

ENTIER-TAMME 1870

My first « transformist » scenario, or rather second. The first one was Solferino where I simply took the terrain, set up and story and used napoleonics (the First, the warrior one) instead of the 1859 rules and troops. It worked nicely.

Now a bit more devious twisting with using Antietam, an interesting battle by itself, if done with possible what-ifs to keep the players on edge, a bit like the historical counterparts. Though with the real possibility of a completely one-sided story. So, it will be Antietam in 1870, in France.

I chose to have the French do the confederates as they are most often on defence. It might look a bit weird, as they are, historically the less manoeuvrable, responsive army. With Age of Valor, it is far less sensitive, and not having such a high discrepancy in numbers might compensate the skill equivalence. My cards give a bit more abilities to the Germans though not that much. Obviously, they can be fiddled with to move things more one way or another.

1 Terrain

One of the things that make this battle stand out, the two rivers, unfordable except at rare spots. Early on I decided I won't go too deep behind the French to speed up confrontation and limit withdrawals (it proved to be a mistake). So, the "Potomac" was nowhere, deemed to be some impassable exits on 2/3 of the table off table, so no retreat that way.

I wanted to use big armies (folie des grandeurs!) and in 1870 everything shoots further and better and units are bigger. So, the distances had to be increased to keep a similar coherence between deployments and first of all, the guns danger zones. It ended up 20 km x10. I chose not to have unknown fords as I played solo, no need and it might slow down things.

In addition, the terrain must be a French plausible thing, just doing the ACw would not do.

Many features, fences, wooden buildings, very few of them, would not do. One needs to re-transcript, in a way, the impact of things adapted somehow to the new period. So, villages and farms, the town now could be fought over, and several bridges and a ford would be more likely and make the thing interesting, I just had a so-so scenario with bridges for my 1809 which was not a great success, game wise (space and slow). Besides I did not want to get into detailed reproduction of the battlefield, a tedious and long thing, so it was mostly "inspired by" but ended up quite producing the right thing.

2 Armies: something big, plentiful, and using not all my corps but most. Imperial period, (the republicans need a bit of additions and revamp).

French:

1er, 2nd, 7le, 4e corps plus La garde, plus Chasseur d'Afrique division, Bonnemaains cuirassiers, and an additional brigade from 12° corps for numbers plus the artillery reserve. 167000 everything full to simplify the life, straight out of the drawers. I play La Garde as elite because they were chosen from the line professional as a reward so should be by experience and status better at sustaining casualties and close combat. So with the colonials of First corps, a lot of elites, no equivalent in the Germans, the Garde except for 1. Grenadiers, Jäger and Leib Kuir. All "regular" as just better, bigger conscripts.

Germans:

I. III. V. VI. X. 2. Bavarian, Württemberg div., XII. (Saxons) Korps 3 cavalry divisions. 220000 men. I will play the Germans and make them globally the attacker.

3 Set up:

Playing solo, so I Used a combo of the just released solo opponent from Adjudant introuvable2 (can be get for 10\$ on Wargames vault) improved from the first version not the least by now being able to defend, and the set up of Volley and Bayonet roads to Glory card system. That was a bit risky as some results might not fit Antietam at all, so in case I would draw again.

I had 4 different assignments of the French corps (centre, right, left, reserve) which I will random chose after I put all the Germans and made myself an idea of the first 3 moves, enough to get close enough to see more of the enemy deployment (that is if it were playing a human with fog of war). I drew the Road to glory cards for the French oy after these moves, if any major silly things I can redirect some Germans. In the end it proved fine.



The cards I chose, the second one for the French had half of the army as reinforcements, maybe closer to Antietam but a high risk of spoiling the scenario.

The table



The German set up (X. Bavarians, and one cavalry division will arrive later)





I kept more 36" at least between deployment zones, the range of guns. It left the Germans mostly on the out table, the French 70 cm from the edge, 1/6th of the table was without troops on each flank as per the VnB rules.

The corks are forgotten from the deployment zone calculations 😊

The IA.I from Adjutant Introuvable had its way a bit, with the attitude/orders of each corps, (kept as a little blue die near each corps commander, 1 they are cautious, withdraw under pressure, 6 all-out attack if with more than 50% chances and the deployment especially the reserves which I did for each wing. Actually, the reserves would be deployed later in their real position. A bit of adapting to the terrain was needed. At the beginning the French were quite aggressive which in the end did not help as it sucked reserves forward.



GT 3 from the right, German view.



Center and rear. Rolling terrain, obstacles to avoid a pure artillery slaughter. I had a hard time coordinating the Germans with bad movement dice here and there. And did not put enough guns forward.



Started the fight in the right (just like the historical battle) Here the Saxon Korps starts its epic fight with French IVe corps that will last 12 turns.



I got too eager and sucked in a fight with most of the Saxon turning movement so that the right part of it was not ready when the fight got serious. It helped the French sustain the conflict against only a fraction.

In fact, I got lucky that the AI did make them cautious, as I was considering what they would know and see. As you can see, again the guns were too far behind. Contrary to the rules I roll dice for movement for guns groups, as it is supposed to be about

command as much as morale. Solo batteries if close and in sight of their commanders I tend to move at will. It makes the powerful gun lines a bit more of a trouble and a chancy thing to move especially if left behind out of the magic 12" from their commanders. I do have a corps artillery chef for each corps, both side though (but no bonus just "control").





Unexpected half-hearted victory of a charge that took the village.



On the extreme right the Saxon cavalry division took opportunity of two consecutive German moves to go and surprise the French cavalry to a startling effect, flank attack to flight and heavy damage.



In the center the two turns in a row(moving second then first) allow the Prussians of I. Korps to try a charge on the disordered garrison of that village. I worked with good dice.



Meanwhile in the center left III.Korps was slowly deploying hidden, its guns still on the other bank on a hill keeping guard on the heights and more in case.

Anyway there was a serious traffic jam at the center bridge with I. korps.

Extreme left the Garde and Württemberg behind them (they were in the center rear initially) went on crossing, long time as they were the reserve in the deployment, the initial "left flank" missing as reinforcement (from the cards)



The French 2nd corps on their right was very extended, the Garde having even to put a division forward in the center right as their "reserve" a heavy one with the VIIe corps and a cavalry division + horse artillery reserve was to arrive on turn6 (or4 to 8 as per AOV) no clue still.

On the right pic they start realising those things moving were not dummies but more than



expected.After a few turns trying,(assuming the French commander was not that sharp and a bit unsure) needed a high die (that was not really in the Adjudant Introuvable) to move right the foot reserve artillery of 12lb, 8 batteries to bolster the defence there.



Gt 5 following the AI orders of all out attack (they can change each turn with influence from the situation, if none only on 1 or 6 on D6) I had the French rush in an attack in columns, before the Prussians are fully installed in the village. House rule, it takes ½ move to fully get the full village bonus (+2) so moving first after the enemy took it allows for them only a +1, a chance. In the end it turned to be a catastrophe as it doubles the fire points, and the Prussians rolled a 10! The attackers were suppressed in masses with 3 casualties.

The French center was held by the partially elite 1er corps, 2 division forward and two back.



On the French left things got really hot when the Saxons got their artillery to play.



...just in time as things were getting bad for them, the reserve started to arrive, one division of 7e corps was sent to bolster the left, another as a second line. The cavalry trying to counterattack the Saxon's as the French cavalry from the left had been squashed and artificially pushed off the edge of the world and so counted as dead. This laziness to use the other outer table to have depth was a big mistake, forfeiting the use of both side cavalry on the flanks as they should have.



View from the French center, the poor two masses, one got away the other one stuck suppressed for 3 turns. It was just as well for the French that I did not push guns forward in time, partially because of poor dice.



GT6

On the left one of the French regiments will get flanked by Jäger and get suppressed to death (it will take 3 turns) in the center left, the German reserve appeared, Bavarians first, and they deployed on the right of III. Korps slowly waiting for the French reserves been sucked on both flanks. If playing with someone I would not be so sure there is not so many troops facing them.



Garde Korps and Württemberg are doing their left hook with very little opposition. I opted (and AI said so too) for a delaying action from the overextended French 2e corps.



On the German right the Saxons suffered and the reinforcing French from 7e corps plus cavalry was too much, offensive action stopped, some infantry is here going to help the cavalry.



Center right, French 1er corps stopped the German advance. Ended up with the Germans recuperating on that hill, the opposition in front lower, no one seeing each other. It is easy to mix up units and command in action but too much of it and checking command radius ends up easily with someone missing its +1/+2 and running, adding more trouble.



Gt 7



The confrontation in the centre took several turns of shooting. No way the Germans could relatively try to retake the village without the zouaves inside disordered and preferably worn.

It needs a double move too, most of the time.

About 4 turns of artillery shooting and both sides reorganising.

I also have some cards where unengaged units can get back one stand out of 2 lost, max 1).



Then repulsed by a divisional cavalry regiment of the Saxon second division, but the damage was done. 2 worn units.



Will French fight flank refused wing delaying action installing as long gun line to make a stand later.

One key of this game and a good one: do not allow your units to go down to worn, even one stand close, if you can. It is especially true if attacking. They will become unreliable. Defending, you can if say 3 lines to avoid holes. Holes and opportunity should be eyed for by cavalry.



Gt11-12 I decided to use the artillery as a true Prussian should;
 And wait for the other side to start running.



Right side (from German view) stand off French replacing worn units with those from 7e corps.

Not too good to separate divisions from their corps commander, that little +1 for him is actually very important, cannot be looked except at the very beginning of the action. He also can help bring back runners.

This system follows the Logic of its ancestor Fire and Fury: if within command range (the magic radius) of commanders, no casualties and in column, troops will mostly do all you want.



Gt 11 from the French view.





Gt 13 on the French right the gun line is doing the job of keeping the Germans modest. Moreover, the French had a rare event card (can appear only once) of misunderstanding, division falls back one turn. Played on the second Garde division it made a German attack next two turns on this sector impossible to coordinate. If I had the other table to the right here, the cavalry of both sides would have had more roles.

That French cavalry division seen here was pushed away fleeing musketry and artillery, losing a bit on the way. Plus retire and retreat dice results.



Center left of the German lines, III. Korps went on the left of the picture, but for a while stuck by the Bavarians rolling three times 1 successively on maneuver while having no opposition in sight! Bavarians being unenthusiastic (4 years before they were fighting those Prussians) they get a -1 on the roll so they can get stuck when others would have the cautious 1/2 move.



To the right of the Bavarians on this picture III. Korps in conjunction with the Württemberg division are trying to unhinge the French line. At the bottom here, not seen is the gun line of the 8 batteries of 12 from the reserve plus the 1e corps reserve and cavalry some 90 guns and left, divisional artillery and the reserve horse, another line of 80+. This farm and brigade is the forward hinge; having no reserves here, the French are more or less doomed unless this gets good dice.



gt 14, the beginning of the end on the German left, a brutal shooting from the French and a Kolossal charge from the Württembergers pushes away again those who lost last turn and enters the gun line from the flank.



gt 14 Bavarians finally do something, sweep away that pesky chassepot and its mitrailleuse, while taking the farm from the guard!

After a first too cocky attempt, and repulse, the Bavarians finally do something useful. I have to clear the crest (done there) and push the French further to deploy Bavarians and III. Korps artillery, otherwise, they would be wrecked on that crest, plenty of guns and a long Chassepot line waiting eagerly.



Gt 14 was the unlocking one. On the German right, a double move (end of Gt13 , first GT14) with good artillery shooting on Gt13, two French units disordered and worn on the angle, a magnificent charge by 2 brigades of Mecklemburg cavalry division did the job. Big win, and pursuit with another win. Unit destroyed, 2 worn, and a gapping hole. The German V. Korps on the hill with X. coming behind (I never got it out of its box) was just waiting for this. Next rolls for the French here had more run and no hope.

The end, no need further playing. Enough chaos to put back in boxes. The French had 5 units fatigued, 5 destroyed+ guns, 9 worn and plenty more on the edge. Germans 4 worn, 8 fatigued about 60 stands lost to 170. 46 points as per AOE to 16. It would have been interesting to carry on and indeed better before if I had more depth.