

Rank and File

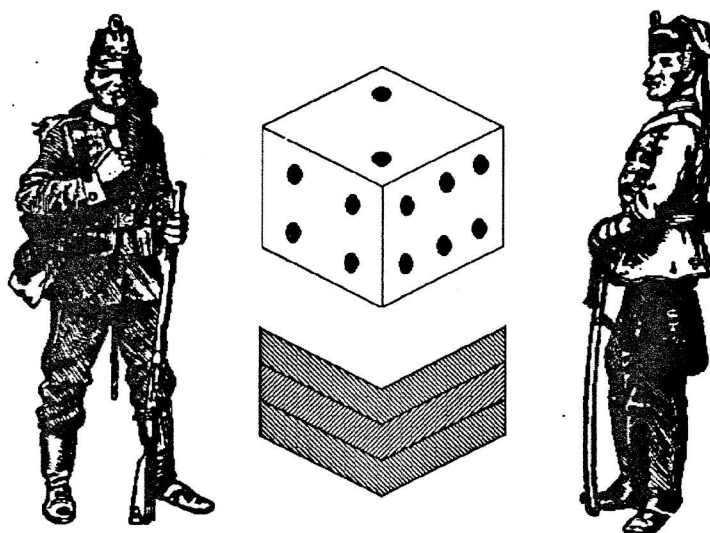
Journal

of the

Tunbridge Wells

Wargames Society

Issue 5/92 September 1992



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Editorial

by Andrew Finch

I must apologise for the delay in the production of this issue, which was caused by matters out of my control, namely the delay in delivery of my new machine. This issue is being produced courtesy of my office lunch hours as it is. Hopefully we will be back to the normal routine for the next one.

Anyway you get the bonus of a bumper issue. We have an ACW issue really this time, with a report from your intrepid reporter from the sidelines of the ACW one-day campaign. There are other comments in this issue which were also caused by the game.

You will recall that in the last issue was a questionnaire which sought various comments on badges and magazine supply. Of the 30 - 40 mags handed out, I have received 13 responses, which led us to democratically decide, via your committee, on the following action:

1) On badges, a detailed quote for button badges has been sought (and now received) and the committee will decide if we go ahead or not. Given the price, and our bloated coffers, we are likely to go ahead with these.

2) On the magazine front, the majority were in favour of receiving the magazine direct if they did not get it at the meeting. A decision will be taken concerning subscription/membership costs at the AGM in December. It was agreed in any case that as of next year we will distribute magazines by post to those who may miss one by not being at a Sunday meeting. This will be done as an experiment for one year. For your information, the majority were in favour of a nominal increase in membership fees as a contribution towards postage.

TWWS Sunday Meetings for your 1992/3 diary

September	6th	1993	
October	4th (Bring & Buy)	January	3rd
November	1st	February	7th
December	6th		21st OPEN DAY
	(A.G.M. & Painting Competition)		



Advertisement Feature

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"HOW ABOUT A WEEKEND IN PARIS, DEAR?"

BY Lance Flint

Well of course I meant for myself and a group of wargaming friends from BAOR of course! More specifically the 9th European Wargames Championships held in late April this year.

As I am currently stationed in Germany I represented, as one of a three man team, one of the three teams entered by the BFG Wargames Association, BFG being both Army and RAF (British Forces Germany). Generally the standard of gaming out here is more enthusiastic than sharply competitive with a stronger emphasis on the socialising side of our hobby.

Anyway as current BFG Renaissance champion I took 1600 points of Early Catholic French, using Georges rules, as they are an extremely well balanced force with plenty of cheap, steady infantry along with a powerful and highly mobile cavalry arm.

After a hideous ten hour minibus journey we settled into our amazingly cheap, but perfectly adequate city centre hotel (only £10 a night each!). Over a few beers we talked yet more "shop", merits of certain troop types over others, tactics in general and the competition amendments and just as importantly the "way" the competition was run by our hosts the French.

So, slightly worse for the journey (and some definitely the worse for French beer!) we made our way to the underground hall, aptly nicknamed "The Bun-

ker" for the scheduled nine o'clock start. Every competitor was checked in at the gate and any queries on army lists immediately sorted out, in fact the scrutineering was the most thorough I have come across and credit to the organisers for that (despite the Seleucid army that for two games got away with having 14 elephants!), despite the few "wobbles" and delays during the weekend, a sudden change in the scoring of game results as well as the inevitable human errors (that's being diplomatic), the French organisers coped cheerfully with rule interpretation and of course the inevitable language barrier, which was frequently overcome by a group effort!

In the first of my four games I was drawn against a Brit using 16thC. Turks, pleasing because I knew that army inside out, it being a favourite of mine. With my army's strength based on savage cavalry attacks from the cover of the pike and shot regiments I deployed defensively even though not outscouted. My opponent made the fatal error of over-extending his line with the consequence half never got to within shooting range. On his closest flank I rushed stradiots and gendarmes at a band of tartars and two units of feudal spahi, which were overcome quite easily, but my two units pursued off and refused to return for the rest of the game!

Another gendarme unit just managed to destroy twice their own points value of janissary musketeers

but 8 of my mercenary EHC reiter failed to do the obvious to 10 halbard-armed LI janissaries, and there, all too soon for me the game ended.

However I had destroyed some quite 'expensive' units so that with all the other results in I was placed in the top half of the table with a good few points 'in the bank'. To do well at these 'Swiss System' events the luck of the first draw, as it is completely random, and the result are critical to a good final position, so far so good.

The second game was against a Frenchman using New Model Army, he was completely outscouted but deployed with skill to make maximum use of his impressive firepower. I decided I could not outmanoeuvre his superbly disciplined force and to hang around 'fencing' would see my lads shot to bits anyway, so keeping the gendarmes back to counter his powerful horse my reiter and stradiots were launched at his shot and artillery, combined with a flank march by the mounted arquebusiers.

I have long ago learnt the value of having a reserve force, hopefully mounted, and this game proved its value. My gendarmes and guard foot stood off his powerful flank attack but with no support behind his line of foot regiments, deployed to use its firepower, my flank move rolled him up whilst the shot and gunners were driven away by frontal attacks, the pike, isolated and surrounded, fell to the extra pressure of my advancing foot. It was a maximum points score for me and placed me fourth at this half way stage.

Briefly, a few notes about the other competitors and other detail. The Renaissance games were played on 6 x 36" tables with plenty of well defined but very poor quality terrain. Despite the fact that each list was limited to 160 points only of artillery, there were two gentle hills in seven of the nine tables, on both sides, which of course gave some excellent shoots, especially for the 'western' armies that tended towards light guns for their mobility. Other than my own army there were two Cossacks, two Royalists, two New Model, two Polish, one Imperial, one Indian, Turkish, Sudanese, 100 Yrs War English, Huguenot and others besides, but I was the only one with true gendarmes, surprisingly.

One amusing example of the problems with language was highlighted last year when after a complete French translation of the rules interpreted 'mounted troops disorganised by fire urns' (i.e. Naptha, fire pots etc) became 'mounted troops disorganised by fire' (i.e. anything to do with gunpowder!). Needless to say the French had, for a while, been put off cavalry armies!

On Sunday morning I had to face a very serious alliance of Sudanese and Tuareg camelriders. Totally outscouted I deployed very defensively with a view to letting the Frenchman come at me and awaited

the opportunity to counter-attack. I had all of Saturday night to consider my tactics and had made considerable reference to rules to consider the strengths and weaknesses of his army.

Plan 'A' went well, I cowered, he advanced with masses of his fierce but ill-disciplined units and loads went into a battle frenzy and rushed at my line to be soundly repulsed.

Plan 'B' was a controlled counter-attack by my gendarmes with minimum support. This time I went berserk and was chopped up by the Tuaregs (bloody useful troops these, only 'D' types and fairly slow moving but on the plus side, they count for scouting, in open order they are difficult to shoot down, they are well armed with lance and shield as well as javelin so they can skirmish, and disorganise all other cavalry!), however his general also went wild leading an 'A' type band and launched himself at a block of pike supported by the guard arquebusiers. (Cue big cheesy grin!)

Plan 'C' (improvised), try and kill his general! Despite all the fire and impaling his bodyguard on the pikes the great man refused to die even in rout. (Two chances at 1,2,3 and two at 1,2 on a die six to kill him!)

However this led to plan 'C' (planned), the closing, across the line counter-attacks which resulted in several infantry blocks being destroyed by my open order cavalry with a subsequent cracking in morale of some others.

At the end of this very hard fought game my plan 'C', only barely carried out in time, saved the day and gave me a good victory that put me on top of the pile for the very last game of the competition.

This was to be against Indians, camel-gunners, rocketeers and all. The latter in fact were a big headache as there were so many hills for them to be deployed on so that they shot my cavalry into disorder giving his slightly inferior nobles a decisive edge. What followed was a very wary game of manoeuvre with both sides going for the kill in fairly limited, controlled local attacks. The Frenchmans line stood up to things generally better than mine and he came off with the result, hard earned but deserved all the same with his very competent handling of his army.

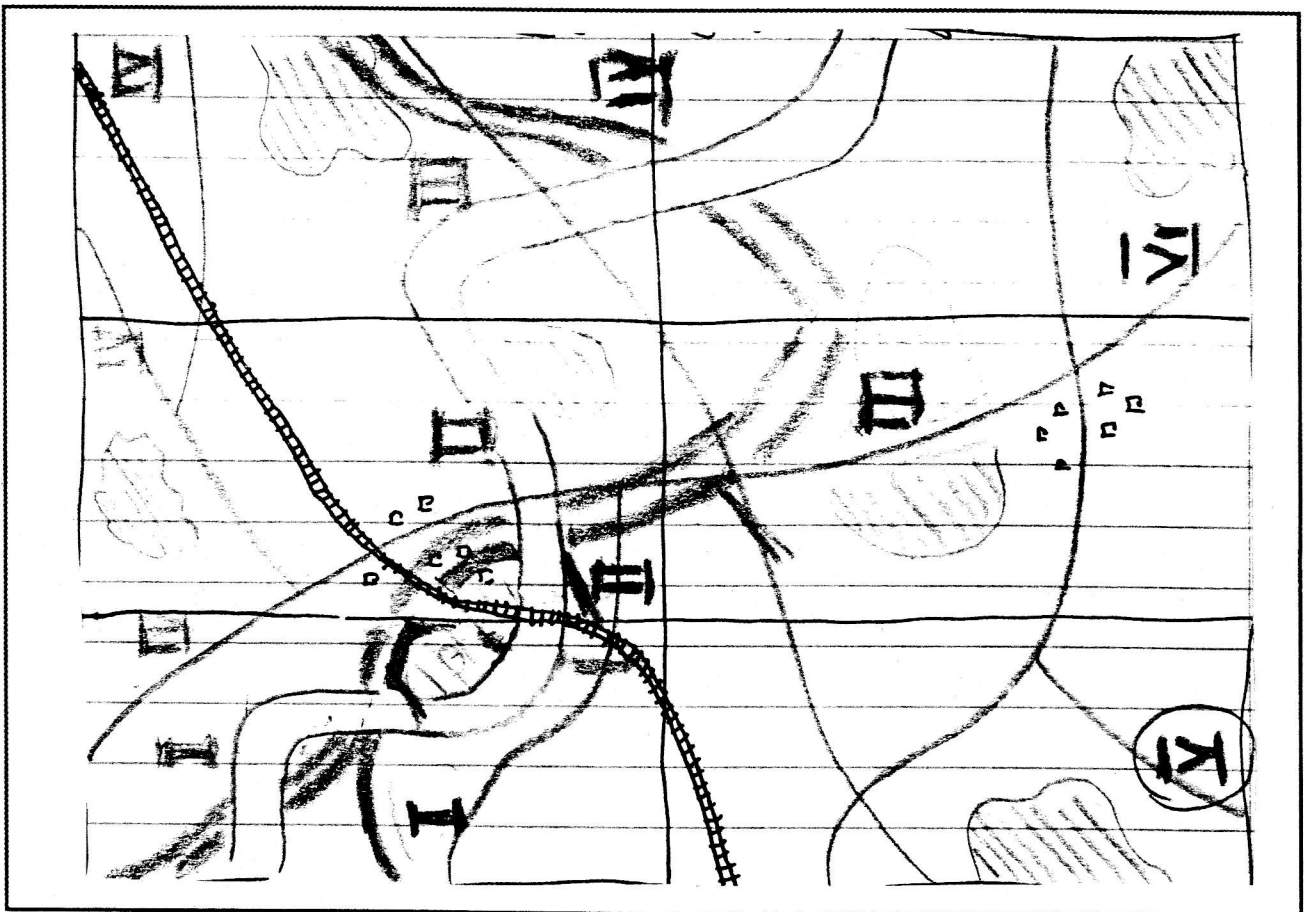
An anxious period was ahead of me now as I waited for the final results. Obviously having lost to the second placed player I could only hope for a third placing overall, but how had the German, who had been third with his Imperialists, stood up to the Frenchman and the Sudanese who had been fourth? Had I done enough damage, in my last game, to score enough points to keep me in the medals?

Anyway I had really enjoyed all my games despite the pressure of the last two and that is all that counts in the end, in fact it was a very friendly competition. I don't know about next year, the only thing that really puts me off is the travelling but as the organisers have promised something special to mark the 10th Championships, we shall see.

I collected my cup for third place and was heartily congratulated by the rest of the BFG players, chuffed to bits, or what?

With typical forces humour I was also threatened with being dropped from the team for getting a "result"!

The Battle of Big Stoney



Report of your Roving Reporter from the New London Times and Narragansett Pig Breeders Chronicle

Yon Damn Yankees

Ulysses S. McLeod ("The Infamous")
Dave Cooke
Peter England
Ivor "I can throw lots of 1s" Metcalf
Ken Bulmer
Mark Summers

Yawl Johnny Rebs

Dennis Redhead
Phil Louch
Chris Avery
Lafayette "But I can do it every throw" Gush
Russell Hanson
Simon Elwen
Paul Colebrook

Introduction

This special one-day campaign was played using the Fire and Fury Rules. After the terrain had been set up (on three large tables to represent the flanks and centre) markers were placed for Rebs and Yankees, which denoted starting positions for corps, or elements thereof.

The report is purely to recount some of the exchanges which took place (both verbal and military) during the course of a very enjoyable day.

Wargaming Notes:

Movement

- A) Any voluntary move over the Big Stoney must test. On a throw of 2D6, a 2, 3 or 4 drowns a stand (per brigade).
- B) Any involuntary move must also test. On a throw of 2D6, a 4 or 5 loses a stand; a 2 or 3 loses two stands (per brigade).
- C) Guns etc. cannot cross at all (except at fords and bridges of course).

Concealed Movement

- D) Corps other than those initially set out are located as per their respective layouts on their location maps.
- E) These Corps can move as counters (provided) until they are within 24" of an opposing infantry stand or 36" of an opposing cavalry stand. Then they must reveal their identity and numbers.
- F) A counter can - at its owners discretion - represent anything from a brigade up to a Corps. Oppos-

ing generals will see it but will not be able to request its identity until E) above is complied with.

Synchronisation

G) Tables should move at their own speed, regardless of events on neighbouring tables.

H) Movement from one to another is by brigade. If a brigade arrives onto a neighbouring table it can revert to concealed movement if it chooses and is able to.

I) A brigade or brigades arrive, and any enemy forces within their own charge distances can in their own game turn attack it. No force however can arrive and attack in the same game turn.

The Report

The day started with the usual exchange of misleading and misinterpreted orders from "on high". Yankee England was ordered "to thrash the Rebs facing him, regardless of cost, smashing them, driving them into the Big Stoney (the river), and drowning them like rats." Opposite him, Reb Hanson was commanded to "ride around the enemy forces, winning the field by being dashing, and with flair."

Needless to say these aims were of course fulfilled to the letter (at least according to their autobiographies!)

Early on in the day, the Yankee Metcalf distributed a very palatable local brew of moonshine to his followers. During the course of the ensuing affray, some of this liquor fell into Reb hands, which might have been the reason for the final outcome.

In these early stages, Lafayette Gush insisted there be no whingeing from the Reb commanders. This is believed to have been in response to accusations of inadequate intelligence, inadequate troops, and inadequate supplies of bootleg hooch.

11.00

The first shots were exchanged as the fog lifted and the Union saw the massed Reb forces, pouring forth in endless waves. Ulysses S. McLeod was heard to cry "Shee-It!" at the sight.

Lafayette was confident, having gained the initiative and judged that "everything was going according to plan." His unruly subordinates were still looking for their copy of said plan at this time, so they just charged forwards bravely.

Yankee Bulmer ordered his troops to mow down the advancing enemy. The shattering volley had its effect, but the troops had expended all their ammunition in their eagerness to oblige.

11.20

On the E. flank Yankee England charged the lines of Rebs Colebrook and Louch. The defensive fire was not very effective but the attackers fared no better. Lafayette was heard to expound the view that "TB-ridden city boys stood no chance against the healthy country fellers." This nearly proved to be the case. The Confederate views of racial superiority were to be sorely brought into question during the course of the day.

In the Centre a big fight had developed around the vital road and rail bridges and the village. The Union seemed to hold on, but were sorely pressed by the Rebs crack troops. General McLeod felt it too early to tell whether victory was in his grasp or not. (This state of affairs continued throughout the day.) He succeeded in driving the Rebs back over the rail bridge, but was threatened by a Reb brigade advancing over the road bridge.

On the W. flank, Metcalf committed the Union reserves. Through my spyglass I could see further clouds of dust rising as other commanders on both sides called on their own meagre resources.

11.40

On the West, Yankee Col. Bulmer swept a unit of "Rebel Scum" from the field, capturing one of Reb Averys Commanders. On this flank, the Yankees were more in the initiative than the Rebs. In the Centre, the Rebs were busy obeying the Yankee orders to "drown in the Big Stoney" while fleeing over the Ford. Others were captured at this point.

At this moment the exhausted troops broke for luncheon.

14.00

Interviewed in a post-prandial haze, Union Col. England voiced the opinion that the C-in-C had sacrificed an entire corps for the sake of his own glory. Reb Col. Colebrook confirmed this point of view saying "We sure whupped them Yankees!"

14.20

By this time the Yankee E. front had disintegrated, or so it seemed, with Col. Cookes cavalry Corps being used to try and stop the rot. Cooke felt the position was threatening, but declined to say for whom.

In the Centre the lines had returned to their starting positions, though Reb Col. Redhead felt that his situation had deteriorated.

In the west the imagined Yankee victory had vanished due to their severe losses, which had eroded the previously-held advantage. Col. Metcalf described this front as "two petrified armies exchanging pot-shots."

14.30

Col. Colebrook appeared to be suffering from some dementia about the use of artillery batteries on hill-tops, though no hill was visibly involved in his part of the front. Some of his colleagues muttered an explanation that "it should be put down to his spending too many hours in the hot sun."

14.40

A concerted Yankee drive over the Big Stoney started in the Centre and West, though in the latter area they were forced back. About this time the Yankee Summers was overheard to say that "they" were in trouble now; but who are "they"? In the West urgent despatches were received by both sides to "get on with the battle and destroy the enemy". How the weakened forces were to achieve this end was not explained.

14.50

Following another melee Col. England captured the Reb Colebrooks Commander LeNoir. Urged on by this success and the threat of summary execution in the case of failure, England proudly obeyed his C-in-Cs orders and attacked with what few troops he had left.

Reb Redhead ordered the W. Flank to fight on "with reckless gallantry, verging on folly." The position for the Rebs was not so good in the west. This daring idea might change the situation, but how?

15.05

Some Reb forces were starting to get reckless by swimming in the Big Stoney, trying to get back to their starting positions. Shortly after this, I observed much activity around General McLeods command post, with scribes rushing hither and thither. Enquiry revealed that he had apparently already decided to whom the defeat of his army could be ascribed! He was keen to ensure that the blame be spread widely amongst his subordinates. In fact it was to be spread so thinly that it hardly showed at all, except in a bright light!

15.15

Revenge! Col. Colebrook swept two of Englands brigades from the field, and Englands commander Mulligan was captured. In the Centre McLeods attack over the railroad bridge continued to surge forward. At this time it was becoming clear that the Union were not doing too well at all.

15.40

At the centre a fierce struggle developed and Col. Summers of the Yankees felt it was now hopeless, there being no way they could break the Rebel line by now. The Union succeeded in breaking through the road bridge, however, on the western flank the Rebs massed for a breakthrough. In reaction to this, the Union positioned their troops in the centre to receive the anticipated flank attack.

16.06

The aforementioned attack now took place and Reb Redhead issued a communique saying he was "pleased to announce that overwhelming Confederate troops under Col. Hanson had struck the Union defending the ford on the W. flank. This was a GOOD THING!"

16.36

The west was now in Rebel hands with Col. Bulmers exceptional Union brigades destroyed and the Rebs advancing towards the centre. The scattered Union units on the extreme west of the field could be of little support other than as a distraction to the Rebs. In an attempt to stem the Rebel advance, McLeod committed his cavalry as a reinforcement.

During this time, on the E. flank Col. England lost another commander as his brigade disappeared, faced with strong Reb forces.

17.10

A mirage appeared, which turned out to be a massed confusion of Yankee mounted and dismounted cavalry. This mirage soon dissipated, leaving a gap in the Yankee line, which was quickly plugged with an ammunition wagon!

In the Centre, Union Col. Summers had established a good position, with strong troops over the Big Stoney, which could put some pressure on the E. flank if they could sweep away the Reb units facing them.

17.24

On the E. flank Colebrook was heard to ask if he could retreat with honour. This enquiry was greeted by scornful laughter from both his allies and enemy

alike. This was a reflection of the change, yet again, in the situation. In some sectors the Rebs had broken through, while elsewhere the Union had forced the Reb units back on the easternmost flank.

17.50

Lafayette Gush issued a report that he had cleared the angle of the river on the E flank by forcing the Union back over the Big Stoney, drowning some in the process. In the west, the Rebs were tired of waiting for the Union to attack them, so they waded the river to get at their foes. Soon after this, Col. Hanson broke through with his Confederate cavalry and discomfited Union C-in-C McLeod: there was a slight chink in the line, with the Union having allowed their troops to be tempted into moving too far north, when crossing from their centre to west flank. A desperate attack by the Rebs in the east was broken by determined Union resistance.

18.45

The sun is now setting and the conflict draws to a close. General McLeod has called for his portable gibbet to deal with those of his commanders who failed to come up to scratch.

Lafayette Gush as, it seems, well pleased with the result, in that they were not entirely "smashed, drowned etc.", though not many lived to tell the tale or fight another day.

In Bloody Angle, Col. England was preparing to write 30,000 letters to the folks back home.

The Result

In the end, the victory was worked out on casualties with the following losses:

Corps	Union	Reb
I	57	58
II	40	67
III	70	22
IV	28	44
V	22	13
VI	28	36
Cav	20	11

Total	265	251
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This was regarded as a "bloody draw", though the Rebs view was of a resounding victory.

As an impartial observer, it must be reported that generally the Rebs had the initiative, in that they had advanced on all fronts throughout the game. The Union had held them and repulsed them in places, but the general final situation was such that the village and bridges would be cut off in any follow-up battle.

MARCHING THROUGH SOUTHBOROUGH

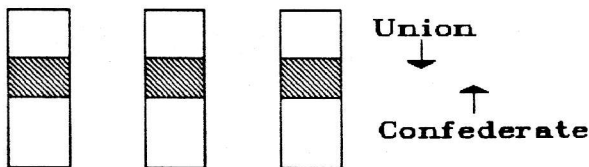
by Cassandra

In a recent enjoyable one day campaign, the Boys in Grey fell upon the strutting Yankee-Doodles with all the fervour of the old South, constrained only by topography and the size of the armies which militated against those manoeuvres which alone permit the full flowering of military genius.

It is in an entirely constructive spirit, intending no criticism of the gifted organisers of the recent fracas, that I humbly advance some ideas to "loosen up" operations in any repeat performance with the little 15mm chaps.

The consequence of setting up tables lengthways so that the opposing armies advanced from either end was that, with the large armies deployed, there was soon a continuous front across all the tables about a third of the way in from one end and throughout the day the depth of movement of forces in combat was no more than a couple of feet. In other words the conditions of the Western Front in WW I were uncannily reproduced; attrition and stagnation.

AS IT WAS:

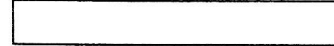


Much time was wasted waiting for one table manned by slower players to reach a stage at which troops could arrive from an adjacent table. This was frustrating to incipient military genius and some players appeared to be on the verge of nervous breakdowns which can not be good for them.

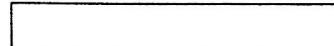
What I suggest is that tables be set up across the hall so that the possibility of wide open flanks and interesting manoeuvres is dangled excitingly before the players, and that each player commands one Division of no more than four Brigades. A Corps of two Divisions takes too long for an average player to operate in a reasonable time without slowing down the whole game.

THE CASSANDRA PLAN:

* UNION "HOME" TABLE *



NEUTRAL TABLE



* CONFEDERATE "HOME" TABLE *

Under the Cassandra Plan the Union Forces would start from one line of tables and the Confederates the far line beyond an intermediate line of neutral tables across which they would have to advance to get at each other. Divisions should start widely scattered across "home" tables at the umpires discretion (enlistment/mobilisation centres) and each table should contain two objectives, one political (Northern or Southern White House) and one economic (vital port or industrial town). The aim of this is to prevent all the forces converging into one big drive to fight one big battle somewhere in the middle.

The topography of the country should play an important part, with a big winding river (river boats and forts could be easily constructed) and a line of mountains blocking off a whole chunk of countryside (c.f. Shenandoah Valley) penetrable only through a limited number of passes. Use should be made of a railway for transportation and sabotage by raiding forces.

Finally, might I suggest that in the interests of democracy for which both sides were fighting, the commanding general on each side should be elected by his fellow players on the day. (A further refinement would be for the Union side to elect a new C in C every couple of hours.) This should ensure a general atmosphere of bumbling incompetence so characteristic of the American Civil War and prevent operations turning into a game of chess.

I should be only too happy to play some part in organising such an event. War may be hell but war gaming ought to be fun.

The Battle of El Stink Oasis

The First Day

by Russell "Harry Flashman" Hanson

(Editors note: Harry Flashman is the eponymous grandson of that other famous British soldier. Other than Ballsaker that is; Ballsaker is arguably the most famous British soldier of his generation, as he has frequently said himself. At the time of the El Stink do, Ballsaker was a Colonel at the threshold of his career; a career that would lead in due course to a Field Marshals baton and the immortal title "Ballsaker of Tobruk". Incidentally, no one has ever been able to discover what the initials W.H.Y. stand for. Ballsaker has always himself been (unusually for him) reticent on the subject, and whatever his rank he has been known by everyone from the most obscure latrine orderly upward as just plain "Ballsaker".

Flashmans account is an extract from his six volume biography of the great man, "Ballsaker of Tobruk and the Shaping of the Modern World".)

Preliminary

It was sometime in 1941 or thereabouts that Colonel Ballsaker was given his first independent command. "Ballsforce", a balanced force of all arms (see Order of Battle) was specially constituted and given the task of striking rapidly westward from Cairo to seize the El Stink Oasis ahead of the main British advance. The Axis powers had the same idea and dispatched a Panzer Group under the command of Colonel Manfred von Klotz (who was also to become quite famous as Ballsakers chief opponent in the desert), moving east from Tripoli. Both groups clashed at the oasis.

The Battle (see sketch map)

Ballsaker was aware that the enemy had 88s and 50mm anti-tank guns and that all his light tanks (and particularly the A9s) were only lightly armoured. He decided not to expose his armour to the fire of anti-tank guns if it could be avoided, and to confront an enemy armoured advance with his heavily armoured Matildas firing from stationary positions which would make their fire more accurate. The light tanks would move ahead of the slow-moving Matildas but would withdraw once challenged. Meanwhile the artillery, firing indirect, would give priority to knocking out the 88s before they could be brought to within effective direct fire range.

The infantry would be held in reserve until the enemy armour and anti-tank guns were defeated, when they would attack the oasis supported by the artillery and tanks. (Ballsaker had to accept that the

enemy, with his faster tanks and half-tracks, would reach the oasis first and that a fully coordinated effort was necessary to dislodge him.)

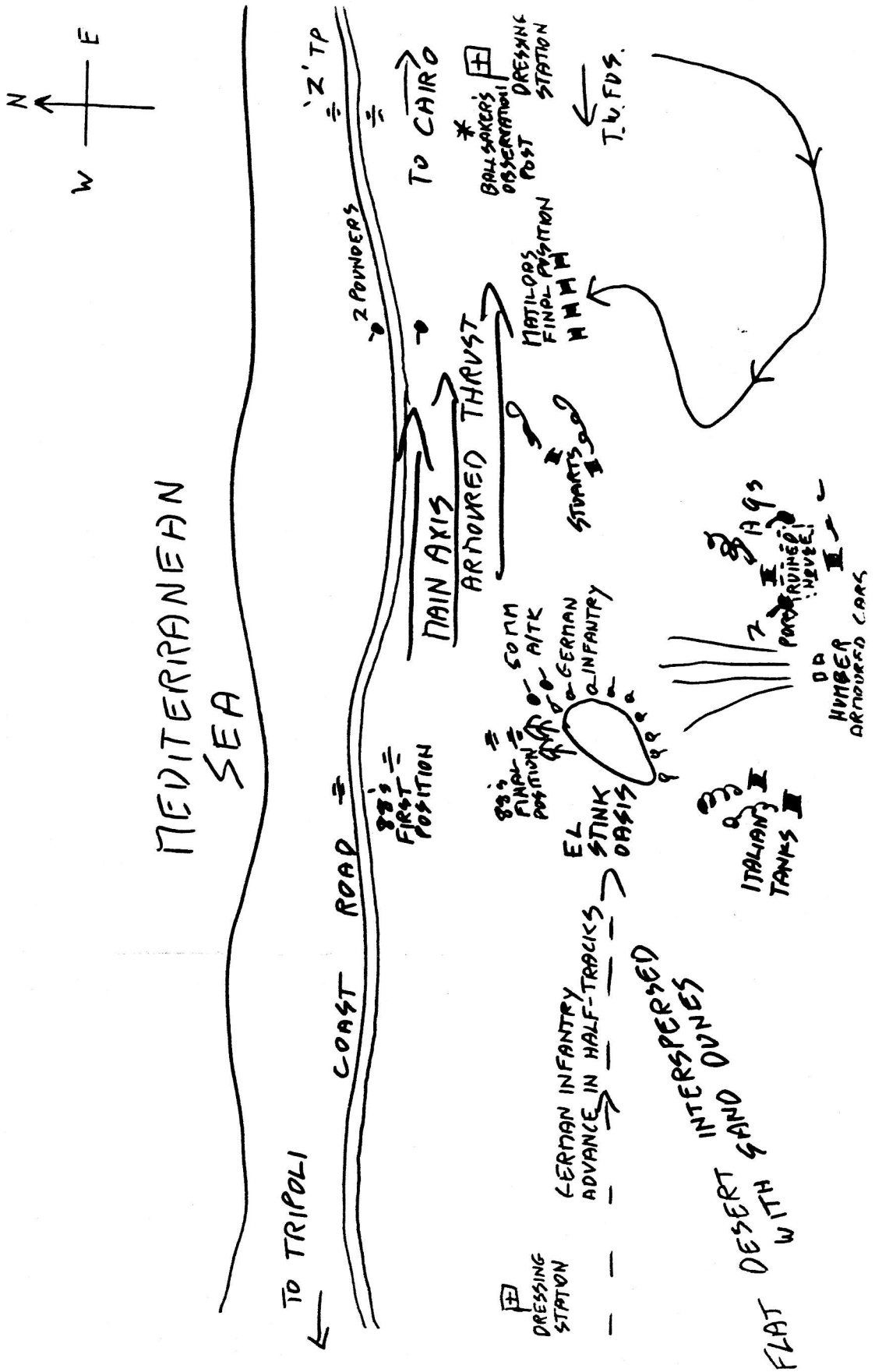
The enemy duly occupied the oasis with his infantry and the 88s were pushed forward along the coast road. The indirect fire of "Z" Troop caused the 88s to withdraw before they could do any serious harm. The enemy armour then made a general advance. There was an exchange of fire which resulted in all the British light tanks being put out of action. But the enemy had taken tank casualties too, and a push by Italian tanks attempting a right flanking movement was brought to a halt by the fire of British tanks and the two pounders, carried "portee" on 15cwt trucks, which had dismounted by a ruined house. The British then had the initiative in this area and the Humber armoured cars were able to strafe the German infantry in the oasis with long range fire from their Besas.

The main enemy armoured attack then developed along the coast road. The Matildas, which Ballsaker had intended should form a shield in the centre, had moved too far towards the left flank and had then become involved in a long range exchange of fire with the oasis. Ballsaker ordered them to disengage and move towards the coast road. This Colonel Bloodlust finally accomplished and their excellent shooting was a significant factor in the final destruction of the enemy armour.

No less a factor, it must be said, was the Kamikaze attitude of the commander of the enemy armour, von Klinkerhoffer, who recklessly threw his tanks and armoured cars forward helter skelter along the coast road. No attempt was made to bring up the 88s in support. The two pounders covering the road were overrun and "Z" Troop engaged the approaching Panzers over open sights. When all his fighting tanks had been put out of action, von Klinkerhoffer charged forward in his Panzer I command tank and began to machine gun the gun crews from the rear. Sergeant "Dusty" Wilson of "Z" Troop traversed his gun through 180 degrees (fortunately the traversing platform was fitted) and destroyed the Panzer at point blank range, for which act of gallantry he was awarded an immediate MM.

A strange silence fell upon the battlefield. The German infantry was still occupying the oasis supported by both the 88s and the 50mm anti-tank guns, but their armour had been wiped out. Ballsaker still had three Matildas undamaged. Then a German emissary arrived with a white flag, but the German surrender was overridden by the High

SKETCH MAP NOT TO SCALE



Command and a second day of battle became necessary. The Tunbridge Wells Fusiliers, who had just arrived on the battlefield, would have to wait until then to receive their baptism of fire.

Wargaming Note: This game was played using the 1979 edition Gush 1930-1945 Rules, which has

larger print than the later edition (*What is the significance of this — Ed.*) The only major modification to the rules was that all direct fire weapons were permitted to fire in both their own and their opponents turn. This worked well in practice and in the opinion of the writer more accurately reflects the firepower of the period.

ORBAT BALLSFORCE

Force HQ

Commander: Colonel W.H.Y. Ballsaker
Jeep and motor cyclist

Armoured Element

Commander: Lt-Col. H. de Q. Bloodlust (RTR)
Matilda with staff officer in scout car

2 x A9 Cruiser tanks
2 x Stuart light tanks
4 x Matildas
2 x scout cars for casualty evac
2 x Humber A/Cars (radios can switch with artillery net)
2 x 2pdrs (Portee)

Infantry Element

Commander: Major Ted Fuggle (TW Fus)
Carrier and CSM

1 Coy (2 Pts) TW Fus, carried in lorries
2 x 2pdr A/T (towed)

"Z" Troop RHA

2 x 25pdrs with towing Quads, HQ wireless vehicle, crews & staff

RAMC

Medical aid detachments with ambulance and dressing station

PANZERGRUPPE KLOTZ

Headquarters

Commander: Col. Manfred von Klotz
Kubelwagen, wireless A/car, MC combination

Armour

Commander: Major Erik von Klinkerhoffer
Pz I command tank

1 x heavy spt A/car
1 x light A/car
2 x Pz II
2 x Pz III
2 x Italian M 13
2 x Italian M 42

Artillery/ A/Tk

2 x 88mm (towed) with crews and staff
2 x 50mm (towed) with crews and staff

Infantry

Commander: Major Adolf Plonke
Kubelwagen and MC combination

1 Coy (2 Pts) Panzer Grenadiers in armoured half tracks

Medical

Aid detachments with armoured half track and Kubelwagen ambulances and dressing station

PRESS RELEASE

From Russell Hanson

A little known campaign somewhere in the Southern States in 1862 or thereabouts.

Summer has come to the Confederate States of America, and with it the armies of the United States, massing to crush the secessionists. The Union Forces are much inconvenienced by the Confederate Fort Dixie which commands the entrance to the Youknowwhat River which, if it can be possessed by the Union, will effectively cut the Confederacy in two.

A hitherto unknown general has sought an audience with President Lincoln and obtained his blessing for a brilliant plan to land a Union Army at Hayseed Landing, which offers a straight march along the Hicksville Turnpike to take Fort Dixie in the rear.

So brilliant is this plan that it has been published in all the Northern newspapers. As these are also read in the South the Confederates know all about it and have hastily assembled a force at Fort Dixie under an enterprising general who is determined to advance and beat the Yankees before they can reach the fort.

The Union commander has his headquarters on board an ironclad at Hayseed Landing which has covered the disembarkation of the Union Army and the establishment of a base of operations ashore. Now, as a merciless Summer sun beats down from a brazen sky all eyes are turned towards the South. Is that a heat haze on the horizon or dust rising from the turnpike? Are those shadowy figures, flitting between the trees in The Wilderness, Confederate scouts or grizzly bears? Have the Confederates abandoned Fort Dixie or are they moving somewhere beyond the Applecore Mountains in some fantastic outflanking movement?

The Union commander chomps his cigar, wipes the sweat out of his eyes with the back of his hand and orders the advance with a characteristic gesture. It is all or nothing now. Fame and fortune or ignominious defeat. Let the day decide.

Wargaming Notes:

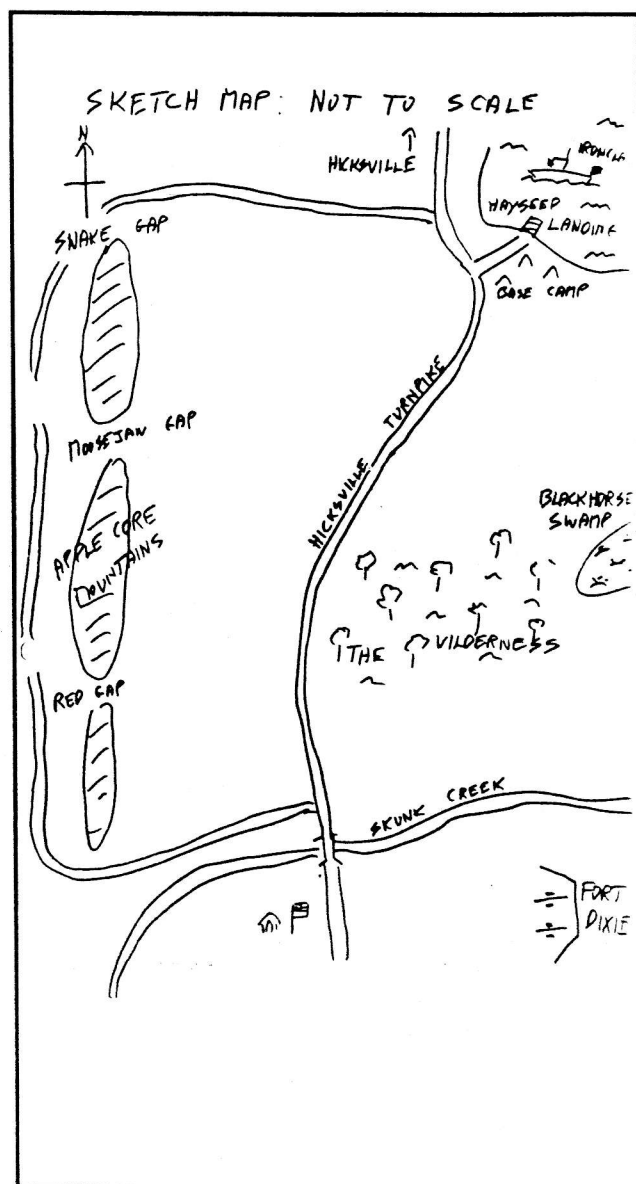
- 1) The Union Army is approximately one third larger than the Confederate. (The Confederates were usually outnumbered).
- 2) Union movement of infantry, cavalry and leaders is restricted to two thirds of that of the Confederates. (Union armies were notoriously sluggish and well supplied Confederates could usually outmanoeuvre them).

3) Observation is limited to twice basic movement rate. (This gives the Confederates an advantage - their reconnaissance was usually more effective).

4) Advancing forces are marked by dust clouds until identified by observation as in 3). Forces behind those so marked are logged on the map. Once the advanced forces are identified, those next behind, out of observation range, become dust clouds.

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Hicksville



Re-Enactment of the Battle of Vimiero

by Graham Charles

This was one of the earliest battles in the Peninsula, where the French tasted the effect of a British line firing steady volleys into their packed advancing columns, with inevitable consequences.

A strict recreation of the battle would be a complete waste of time, since, in fact, British infantry outnumbered French infantry, who are faced with attacking

up steep hills over disordering scrub terrain — not to mention the rivers and the village, and the fact that the British had been ensconced in these positions for at least 24 hours.

However, the battle can be recreated giving the French half a chance by taking a "what-if..." scenario.

The Historical Battle

Wellington had previously met the French at Rolica, where he had forced them to retire and regroup, and he moved to a river bay near Vimiero, where British reinforcements could be disembarked. The disembarkation took place the day before the battle, and the British dispositions were — by reference to the map — mostly based on the western ridge and with a few troops on the eastern ridge, thus protecting the river mouth in anticipation of the French coming from the southern direction. The British camped in these positions that night and it was only at dawn the following morning that the French army was seen to be approaching from the north east. Wellington had time to redispense his forces and he moved the bulk of his army to the eastern ridge, leaving a few troops on the western one; he also moved a couple of battalions and a battery of guns onto Vimiero Hill. In total, Wellington had eight

brigades each averaging about 2000 men, with a handful of light dragoons.

The French were formed in two divisions each of two brigades, with a separate pair of brigades made up by "brigading" the grenadier companies from each battalion — as was standard French practice at this time. The attacks were made by successive brigade strength columns against the eastern end of the eastern ridge, and against Vimiero Hill from the east. In all cases the French attacks were beaten back. Indeed, even if the French attacks succeeded, Wellington had units unengaged, and there were a Portuguese and an English brigade guarding the river north of the positions shown on the map, which could have been brought down to assist, had the French been able to turn the British flank. Inevitably, in such terrain, the French cavalry were next to useless.

The Re-Enactment

The "what if..." scenario which I had in mind was — what if Wellington had been caught with his troops disposed as they had been during the night, and had not had the chance to redeploy his forces, i.e. until it was too late, the British still perceiving the threat to their position as coming from the south.

Accordingly, the table top was set out almost identically to the map and the British invited to set out their forces up to the half way line, but allowing them to position two battalions and a battery of two guns on Vimiero Hill if they wished. Forces were scaled down to about 3/4 size and this gave the British four brigades each of three or four battalions. The British placed two brigades on the western ridge — as I hoped they would — one brigade on the eastern ridge, and the other brigade on Vimiero Hill and in the village. A battery of two guns was duly placed on Vimiero Hill and a battery of three guns was placed on the western ridge.

With some unconcealed pleasure, I then announced to the British that the French were coming

from the eastern edge of the table. The British were allowed to remove any of their troops that were within 12 inches of that table edge, and the French forces then came on, measuring their first move from the table edge. The French were also allowed to deploy troops along the eastern-most two foot of the southern edge of the table, so as to give them the same attacking chance against Vimiero Hill.

I hasten to add that I had no part in formulating the plan, but my colleague on the French side followed almost exactly the actual plan, and the force was divided into two divisions, one attacking the eastern ridge and the other — under my command — attacking Vimiero Hill. I also had command of a brigade of three cavalry units, whose aim was to move past the southern side of Vimiero Hill, cross the river and threaten — and therefore effectively pin — British forces on the western ridge.

The objective set for the French was to dominate, or at least threaten, the section of the river between the points marked A and B on the plan.

In working out the scenario I still thought that the French would very much have an "uphill" task — literally! In the event, the battle, at least at first, seemed to be going all the French way. The British battalions on the eastern ridge were turned to face the flank in line, and were successively hit by three or four of the six French battalions in column that flooded up the eastern side of the eastern ridge and along its top and sides. The British battalions behind the leading ones were not helped, therefore, by having British battalions in front of them successively routing. The British initially moved both of the two brigades on the western side of the ridge down the reverse slope of that ridge, across the river, and then marched them east in reinforcement. Realising that the western ridge was thus going to be deserted and that my cavalry could sneak a victory by a flanking move, one of these brigades was then marched back up the hill (thus spending the entire game first going down a steep hill and then back up again!). The other brigade from the western ridge, comprising three battalions of Scots, found themselves just in short range of a battery of three French guns and, with the assistance of some lucky dice, were completely halted in their tracks — one battalion routing and the other retiring. The third Scottish battalion did, by the end of the game, just reach the western side of the eastern ridge, where it was able to throw back the last of the French attacks during the game.

Although the French column attacks on the eastern ridge succeeded in routing three or four British battalions, it was not without a price. In fact, since the French were, throughout the battle, advancing without firing, all of the musketry throughout the day was on the part of the British, and by the time the French brigades had reached the western side of the eastern ridge, they were all at no more than 75% strength, with a couple of them, I think, reduced to only 50% strength. Certainly they were in no condition to start an assault on the western ridge, where there were unused fresh British infantry battalions.

Meanwhile, to the south, my assault on Vimiero Hill succeeded completely by virtue of the British not "hanging about", but promptly evacuating it and redeploying the two gun battery across the river at the foot of the western ridge. A single battalion ensconced itself in the village and this proved an exceedingly hard nut to crack. By about halfway through the game, I had a battalion of French grenadiers on Vimiero Hill, together with a two gun horse battery and a battery of three field guns to the east of the village, pounding it with shot and shell. The British only chose to evacuate part of the village when, through lucky dice, that part of the village was set on fire. The British had one lucky incident thanks to my complacency, which was that its single rather pathetic unit of six hussars found itself

about to charge into the flank of a somewhat helpless column of grenadiers, promptly routing it — it was to rally a couple of moves later. In exchange, however, I threw a unit of French hussars against it and not only cut the unit down to its last man, but killed a General with it as well — very tidy!

While this was going on, a unit of rifles and a line battalion were routed back from south of Vimiero Hill across the river, hotly pursued by three battalions of French. Following those infantry battalions came the two other French cavalry units. A pristine unit of nine heavy cavalry, after charging and routing a retreating British battalion, spied the two gun battery and, without halting their stride, rashly charged its front, at the same time riding across the front of a British battalion in line. The combined effect of close range musketry and cannister was enough to reduce that heavy cavalry unit by two thirds and the remainder was easily beaten off by the gunners. This attack on the British battery was replaced by an equally heroic and stupid charge by a French battalion — itself already somewhat reduced in size — but surprisingly both guns misfired and thus a melee was formed on very advantageous terms for the French. In the event, and on this the last move, the gunners fought off the French.

At the same time, the remaining French cavalry unit — lancers — found themselves just within reach of the British three gun battery on the eastern end of the western ridge, and charged uphill. The British did not hang around to be charged, and the gunners fled. The game thus finished with a French lancer unit atop the western ridge, the French in control of Vimiero Hill and three-quarters of the length of the eastern ridge, and just entering the village, but with some British still in parts of it. All of the French units were reduced to about three-quarter strength, but throughout the battle had suffered the rout of only two of its units. The British had suffered losses by casualties or routs of about half their initial strength, but at least half of what was left had not been committed at all and they were still fresh. It is debatable that the French were in fit condition to press home any attack on the western ridge at this stage, although in total they must by now have outnumbered the British by about two to one.

In the event, as the author of the scenario, I was left to adjudicate and I deemed it a marginal French victory.

I thought that the game merited a report, because it is rare that actual battles are recreated, and whilst I changed the situation considerably to give the French a chance, a similar use of artistic licence can be used to make other battles worth re-creating, which otherwise would be rather one-sided affairs.

Vimiero

