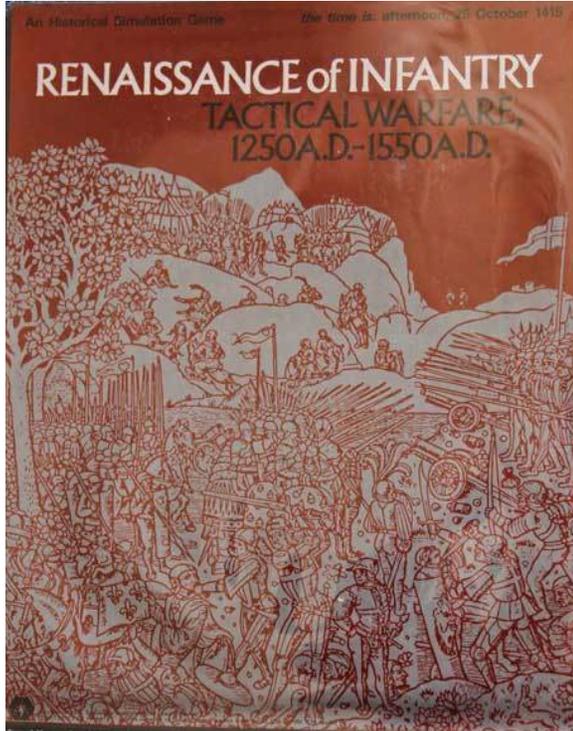

Renaissance of Infantry, SPI 1970

Rules Review and Replay

by Russ Gifford

Renaissance of Infantry– SPI Publications:

Note: The historical article in S&T 22 was called “Renaissance of Infantry.” The RULES say the game title is “Tactical Game 14.”

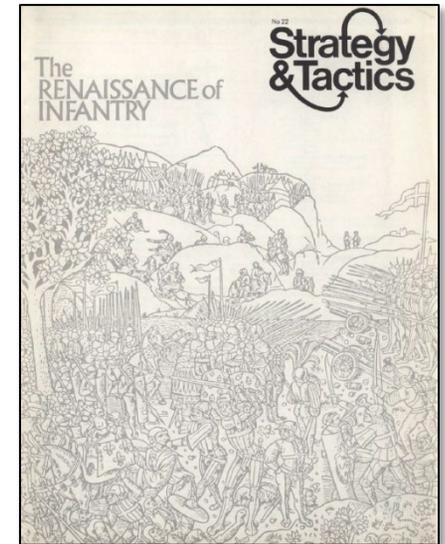


That is your hint that this game, covering tactical warfare at the dawn of the Age of Gunfire, 1250 AD to 1550 AD, was also at the dawn of the wargaming revolution that was known as SPI. This was the transition from the Test Series Games to professional publication.

STEPPING INTO A PAPER TIME MACHINE

Published in June 1970, it was designed by A. A. Nofi, house historian for SPI. “I became a game designer rather suddenly,” Nofi recalls, when I suggested we should design a game on the Thirty Years War. “Dunnigan responded with an enthusiastic, ‘Yes, why don’t YOU!’ “

Nofi’s first-ever effort at game design would change history. It was published in Strategy & Tactics less than a year after the magazine had been rescued by Dunnigan and Simonsen. They had converted it from a fanzine to a magazine and built subscriptions to over 1400 people. The game in a magazine concept was still new, and the games shared much with the Test Series Games (TSG) Poultron Press (precursor to SPI) had originally produced. Like the TSG’s the counters were unmounted, and though the maps



*were sharp, they were still black and white on very thin paper. The big difference? The rules were now typeset, as were all the information tables – and Redmond Simonsen was already trying to push them into a still more readable structure. But this is the first of the Tactical Game (TAC) rules to see print at SPI. The game was an orbital level above any of the TSGs – or any other game. **Renaissance of Infantry** was more ambitious than anything Avalon Hill had published in its 15 year existence.*

*The game was visionary. **ROI** featured a variety of small unit troops counters, some ranged weapons – spears, arrows, early guns and artillery. The game also offered defensive fire with those ranged weapons – occurring during the opponent’s player turn! What devilry is this??? The units also had facing, point costs for changing facing during the movement phase, and cavalry that could both move and charge or dismount to fight on foot. There were also leaders with important skills all their own. It was revolutionary, and it would inspire*

at least 10 games that are direct descendants, and many others that can trace their lineage to this game. All because Al Nofi – now Dr. Al Nofi, respected historian, and author, asked a simple question. Thank you, Dr. Nofi!

The following is my recent playthrough of a battle held on St. Crispin’s Day – Agincourt. First, I will bring you up to speed with the rules in this groundbreaking game of 1970. It is more to remind you of what is NOT part of the game! Enjoy! - RHG

How We Got Here

While preparing the replay of Andrew Hopley’s experiences with the **Yeoman** version of the Battle of Agincourt, I wondered “how did this battle look in **Renaissance of Infantry?**” Yeoman was the updated version of ROI, published in 1975 as part of the PRESTAGS series. **PRESTAGS** – Pre-Seventeenth Century Tactical Games Series – moved the earlier games to a set of unified rules, each with separate exclusive rules to adapt the simulation to a specific era or group. It not only showed SPI the way to create the quads later that year (1975), it also predated the gamettes concept that would power AH with Squad Leader and ASL for nearly half a century now.

Long ago, my earliest SPI purchases were the precursors to PRESTAGS: **Centurion, Phalanx, Armageddon, Dark Ages**, along with the fellow travelers in the highly tactical small unit games, **Musket & Pike, Grenadier, and Rifle & Saber.**

But **Renaissance of Infantry** in 1970, started it all – and in its roots, you find the entire DNA chain for the breakthrough that would be **Terrible Swift Sword** in 1976, and, perhaps, **Squad Leader**, 1977. Without ROI in 1970, these later giants do not exist.

Playing ROI, 50+ Years Later: Rules Overview:

OK – be aware – as a first effort under time pressure for a magazine, while **Renaissance of Infantry** has almost everything the later games have – except SPI’s later well-organized rule structure. The rules are remarkably clean – but they come long before Redmond Simonsen codified SPI’s master template for rules. It is not a surprise, nor is it a failing. But it can be daunting stepping back years later.

Example – Dispersal, later enshrined as disruption, is a common Combat result in all the later games, as it is here. Dispersed units cannot move or attack, which does not change much. But in almost all the later games, that *D* result on the CRT includes a mandatory retreat (or rout, as we know it.) But... not only can’t you find it – you finally realize it, it isn’t there! Whoa – game changer!

There are not many other rules differences that sweeping in impact, but I will point out what you need to know to play and note if there is a difference vs. the later, more familiar **PRESTAGS** versions.

	1-2	1-1	2-1	3-1	4-1	5-1	6-1	7-1	8-1	9-1	10-1	
1	D	D	D	D	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	1
2	–	D	D	D	D	D	E	E	E	E	E	2
3	–	–	D	D	D	D	D	D	E	E	E	3
4	–	–	–	D	D	D	D	D	D	E	E	4
5	–	–	–	–	–	D	D	D	D	D	E	5
6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	D	D	D	D	6

OVERALL SEQUENCE OF PLAY

1. First Player moves units.
2. First Player indicates which units are attacking which defending units. Second Player rolls for Militia Pikemen Demoralization.
3. Second Player allocates and resolves defensive fire, extracting whatever losses called for from First Player's attacking units.
4. First Player resolves all offensive fire, extracts whatever losses from Second Player's defending units.
5. First Player resolves all viable ground attacks (Melee).
6. Second Player proceeds with Steps 1 through 5.
7. The Second Player having completed Step 5 and complete turn has taken place. Move turn indicator.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY is deceptively simple. Changes? - The predesignated attack concept. After movement, the player states who he will be attacking. This matters, as *Defensive Fire* is next, and while all Fire units may Defensive Fire, in ROI, it says Defensive Fire is limited to ONLY fire on units designated as about to attack them!

If the Defensive Fire takes out an Attacking unit, no adding in new attacks. You cannot shuffle Attackers. Only predesignated attacks happen, and if the Attacker can't meet the 1:2 minimum attack rule, *the attack does not occur*.

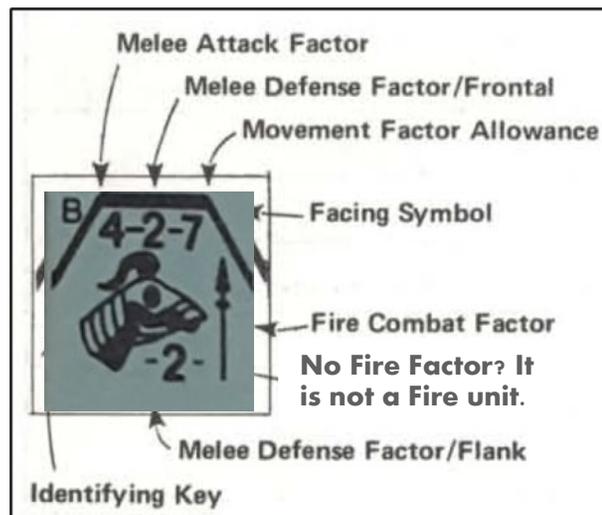
MOVEMENT: (BIG CHANGES HERE!)

- NO ZOC - nothing forces you to stop when you come adjacent to an enemy unit.
- Nothing prevents you leaving a hex adjacent to an enemy unit.
- If you are not Dispersed, you can leave in your movement phase!
- NO Advance after Combat. No movement at all after combat. (*The later PRESTAGS games give Fire units fluid ZOCs.*)
- You cannot move through a friendly unit's hex if it would over stack that hex.

FACING AND MOVEMENT – Another Big Change!

You must move into one of the unit's three frontal hexes. In the initial starting hex, it costs 1 Movement Point MP to change your facing MORE than 60 degrees.

As you move into a hex, you can change up to 60 degrees in either direction at no added cost. But changing more than 60 degrees costs an added 1 MP. If you use your LAST movement point entering a hex, you CANNOT change facing more than 60 degrees!



COMBAT:

Two Types of Combat. **FIRE** and **MELEE**.

(If Fire Combat Factors is blank, IT IS NOT A FIRE UNIT)

- Units must attack out of one of their 3 **FRONTAL** hexsides – Melee or Fire.
- Unlike PRESTAGS, Fire units may fire in consecutive player turns!
- Group all FIRE together - all FIRE units in the attacker's hex may participate in FIRE combat, as well as Fire units from other hexes.
- Fire Combat attacks ALL units in the hex.

FIRE Calculations:

Total FCF (Fire Combat Factors) x Range Effects x total Enemy Units in the Hex = Attacker's *Combat Factors*.

Defender: All Target Hex's Units FPF (Fire Protection Factor = 2 if frontal hex, 1 if flanked or dispersed) x Units x Terrain Protection Factor = *Defender's Factors*.



Example: (Use Picture at Right)

It is the End of the French (Blue) Movement phase, and the Heavy Cavalry (HC) has charged 4 hexes at the 3 Longbow (LB) counters. That predesignates the LB as defenders. The two French Crossbows (CB) are firing at the English Heavy Cavalry (unit ID C).

Quiz:

1. Compute the Defensive Fire that can hit French HC Stack B.
2. What are the odds?
3. Can the English Longbows in Stack K add their fire on Stack B?
4. Can the English Longbows attack the French Crossbow F?
5. What is the English HC (ID C) unit's Defensive Fire?

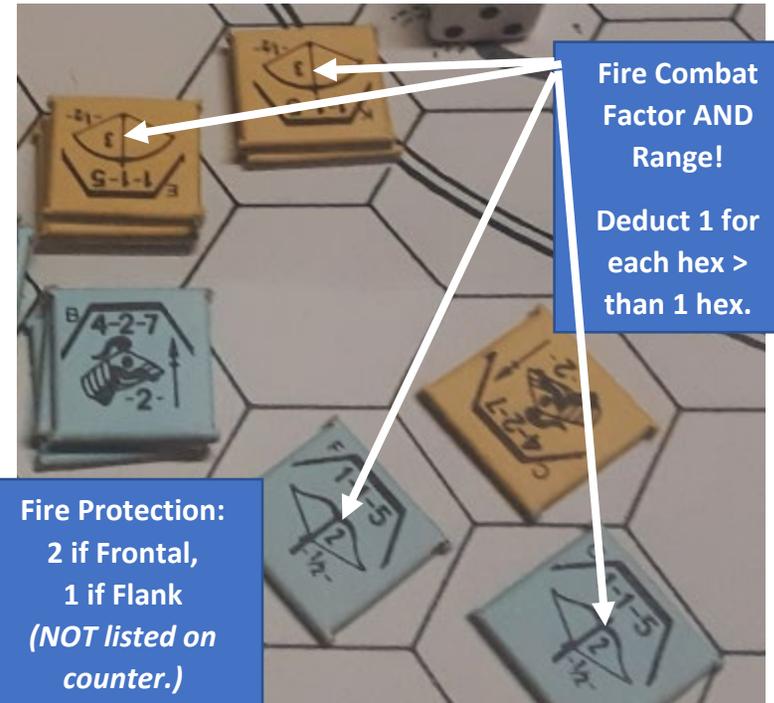
Formula: Total FCF x # of Target units vs Total Fire Protection x Terrain
Each Longbow has FCF of 3 at a range of 1. The target is in their front, and LBs (Stack E) were predesignated as the target of the HC (Stack B) so Defensive Fire is allowed.
The HC (Stack B) is taking the attack through the front, not Flank attack.

Answers:

1. **The Attack: LB: 3 FCF x 3 units firing x 3 Enemy units = 27 Factors**

HC: Fire Protection (2 per unit x 3 units in stack) x Terrain (Normal = 1) = 6

2. **Combat Ratio = 27:6 = 4:1**
3. **No – Stack K was not predesignated as Stack B's target.**
4. **No – the Crossbow predesignated Unit C.**
5. **ZERO – the Horse Cavalry have no Fire Weapons; it has no Defensive Fire!**



MELEE

Units for different hexes can be of different types and attack a single hex.

But any units from hex can only attack with other like unit types.

Formula: Attacking Units Total MCF (Melee Combat Factors) vs [Defender's MDF (Melee Defense Factors) adjusted] x Terrain.

Terrain: (Clear is normal x1, Woods x2, River x1/2 etc.).

Adjustments: See Charts. Also, HC must Charge 4 or more hexes to get full Melee value. See Rules.

Example: (Use Picture at Right Above.)

Quiz:

Continuing from Above. The Longbows roll 5 -missed! It is now the French Fire and Melee Phase.

1. Fire is First - Calculate the Crossbow Fire attack on the English Heavy Cavalry. Each side and final odds.
2. Calculate the French Melee Attack on the English Longbows.

Answers:

1. **FIRE: CBs 2 FCF x 2 units firing x 1 Enemy Unit = 4 vs Fire Protection 2 per unit (Frontal) x 1 unit x Terrain = 2 = 2:1**
2. **MELEE: HCs (4 per HC [Charge] x 3 units in stack = 12 vs Defender MDF (1 per unit x 3 units in hex) x Terrain = 3 = 4:1**

Combat Results: Elimination, or Dispersion.

Dispersed units may neither move nor attack.

Dispersed units defend with a 1 Melee Defense Factor, and a 1 Fire Defense Factor
There is no Retreat with the Dispersion (D) result.

If the units are Eliminated, there is NO ADVANCE AFTER COMBAT.

Dispersal Recovery: Units become undispersed at the end of THEIR MOVEMENT TURN.” (Note: It later states, “A dispersed unit loses one opportunity to attack, and one opportunity to move” and *Centurion* clarifies this as literal.

If you get a D result in the Defensive Fire phase:

- You miss your following Attack phase.
- You remain dispersed the entire enemy Player turn.
- IF you are Attacked in that enemy player turn, you are attacked as a Dispersed unit. (A Dispersed unit's Fire Protection Factor is a 1, and their Melee Defense Factor is also 1!)
- IF you survive the Enemy Player Turn, you are still dispersed until the end of YOUR movement phase.
- At the end of the Movement Phase, you revert to normal (undispersed.).

Note: If you return from Dispersed and you are adjacent to an enemy unit or have Fire units and are in range of the enemy, you may then predesignate an attack. (And thus possibly be targeted by Enemy Defensive Fire again!)

If you get a D result in the Enemy Melee / Fire Combat phase:

The Play passes to your Player turn, and

- You miss your Movement phase.
- You miss your opportunity to Fire or Melee in your Attack phase.
- You have now met the requirement to miss 1 movement and 1 attack.
- and thus, revert to undispersed at the END of your Player TURN.

IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES:

NO ZOC.

NO RETREAT after Disruption result.

NO ADVANCE after Elimination result.

Leaders have some cool assets:

If opposing leader within 3 hexes, all Enemy Combats add 1 to the DR.

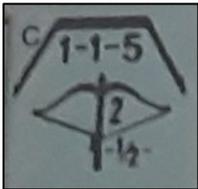
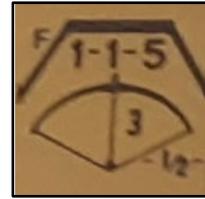
If friendly Leader within 3 hexes, subtract 1 from all Friendly DR.

	Militia Pikemen (MP) 2 pts
	Pikemen (PK) 4 pts
	Swordsmen (SD) 4 pts
	Heavy Cavalry (HC) 4 pts
	Lt. Cavalry (LC) 2 pts
	Crossbowmen (CB) 2 pts
	Arquebusiers (AQ) 2 pts
	Longbowmen (LB) 3 pts

Joining the Battle!



AGINCOURT (25/10/1415)



English: (Gold) – 57 Points. Panic at 23
10 Longbow, 3 Heavy Cavalry, 1 mounted commander.
French (Blue) – 75 Points, Panic at 30.
14 Heavy Cavalry, 2 Crossbow, 1 mounted commander.



The French walked into—we might better say charged—each time, varying slightly, assuming that it was the dismounted men at arms who had given Edward the victory. Thus they themselves dismounted again and again with equally disastrous results, as at Agincourt in 1415.

Special Rules:

1. Feudal Rule applies to the French, which will force the French Cavalry to charge the moment they see an English unit. They will also not retreat, though they can back up to charge.
2. Weather condition 6: Mud. Cavalry Charges at half; and all units lose 2 movement factors.
3. Panic Level Rules. The English Panic Threshold is 23, and the French Threshold is 30.
4. Heavy Cavalry may dismount. They will be replaced by Pikemen with a Movement factor of 3 if they do.

Victory Conditions:

Each side needs the highest level of victory to win: (3:1 casualty ratio.)

Setup:

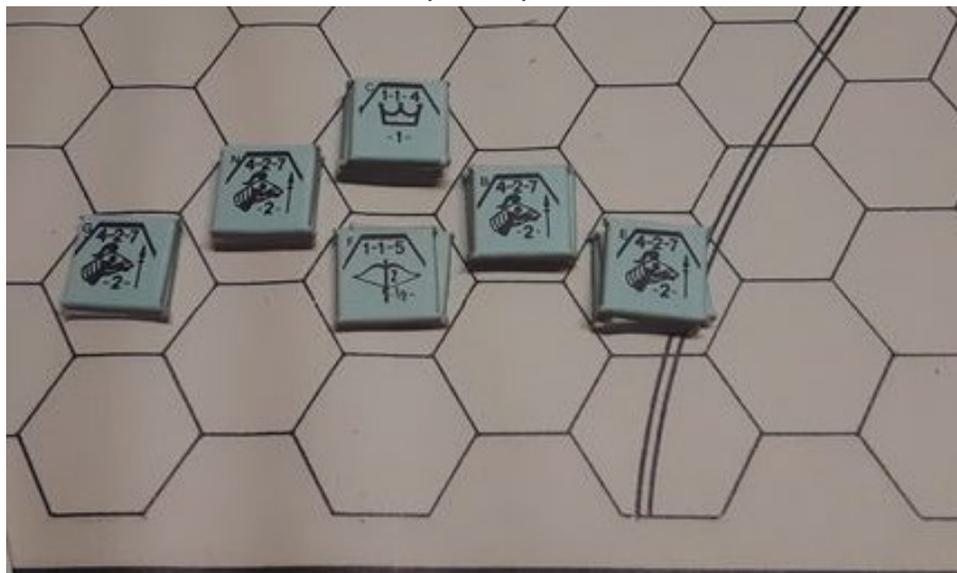
The English player will set up first, within 3 hexes of the village on the east half of the map board. The French set up within 5 hexes the map edge hex 10 hexes on the hexrow south of the village. The playing area is the 9 hex width below and extend the 10 hexes to the south board edge. Consider the heavy bocage (woods) to be impassable by both sides, represented by the green boxes below.





Above – English Setup – Longbows (LB) Left to right: 2 LB / 3 LB / 3 LB / 2 LB, with the three Heavy Cav (HC) in the rear. The leader Henry is stacked on one of the HC.

Below: The French. Their HC is stacked 3 deep except for the left units, which are 2 deep. The 2 Crossbow CB are in the rear, to avoid being trampled when the mounted knights spot the English.



Note: The way the Feudal rule is written in this edition, the French Heavy Cavalry MUST be in the Vanguard, and *"must move full speed toward the enemy mass, no subtle or devious maneuvering allowed."* (Or, to quote a knight for a later time, the Mandalorian, *"It is the Way."*)

the Feudal rule is written in this edition, the French Heavy Cavalry MUST be in the Vanguard, and *"must move full speed toward the enemy mass, no subtle or devious maneuvering allowed."* (Or, to quote a knight for a later time, the Mandalorian, *"It is the Way."*)

The Battle is Joined!



End of French Movement Phase, Turn 2:

With the mud, it took the hard-charging knights, driven by their passions for First honors on the field to reach the enemy. These heavy cavalry are certain they will sweep these flimsy archers from the field at their first contact. But those arrows have been heavier than the rain.

Battle pre-designations are easy: Each HC stack will come to blows with the 3 stacks of Longbows to their front!

On to Glory!

English Defensive Fire phase. The LB have 3 FP each x 3 units x the 3 target units. Clear Terrain is normal, x1, for 27 Attack points.

	1-2	1-1	2-1	3-1	4-1	5-1	6-1	7-1	8-1	9-1	10-1	
1	D	D	D	D	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	1
2	-	D	D	D	D	D	E	E	E	E	E	2
3	-	-	D	D	D	D	D	D	E	E	E	3
4	-	-	-	D	D	D	D	D	D	E	E	4
5	-	-	-	-	-	D	D	D	D	D	E	5
6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	D	D	D	D	6

The three defenders, at 2 Fire Protection (for a frontal attack) $2 \times 3 = 6$ Defense.

4:1 (66% chance) for each of the three unit stacks of Longbows. (LB).

The 2 unit stacks of Longbows are 3 FP each x 2 units x 3 target units = 18

Firepower vs the same 3 stack Defense (6) for **3:1**. (50-50% chance.)

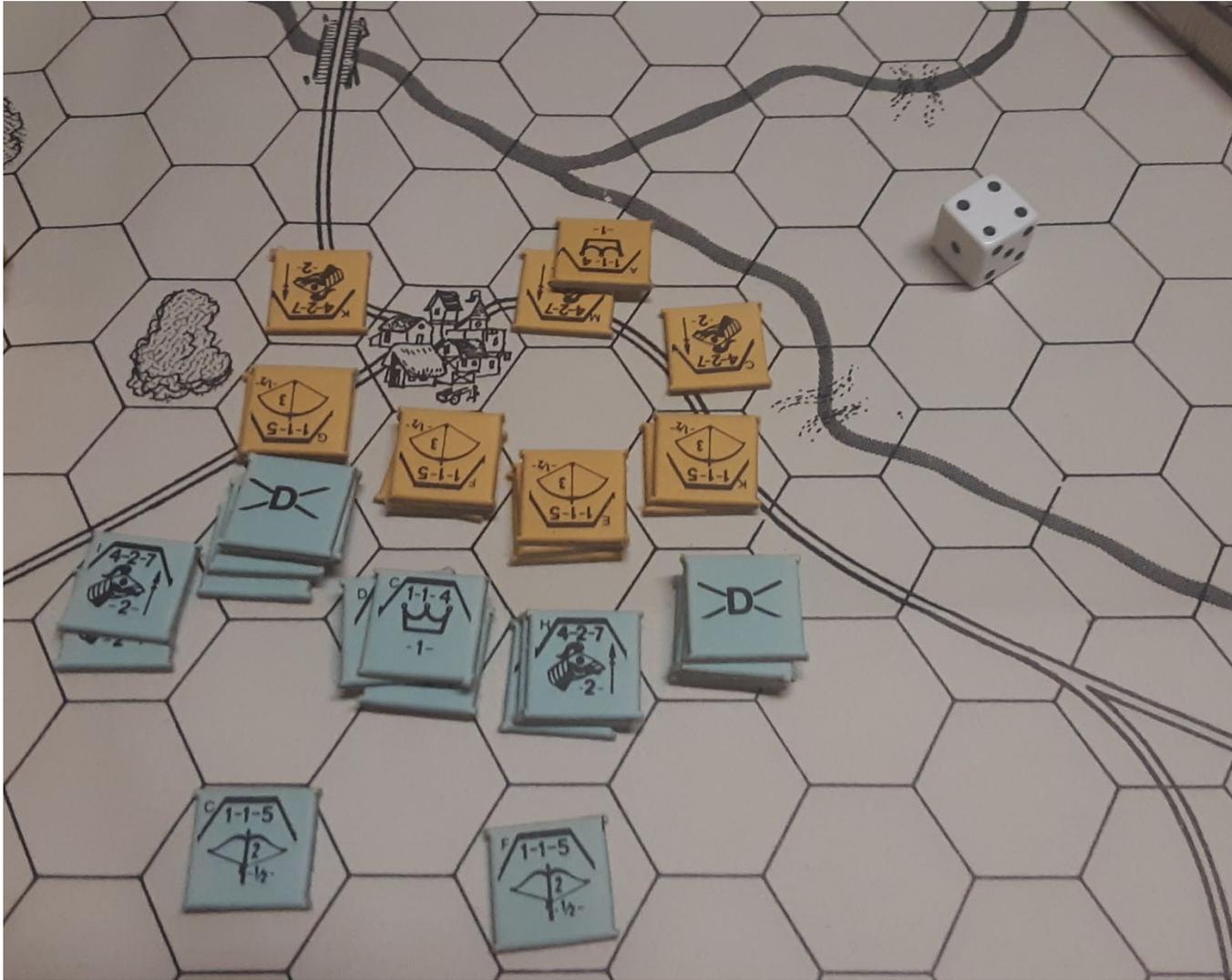
The leaders counter each other, so the Die Roll is even.

The dice, Left to Right in the picture above.

3:1 - 2 (Dispersed!) **4:1 - 6** (MISSED!) **4:1 - 5** (MISSED!) **3:1 - 2** (Hit!) Rut-Roh.

At least we hit something. The 2 hits were the lower odds shots! It shows it isn't only VASSAL that rolls high! This Melee will hurt!

Picture: Before Melee, French Turn Two:



I have used the D markers from the game to mark the Dispersed units. (In the game these are only for Demoralized Pike Militia. ROI expected you to flip Dispersed units to their blank side.)

The French dispersed Heavy Cavalry will return to good order at the end of their Movement Phase – unless the Longbows improve their shooting drastically in their player turn. – And they will get that chance, as they dispersed their attackers.

But the two center stacks of 3 Longbows did not, and they will take the brunt of the French Knights.

Thinking ahead to the English turn might be fanciful: It does not escape Henry's notice that the two stacks of three LB will be hit hard in the next moment. It could disperse 60% of Henry's longbows!

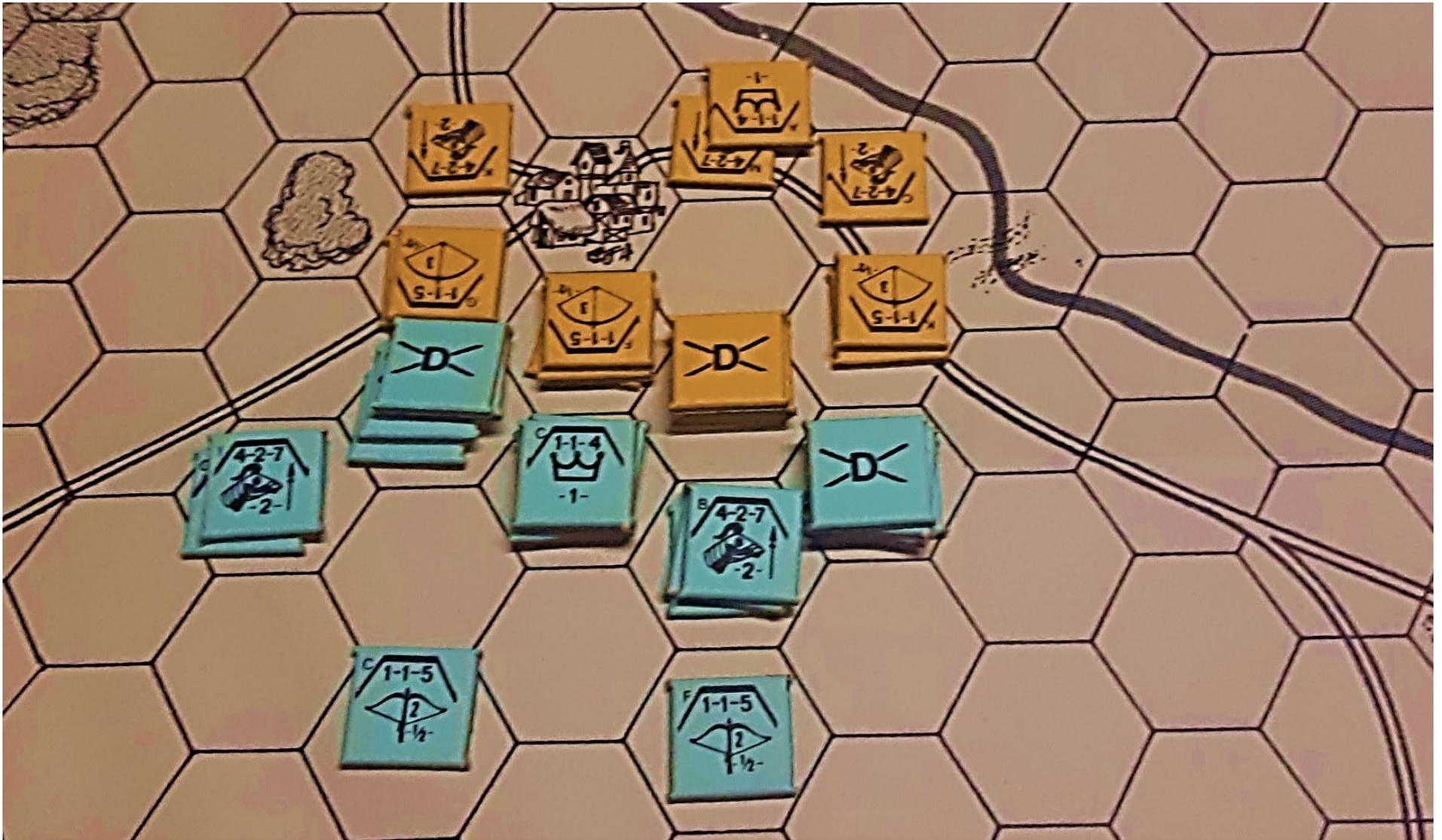
I thought this was supposed to be a cakewalk for the English? Isn't that what the Battle of Crecy taught?

Calculating the Melee (No French Fire Units have targets.): 3 HC charging have a strength of 4 each, and the Longbows have a defense of 1. Terrain is normal, so no help. 12 to 3, or both attacks are on the 4:1 column. The Dispersed HC can't attack.

The die roll above – a 4 - is the Melee for the H stack vs the E stack. D – and the first set of longbows are scattered to the wind!

Now for the troops personally led by Charles D'Albret: DR = 6!!! A MISS!
Henry sends up a cheer and surveys his field at this moment. (See the photo below.)

End of French Turn 2:

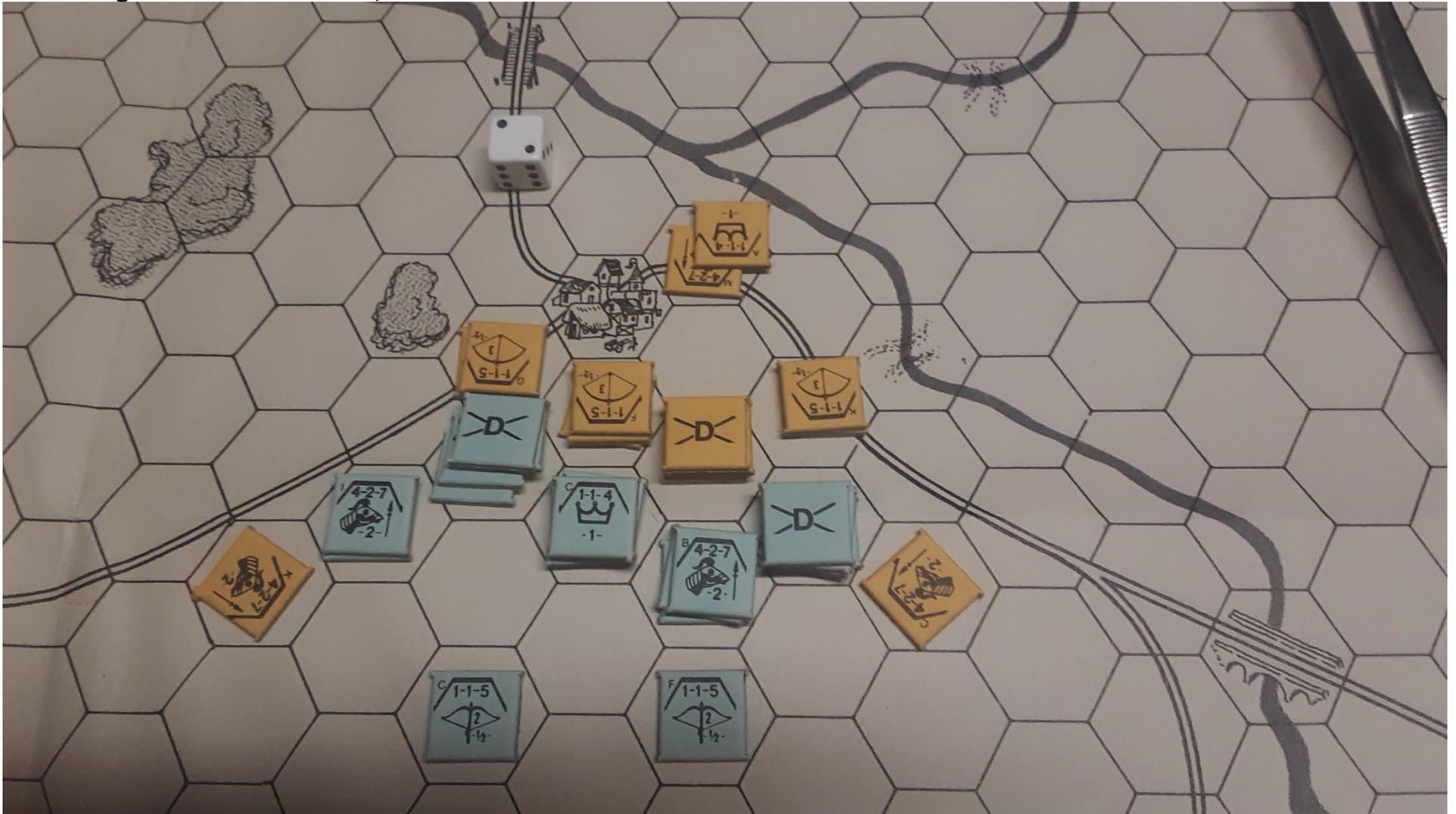


The English Longbows will not return to good order until the end of the English Fire / Melee Phase – i.e., the end of the English player turn.

The French, having disrupted in the Defensive Fire Phase, will return at the end of the French Movement on turn 3. Meaning the Disrupted French are clearly the vital target here. But Charles and his stack can't be ignored, can they?

The Longbows will not Melee if they can help it. Henry will stick to the plan and fill the sky with arrows! But he will also send out his few cavalry to harass the French flanks, too. (See picture below)

End of English Movement Phase, Turn 2:

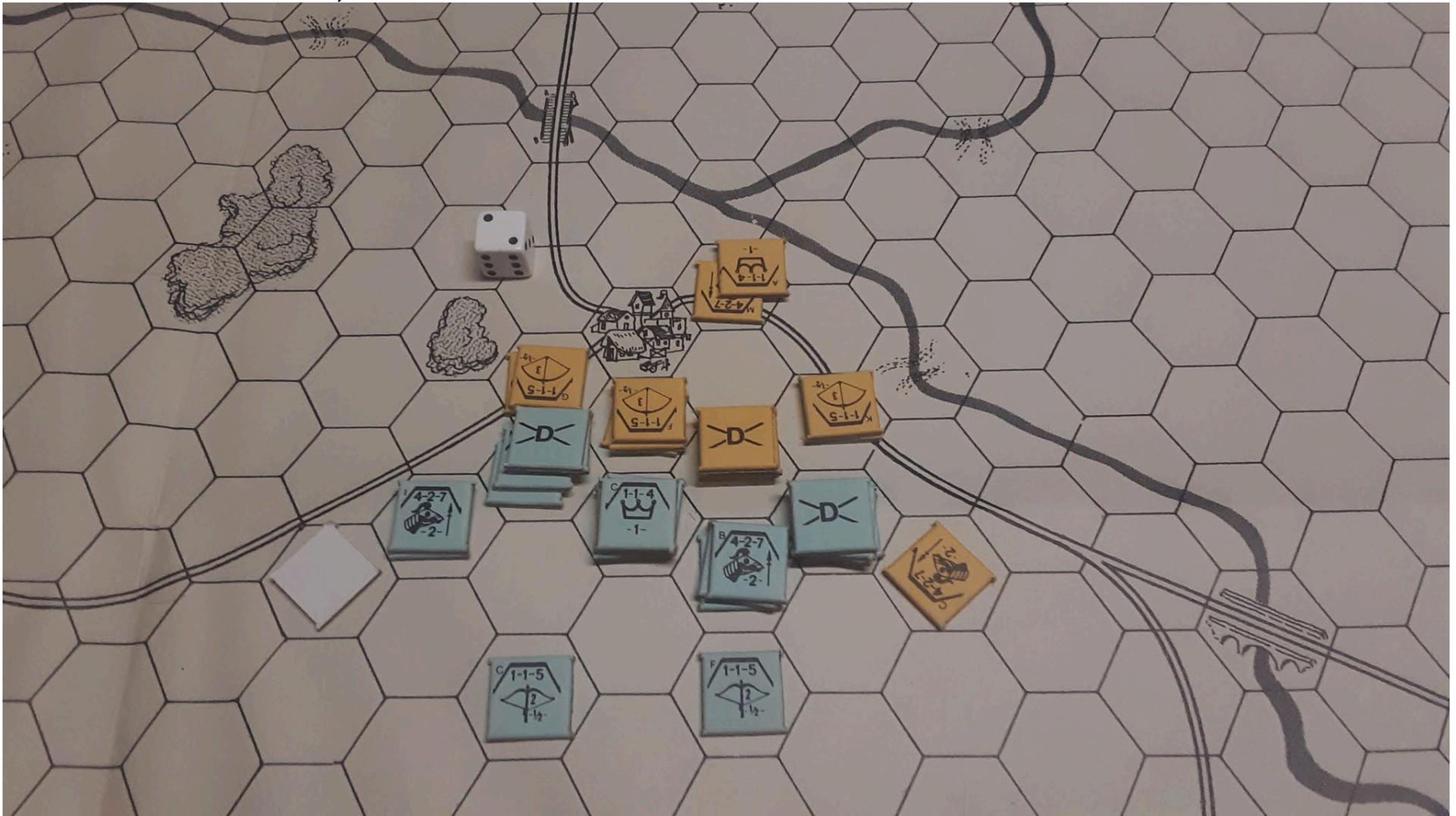


Have I mention how I really love the movement facing restrictions in this game? Seriously, it adds so much to the feel of moving troops, not just pushing cardboard.

Both English Heavy Cavalry take advantage of the lack of ZOCs – and the fact the Feudal rules does NOT apply to them - and moves to flank the enemy. Mud has reduced the MF by 2, but the bigger problem are the crossbows guarding the back ranks. Will Henry get away with this audacious move?

The Crossbows are the only thing that has Defensive fire for the French, and by the rules, they cannot fire as they are not targets. However, I can't believe they would KNOW they weren't targets, and in the heat of battle forgot that rule!

End of French Defensive Fire, Turn 2:



Only the Crossbows have Fire weapons, so only they have Defensive fire. The Crossbows did not have great odds: Listed as a 2 Fire factor, that is at 1 hex. It decreases by 1 for each hex beyond 1 in distance, so the Crossbow FP is 1. 1 unit (1 FP) x 1 unit in the target hex. Total = 1 FP.

The HC was careful to face the CB, so his defense is 2, x 1 unit in the hex x1 (normal clear terrain) = 2 FP defense. It was a 1:2 shot for each of the crossbows. You need a 1! Ha! BUT -- the left CB rolled a 1! The right, a 5.

The one HC is dispersed – shown here as flipped – until the end of the next English Player turn!

But now is the moment of truth, as the English Fire in their Attack phase. They will target the dispersed French HC, in hopes of prevailing. (A dispersed unit that suffers an additional D result is eliminated.)

English Attack Phase, Turn 2: Same shot below – to help with the calculations:



Fire come before Melee, so the HC Flank is on hold.

Stack K – 2 LB - has no options. He can only see the Dispersed stack in front of him. The good news is as it is dispersed, the fire defense is decreased from a 2 to a 1.

The same is true for Stack G another 2 LB, who is hitting the Dispersed unit to his front. **But** - one of the units in Stack F will add his fire at the Dispersed stack, too.

Of course, that means only 2 LB will be available in Stack F to fire at Charles' stack.

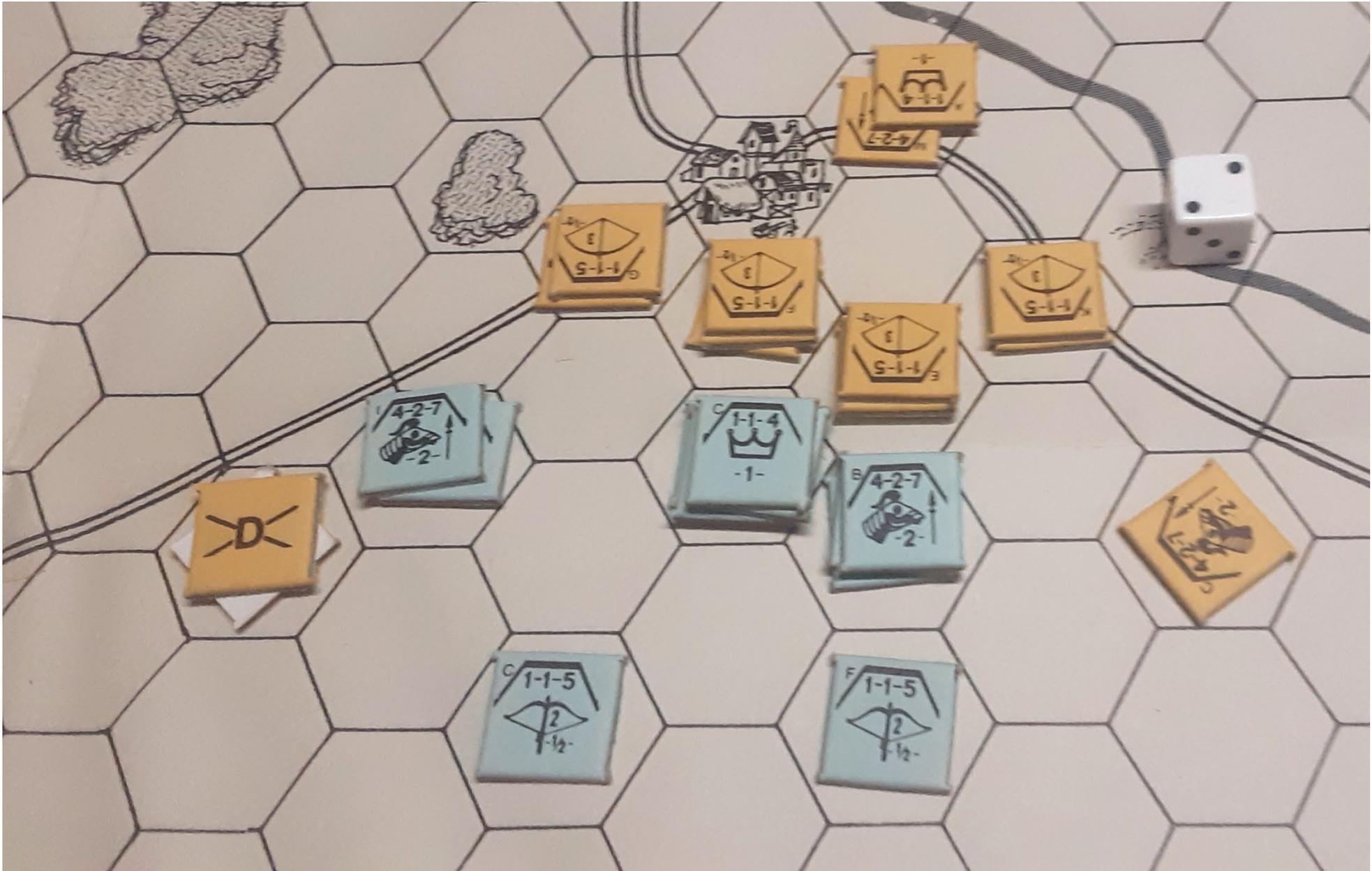
We will start with the big attack on the LEFT: Stack G, 2 units, and unit F from Stack F. Three attackers, so $3 \text{ FP} \times 3 \text{ units} \times 3 \text{ target units} = 27 \text{ FP}$. The target is the 3 Disrupted units (1 defense \times 3 target units \times 1 Clear Ground = 3). So, $27:3 = 9:1!$ *They can't miss!*

But they tried! They rolled a 6! (Note that Charles and Henry, each within 3 hexes, offset their leadership Die Roll Modifiers). Thus, a 6 is a D, and a D on a Disrupted unit is still an elimination. *Three French Heavy Cavalry are gone!*

On the weaker side, the Fire attack will come before melee by the English HC. LB Fire is $3 \text{ FP} \times 2 \text{ units} \times 3 \text{ target units}$ for 18 FP. The Defense will be the same as the other flank was = $3 \text{ units} \times 1 \text{ Defense each} = 3$. Final is 18:3, or **6:1**. **This time, the DR was a 5**, just enough to eliminate another 3 French Cavalry units! Whew! (Dispersed units that are dispersed again are eliminated.)

And the Last Fire Attack - the 2 remaining LB in the F Stack Fire at Charles, $3 \times 2 \times 3 = 18$ vs $3 \times 2 \times 1 = 3:1$ - and Miss with another 6! (No need to be greedy!) Since the Disrupted units died before the Melee Phase, the Heavy Cavalry have nothing to melee now.

End of English Player Turn 2



As you can see on the follow-up picture above the French lines are devastated. 6 of the 14 HC are gone. At 4 points each in this game, that is 24 points, on a Panic Level of 30. As the turn ends, the Dispersed LB return to good order. Charles has problems. But then again, the Feudal Rule is unrelenting. (Until the Panic Threshold is reached.)

French Player Turn 3, Movement:

Speaking of the Feudal Rule, it also states a French unit will **not** break off the attack! Heavy cavalry must attack the same hex, until successful, or dispersed or eliminated. But cavalry depend on a CHARGE to have a Melee of 4 rather than 2.



degrees, They have only 1 MP left, and that would not bring them back to contact!

Under the Feudal rule, that would not be “the Way.”

Without the Mud, they could do it – but not with the weather to simulate the actual condition of the battle.

So, for Valor, Charles and his fellow knights stay in contact. This will mean their melee value per unit is 2, not 4.

Good thing they are only facing those pesky Longbows men. That would still be a 6:3 or 2:1 Melee. Are we not the flower of the French culture? Beloved by God and countrymen? Certain to be successful because our hearts are pure?

Those dastardly English dogs who snuck behind us, though, certainly need dealt with. They are now the closest unit for the stack of Knights who did not reach the initial clash of arms – fulfilling the Feudal rule’s requirements of valor. The Knights that were almost attacked in the FLANK by those unchivalrous barbarians will deal with them!

Under normal circumstances, it is allowable to fall back and charge in the same turn – and with 7 MPs, that is normally possible. (Heavy Cavalry must charge to get the 4 Melee value – otherwise in Melee, they are only 2 Melee.)

Mud and the Facing rule make this VERY difficult to achieve, though.

- They have only 5 MP because of the mud
- The Facing Rule says you MUST move into a hex to your front.
- And it costs 1 MP to change facing more than 60 degrees in a hex.
- So, to fall back 2 hexes for the charge, which is 2 more MPs.
- And once you pay the 1 MP to again change your facing 180

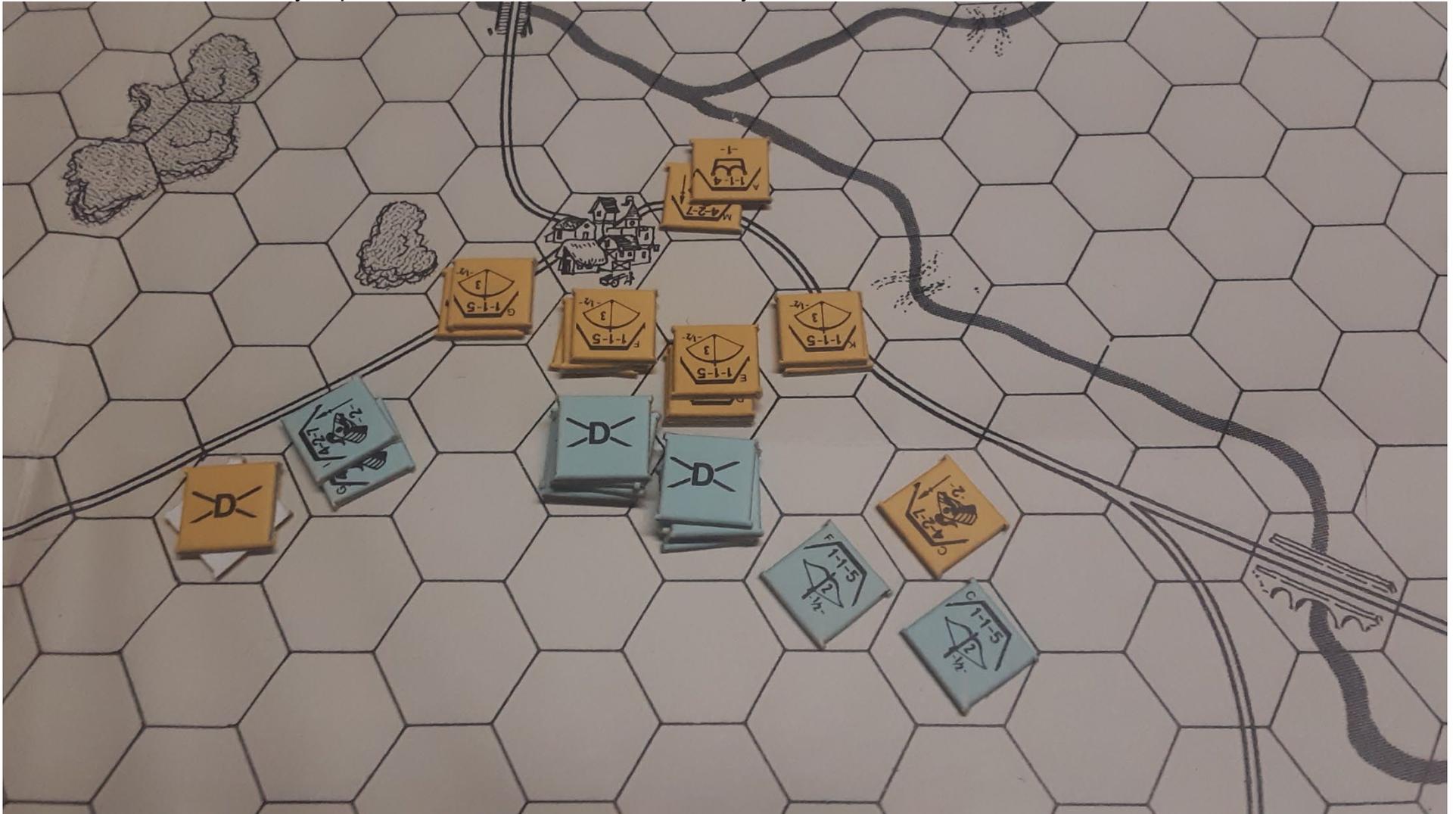
The French Cavalry will pay the MP to 'about face' and prepare to deal the death blow to these dispersed English curs.
That Melee will be 4:1 since the 'curs' are dispersed. 2 (non-charging Melee Value x 2 units vs 1 dispersed unit in open ground =4:1.

Meanwhile, the Crossbows will go hunting the cur's brethren.

But of course, first comes

the English Defensive Fire, Turn 3.

And this time, with the ability to put ALL their FIRE on the French, they do not miss.

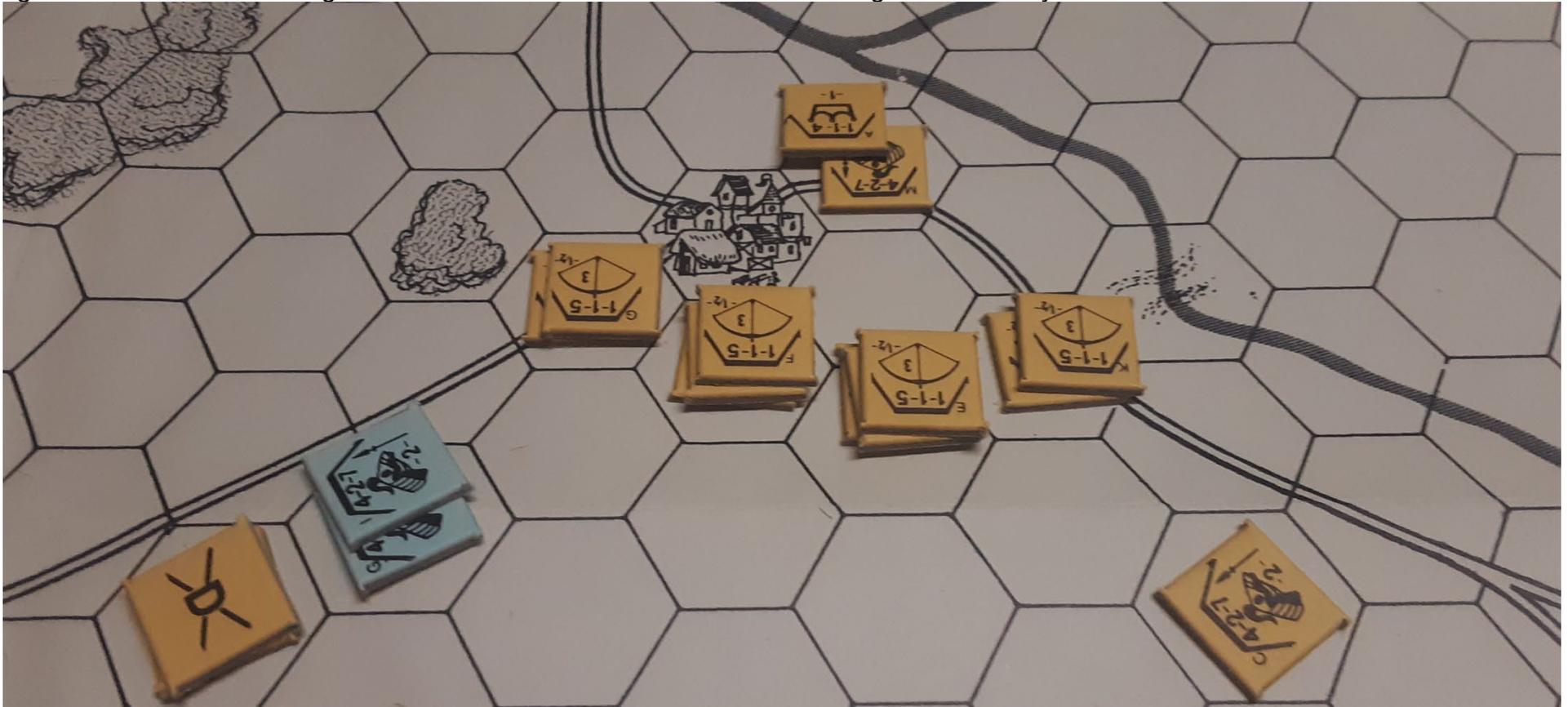


But in the subsequent **French Fire and Melee phase**, the Crossbows miss on a 2:1, and in the Melee, the 2 HC Miss at 4:1! (Not a charge, so only 2 Melee per unit, not 4) Had Charles not Dispersed, they and the CB would have gotten a -1 DR Mod from Charles

In the English Player Turn, more losses, as all the Long Bows target the two remaining disrupted stacks. Each will have 5 LB with 3 at 1 hex 3 FP x3) + 2 x 2FP x 3 targets = 13x3 = 39 to 3 units x 1 x1 = 13:1 Both attacks are the same. Both gone.

Panic removes the Crossbows, while the remaining knights ponder their fate.

I guess we will see if the English understand French when the wounded Knights ask “Mercy.”



“The French walked in – we might better say charged – each time, varying slightly... And again, with equally disastrous results, at Agincourt in 1415.” – Historical notes from Dr. A. A. Nofi’s “*Renaissance of Infantry*,” S&T 22, 1970.

Some thoughts: I tried to leave the Knights mounted, and clearly, that didn’t work either.

INITIAL DEPLOYMENT

The Player indicated as deploying first by the Scenario or by mutual agreement designates one hex as his center of mass and deploys his troops within a five-hex radius of it. The other Player then deploys his army a minimum of 8 hexes distant, facing the front of the enemy. Normally the player who deploys first moves second, but in some Scenarios this is not the case. In addition certain Scenarios are relatively specific in outlining the deployment to be followed. Players should try to deploy on as many different terrain features as possible to add an additional element of variation.

But there are many options. As I have often said, these games are almost infinitely playable. The setup is left up to the play in all versions, though by **PRESTAGS** they do limit the scenarios to a given area. **ROI** and others challenge the players to incorporate different terrain from the map in subsequent setups.

These older games also offered a large variety of rules that may not have made the cut to the **PRESTAGS** system.

A few of my favorites here are Treachery, where your leaders may sell you out; **Maneuver /Honors of War** options, to reflect the mercenaries who really had no reason to fight to the death. The goal is to try via maneuver and feints to trap an opponent into a position that promises heavy losses. So heavy, he will accept the Honors of War offer, you record it as a win. Both armies retire unscathed, to 'play' at war again later.

Don't overlook the castles in this game, with Heavy artillery designed to

smash their way in! How could anyone pass on that option!

Clearly, these games offer an incredible value in table time and enjoyment. We could play this same scenario again, using a different defense based on what we learned – *like, LOSE the Feudal Rule!* – and the result will be completely different. Or make Weather a random event. (See picture on the right. On 5 the English better stay home!)

Or consider this – add **PRESTAGS** leader rules to these games. Major game change there.

Also realize, you can play **Armageddon, Centurion, Phalanx, Dark Ages,** and **Renaissance of Infantry** - the games that preceded **PRESTAGS** - with the later rules, too. The major difference is all the counter information. Also, the special rules for each of the earlier versions game's era are in their rules so you need to consult the exclusive rules, or as above, add them yourself from the options in the game.

There are also at least 100 other scenarios for all these games at SPIGames.net under the scenarios menu. Enjoy! ---Russ Gifford]

WEATHER. Usually, during this period, the war would be called off for the day in the event of bad weather, but occasionally the killing proceeded without sunny skies. Roll a die at the start of the game:

1 or 2 = Picnic weather fit for a prince. No effect on combat.

3 = Fog: Fire units, excluding LIGHT CAVALRY, reduce range by 1. Artillery reduces range by 2.

4 = Light Rain: Artillery range cut in half, no other fire allowed. Oil your armor.

5 = Heavy Rain: No fire; cavalry charges at half; pikes halved; all units lose 2 MF.

6 = Mud: Same as "5", except fire is allowed at normal rates.

ADDENDA

I said the Tactical Games were clearly evolutionary, too. Rules were changing. Here are the major ones, inspired by my points above. One person asks, *Can you fire down a spine if only one of the two hexes are blocked?*

That is an interesting question! **Renaissance of Infantry** and 1970-71 games in the series based on the **ROI** rules are mute on the subject. Most of those were by John Young (**Phalanx**, **Dark Ages**, **Armageddon** 1971).

Late in 1971, **Grenadier**, designed by Dunnigan and developed by Nofi (**ROI**, **Centurion**) AND Young *explicitly says it is blocked if the hexspine is along a blocked/occupied hex.* (With the exception of a VILLAGE hexside, of all things!)

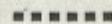
In Young's later works - **Musket & Pike** and **Rifle & Saber** he was specific to the point of adding an image to SHOW it was **BLOCKED** --unless the firing unit was on a slope or a hilltop.

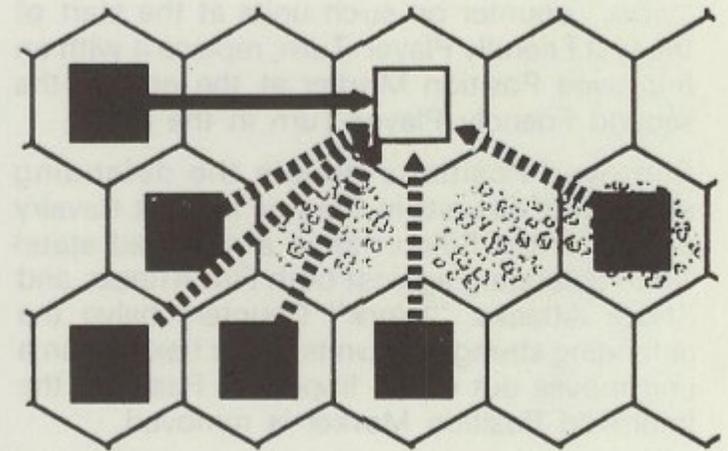
Image from the rules of **R&S**:

BUT -- in his later SPI **PRESTAGS** games in 1975, Young made it **CLEAR**, literally: [6.38] firing along a hex spine where one hex is clear and the other is blocked, the LOS is **CLEAR**. And that became the SPI standard until the end of their days.

Renaissance of Infantry	July, 1970
Centurion	January, 1971
Dark Ages	July, 1971
Grenadier	September, 1971
Phalanx	October, 1971
Armageddon	September, 1972
Musket & Pike	January, 1973
Rifle & Saber	April, 1973
PRESTAGS	1975

Examples of Line of Sight:

Key: Blocked  Unblocked 



Friendly-occupied and Enemy-occupied hexes are both Blocking hexes with respect to Friendly fire.

Replay ERRATA!

Could we do anything with SPI and NOT require addenda and errata? 🤔
In my replay, at the end of the game, I allowed the two longbow stacks to fire down the spine between a clear hex, and a hex occupied by other friend Longbow units! (See pages 14-17 above). The rules of the time said 'blocked!' But it is hard for us to remember that. Here is a thought for those of you that want to keep the different rules clear between the Tactical Warfare Games of SPI!

MAKING IT ALL CLEAR

How far do we go to standardize these rules? Let's look at the changes.

This game timeline will let us see how these games developed.

DEVELOPMENT NOTES:

The *Centurion* rules (Jan 1971) adds CONTACT

K) Units engaged in a Melee Attack which does not result in the elimination or dispersal of one or the other unit, remain in CONTACT and they may not break off the action (i.e. leave their position) until a decision is reached on a subsequent turn. On the movement portion of a turn, however, additional troops may be rushed in to assist a unit in CONTACT.

Centurion (Tac 13) uses almost the same rules as **ROI** (Tac 14). It is really a better organization of the same rules, for the most part. However, it does add something new: CONTACT.

Now, any *Melee* (not FIRE) Attack that does not result in a Disruption or Elimination cannot leave until one side is Disrupted, or Eliminated. (*This does NOT require the Defender to Attack.*)

The *Dark Ages* rules (July 1971 & Errata Dec 1973) adds ZOC Rules to Fire / Missile Units.

Units entering a Frontal hex of a Missile/Fire unit must cease movement for that turn. They may leave the next Movement Phase with no penalty.

One could argue that this could be retrofitted to **Renaissance of Infantry**, happening AFTER the changes in warfare in covered in **Dark Ages**.

(K) (Omission): As units move into anyone of the three hexes adjacent to the front of an Enemy missile unit (Class IV or Class V units only) they must immediately cease movement and may move no farther in that Movement Phase. In any following Friendly Movement Phase they may leave that hex, but must again cease movement immediately if they enter another hex adjacent to the front an Enemy missile unit. They may move directly from one such hex to another.

But: Dark Ages also changes the CRT to add an addition result – DD. They state a second D result does NOT eliminate an already Demoralized unit. But a DD will Demoralize a Good Order unit and Eliminate a Disrupted unit. They also make it possible for Demoralized units to move half their MF. How far do we go in retrofitting these?

The *Phalanx* Rules (1971 & Errata May 1973) adds changes to Demoralized

Demoralization and Panic result in the loss of one-half of the unit's Movement Allowance and Melee strengths (fractions lost, though a unit may not be reduced below "1") and their being unable to attack. In **Demoralization**, the

Demoralized Units lose half their movement and Melee strength – but cannot attack. Meaning if they remain Disrupted and Adjacent to the enemy, next Enemy Melee Phase they would defend at HALF strength. (Cue Pat Benatar: "You better run!")

While **Phalanx** also incorporates Contact, it does allow units in Contact to adjust their facing 60 degrees in either direction. The Errata also provides unit in Contact a way out: If they are not at 3:1 or greater against them, the unit may Withdraw one hex. The Errata states: "A unit withdrawing does not pay any Movement Points for the withdrawal nor may it alter its facing. It is simply moved directly backward one hex."

The *Armageddon* Rules (1972 & Errata of May 1973) adds Retreat rules to Disruptions!

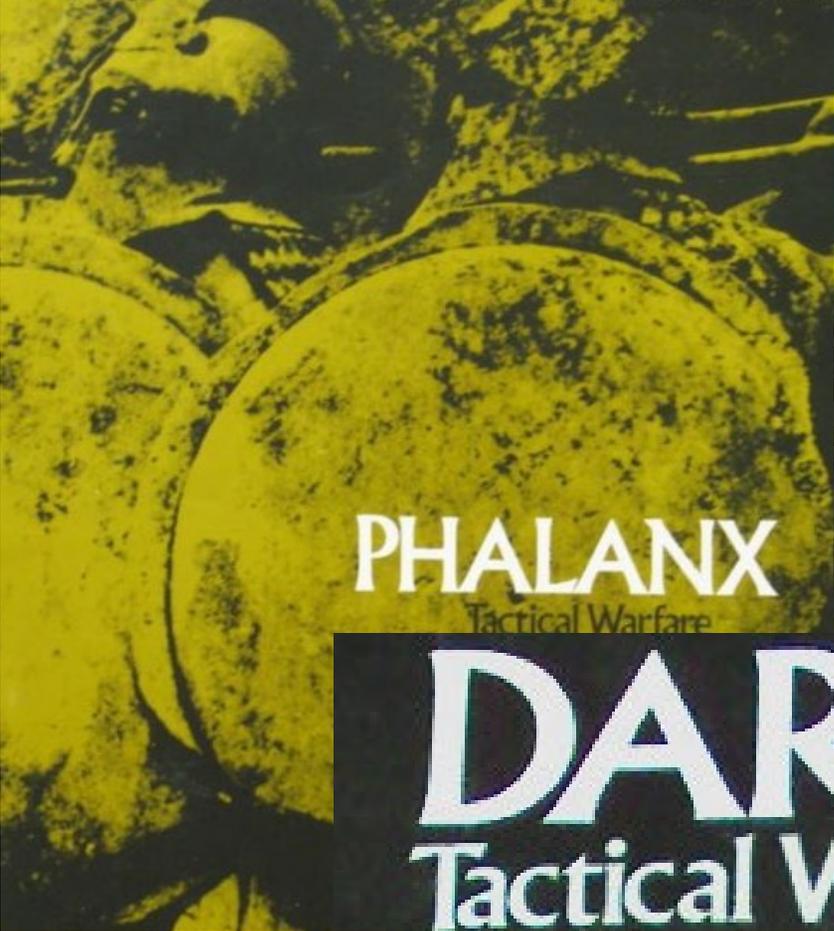
- Units that Disrupt in **MELEE** Must Retreat!
- Contract is also a standard rule.
- The Fire rules have changed!
"Units may Defensive Fire when a unit comes adjacent. They may not fire again that Phase, and they may NOT fire in the following Friendly Player Turn!"

Units must retreat when they receive a Disruption result due to melee combat. When retreating, units may not pass through Crest hex-sides, or the Front hexes of Enemy Fire units. They must end their retreat as far away from any Enemy unit as possible, and must be the number of hexes of its Movement Allowance away from its beginning position, i.e., the unit(s) may not move through the same hexes or move in circles, etc. Within these

And this leads us to the creation of **PRESTAGS!**

I hope you enjoyed this trip in the paper time machine of SPI Wargames! --RHG

An Historical Simulation Game *the time is: afternoon, 1 October 33*



PHALANX
Tactical Warfare



CENTVRION
TACTICAL WARFARE, 100B.C.-500A.D.



DARK AGES
Tactical Warfare, 500-1300

Check out other replays at
www.SPIGames.net



ARMAGEDDON
TACTICAL COMBAT, 3000 to 500 B.C.



Renaissance of Infantry
Tactical Warfare, 1250AD to 1550AD

Created by Russ Gifford, 2023
rgifford@russgifford.net