

AGE of DISCOVERY Scenario Replay: Swiss Attack

Our group needed to playtest a new command and control variant called Crux of Battle, which uses leader cards with different abilities. The scenario was loosely based on Bicocca, where a French army with a large Swiss contingent attacked a well entrenched Imperialist force. With the Swiss contract running out, the French commander was forced into an attack, which historically was repulsed and ended the campaign.

Our reflight would have the same terrain set up, although detailed information on the actual battle is sketchy at best. The manor house and its gardens dominated the French right flank. The estate was surrounded by wet ditches which supposedly had been dug deeper by the Imperialist forces, making them impassable except at the one lone bridge. The road in front of the main entrenchments was a sunken road, backed up by earthworks with artillery sited in. All in all, one of the most impregnable positions we've ever seen in gaming.

As in real life, the French commander must attack the position frontally, so there is no time for flanking maneuvers as the Swiss are growing impatient and could leave at any time if the attack is not agreed to.

The Imperialists set up first and could set up anywhere behind the line running from the sunken road to the edge of the board. Fearing the French cavalry, they deployed their cavalry behind the one unit guarding the bridge as a reserve. We allowed units to exit the road, then reappear behind the ditch after two turns as

FRENCH ORDER OF BATTLE

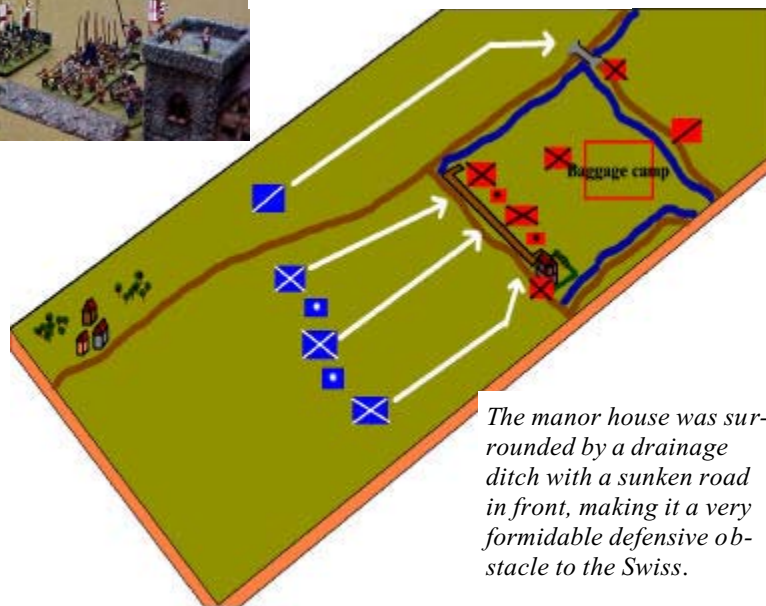
- 5 units of Swiss infantry Class 4
- 2 units of Gendarmes Class 4
- 1 unit of heavy cavalry Class 3
- 1 unit of mtd. Crossbows Class 2
- 1 unit of arquebus skirmish Class 1
- 1 heavy artillery battery
- 1 medium artillery battery

IMPERIALIST ORDER OF BATTLE

- 2 units of Spanish pike Class 2
- 2 units of Italian pike Class 2
- 2 units of Italian pike Class 1
- 1 unit of crossbow skirmish Class 1
- 1 unit of gendarmes Class 4
- 1 unit of heavy cavalry Class 3
- 1 unit of Stradiots Class 2
- 2 heavy artillery batteries
- 1 medium artillery battery



The Imperialist position around the manor house and park.. The artillery is deployed behind the entrenchments.



The manor house was surrounded by a drainage ditch with a sunken road in front, making it a very formidable defensive obstacle to the Swiss.



The view of the French attack from behind the entrenchments

the ditch was impassable. This did create some anxious moments for the Imperialists when they desperately needed their cavalry to plug a hole, only to realize they couldn't cross the ditch and wouldn't arrive for several turns!

The Imperialist commanders decided to forego history and not deploy the cavalry in the open, rather to keep it as a reserve. The rest of the army drew up behind the entrenchments with one lone pike unit placed to defend the bridge in the rear.

The French had no choice but to launch a frontal attack with the



The Swiss move forward with artillery support.

Swiss. The cavalry commander took his units around the flank to take the bridge, but his leadership abilities were to seriously hamper

AGE of DISCOVERY Scenario Replay: Swiss Attack (cont.)

THE BATTLE BEGINS

The Swiss roll forward supported by artillery that begins pounding the entrenchments. One of the heavy batteries explodes and the French are not off

to a great start. The cavalry commander can only command two units at a time, so the cavalry advance is uneven. By the third turn the Swiss are crossing the sunken road, then

charge up to the ramparts. The two Swiss flanking units come under artillery fire from the battery posted at the corner and crossbows from the skirmishers in the manor. The Swiss are momentarily driven back, making the first three units bear the brunt of the assault.

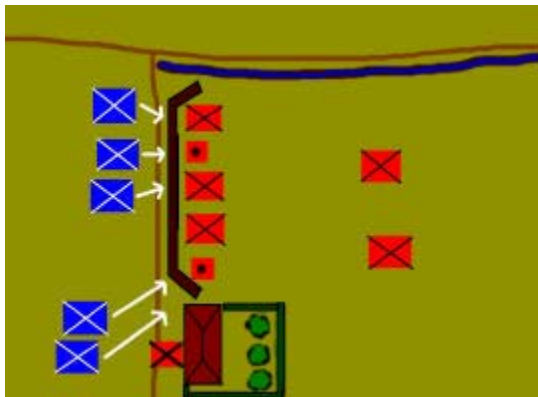
The Swiss in front of the entrenchments endure a barrage of



The French goal. The baggage camp deployed near the ditch.

fire for two turns, but then charge over the ramparts. They slam into the defenders, driving

them back and seizing the main line of works. However, there are no reserves left and the other two Swiss units are taking a fearful beating and begin to give ground. The French cavalry desperately tries to attack the bridge, but are

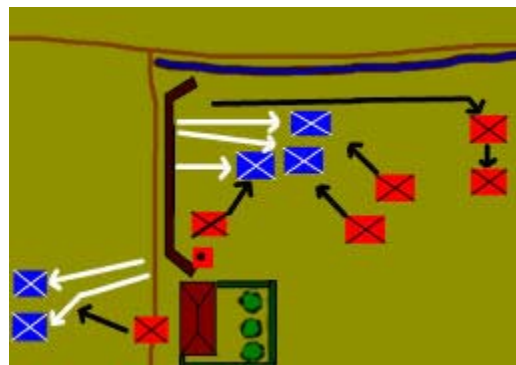


The Swiss reach the sunken road, then attack over the earthworks. The manor proved to be a formidable obstacle to the flank attack.

havoc on the French forces as they prepare to charge.

Back at the center, the Swiss quickly move to exploit the breach in the works. They are met by pike units moving up to seal the hole. The Swiss are only a single move away from reaching the baggage camp and ending the game. But this is the high water mark for the attack. Through the use of reserves and charges, the Swiss are gradually worn down, just inches from their goal.

unable to force back the lone Italian pike unit. The artillery battery posted there continues to wreak



Three Swiss units rout the Spanish and Italians, forcing them back on their supports. Local counterattacks wear down the Swiss and they lose momentum.

Both sides are now at the breaking point with frightful casualties on both armies. The Imperialist forces make two very nervous withdrawal checks and both pass, so the counterattack continues. The Swiss are forced back, then finally give way after the flank crumbles because of the lack of support. The Italians and Spanish retake the entrenchments, then surge over them in pursuit.

The French try to reorganize a defense in the hopes of checking the counterattack, then trying one last attack. There are too many units in retreat, however, and with no reserves left, the French don't have the strength to try again, so they withdraw.

The game followed history fairly close, with the Swiss getting to the ramparts, but being pushed back in the end. The attack in the center was very exciting as both sides desperately threw everything they had into expanding or sealing up the breach. The command system worked very well, putting limitations on attacks and the special events upset a few well planned efforts. This was our fifth game as a group and once again it was very exciting and everyone had a good time.

In retrospect, there wasn't much different that either side could have done. The French had no choice but to go straight ahead and the Imperialists used their reserves to block any gains the Swiss made.

Once again, the Age of Discovery system worked well and seems to accurately portray the ebb and flow of renaissance era combat.