

commander of the British Light Brigade, believed his "Peninsular War Veterans" would easily push aside mere militia defending the bridge. He proposed an immediate attack and General Ross agreed. One battalion of the 85th Foot starts the scenario in a storming column. It must attack across the bridge and charge the closest enemy unit on the first turn.

The bridge and causeway over the East Branch river are a defile. A unit may temporarily change into a storming column to charge through this defile. To form a storming column, the unit must start within one-half move distance measured along the path of the defile, and must roll a Double Quick, Well Handled, or Rally with Elan effect in its maneuver check. A storming column looks the same as a march column. Move the closest stand in the current formation through the defile, place all remaining stands behind it in single file, and switch the command stand to the head of the column. A unit already in march column simply is declared a storming column before moving. The storming column may move up to half the full-move rate for march column and follow the path through the defile. A unit with a Double Quick effect may move half the faster movement rate, and it may also move through the defile at the prorated road bonus if on a good road.

If an enemy unit is located in or on the far side of the defile and within the half-move distance, the storming column must charge along the path of the defile into contact with the enemy

Maryland Militia in the second line exchange volleys with the advancing British Light Brigade.



and resolve charge combat. If the column exits the defile before making contact, it must continue to charge toward the enemy unit by the most direct path. A storming column is enfiladed from all directions but has a better chance to charge home. Only the front stand in the column may fire. In charge combat, a storming column counts all stands for determining which side receives the outnumbered modifier, but it does not receive the +1 for support. Unlike a march column, a storming column is not considered outflanked.

If the storming column wins the charge combat by a +1 or more die roll difference, it must carry the position and change formation again, space permitting, into line, open order, or field column, or garrison a structure. It may refuse one or both flanks, and is marked disordered. If checked by fire combat or defeated in charge combat, the attacker must full retreat broken back through the defile. If the end of the defile is undefended, the storming column changes formation in good order immediately after exiting the defile. A storming column cannot conduct a breakthrough charge.

**Faulty American Deployment.** Historically President Madison and his cabinet made a brief appearance on the battlefield. Unfortunately his secretary of state, Monroe, interfered with some of the troop deployments, which contributed to the American forces being deployed in three successive lines that were placed too far apart to provide mutual support, and divided in order to protect two diverging roads that led to the capital, Washington DC.

There are movement restrictions for the American army. Troops and guns may only advance towards the enemy after an enemy unit moves within 12". Only the army commander, Winder, may move without any restrictions.

Units and leaders in the first and second lines, consisting mostly of Stansbury's Maryland Militia Brigade, must remain east of Bloody Run. These units and leaders must retreat away from the enemy and toward the Georgetown Road to where it exits the table at point B. In addition, units in the second line cannot move forward until after the British are across the river.

Units and leaders in the third line, which are primarily from Smith's District of Columbia Brigade and Barney's naval contingent, must remain west Bloody Run. They must retreat away from the enemy and toward the Washington Road to where it exits at point C.

**Light Troops and Open Order.** Only troops rated as light infantry (LI) may deploy in open order. In addition to the open order formation, all light troops may also deploy in other standard infantry formations, such as line, field column, and march column. Four British units in the Light Brigade are rated as light infantry: the converged light infantry companies, two battalions of the 85th Foot, and a battalion of Marines. There are five American light infantry units: Pinkney's rifle battalion, combined Stull's rifle & Davidson's lt. inf. companies, Doughty's rifle company, Kramer's militia battalion, and the

combined Gorsuch's and Ducker's militia companies.

**The “Bladensburg Races.”** The American army at Bladensburg suffered a humiliating defeat. The raw militia turned and ran; many throwing away their weapons without firing a shot. An article in an 1814 newspaper described this hasty retreat as the Bladensburg Races." Later, this became the title of a satirical poem about President Madison and his cabinets fleeing the capital after the battle.

Normally, a broken unit must halt when it reaches the table edge and may attempt to rally in its next maneuver phase. To better model their panic, a broken militia unit does not halt at the edge and must immediately exit the table. The broken unit may still attempt to rally before it reaches the edge.

**Ammunition Supply.** There are no references that the Americans had been issued buck and ball ammunition. Therefore, American troops do not apply this modifier in fire combat.

No units can suffer from a low on ammunition effect during turns 1-4. Starting on turn 5, units cannot replenish ammunition after suffering a low on ammunition effect.

Bladensburg battlefield:  
4-ft wide by, x 6-ft. deep  
in 15mm.

