

Peninsula Battle - March 21, 2012

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After several games of General de Brigade using prepared scenarios, Milt and I decided to try a game using the system's point system pitting a 1254 point British/Portuguese force in a defensive position against a 1569 point attacking French force. This provided the attacker with a 25% advantage which resulted in the French having 414 infantry figures (12 battalions in three brigades), 48 cavalry figures (two chasseur a cheval regiments), a medium foot battery with 4 guns, and medium horse battery with three guns versus the allies with 260 infantry, 24 cavalry (two regiments) and one 9lb foot battery with 3 guns and a 9lb RHA battery of 3 guns.

The allies, set-up first with two Portuguese line battalions on their right flank located in a woods and building covered by a Cacadores battalion in skirmish order. In the allied center was placed the foot battery supported by three British line battalions and four companies of skirmishers. To their left was the remaining infantry brigade with two battalions emplaced behind a stone wall and in another building. In front of these were 1/95th Rifles and 5th Cacadores as skirmishers. Finally, on the extreme left flank was the cavalry brigade and horse artillery. All allied positions were on the top of a hill.

Upon examining the enemy dispositions, the French commander decided to focus his main attack to rupture the British/Portuguese center supported by both batteries. The two lead brigades would serve as fixing forces to occupy the British/Portuguese flanks and to conduct the initial assault on the allied center in preparation for the follow on brigade. He placed his cavalry opposite the British cavalry to counter any attempt to by the British cavalry to flank attack the advancing infantry columns in the center, but also in a position to follow up French success in the center. Thus, each French flank brigade advanced with a light battalion deployed to screen the two line battalions that would advance in column and then deploy in line to engage the allied forces, and a follow-up battalion positioned behind the line battalion closest to the French center. (See Picture 1)



Picture 1. French advance

Both sides commenced a cannonade while their respective skirmishers exchanged fire (See Picture 2). The British RHA advanced to bombard the advancing French infantry columns on the French left flank but was forced to stay at long range because of the French cavalry threat. The French focused their artillery on the battalions in the allied center between the two villas on either side of the road. As the two fixing forces came into long musket range, advancing line battalions deploy into line to begin engaging the allied forces deployed in the villas, walled areas, and woods around the villas. As the French continued to advance, they pushed back the allied skirmishers, but in doing so exposed the right flank fixing brigade's assault column to canister fire from the British foot battery. This caused a morale test by that French column causing it to fall back into the lead battalion of the center brigade causing it to have to reform, thus slowing the rupture force's advance.



Picture 2. Close up of British/Portuguese center with advancing French. French battalion in center of picture was unformed as a result the French battalion in line (bottom left of picture) retreating as a result of fire from the two British/Portuguese battalions (shown with cotton balls) and the foot battery (upper right of picture)

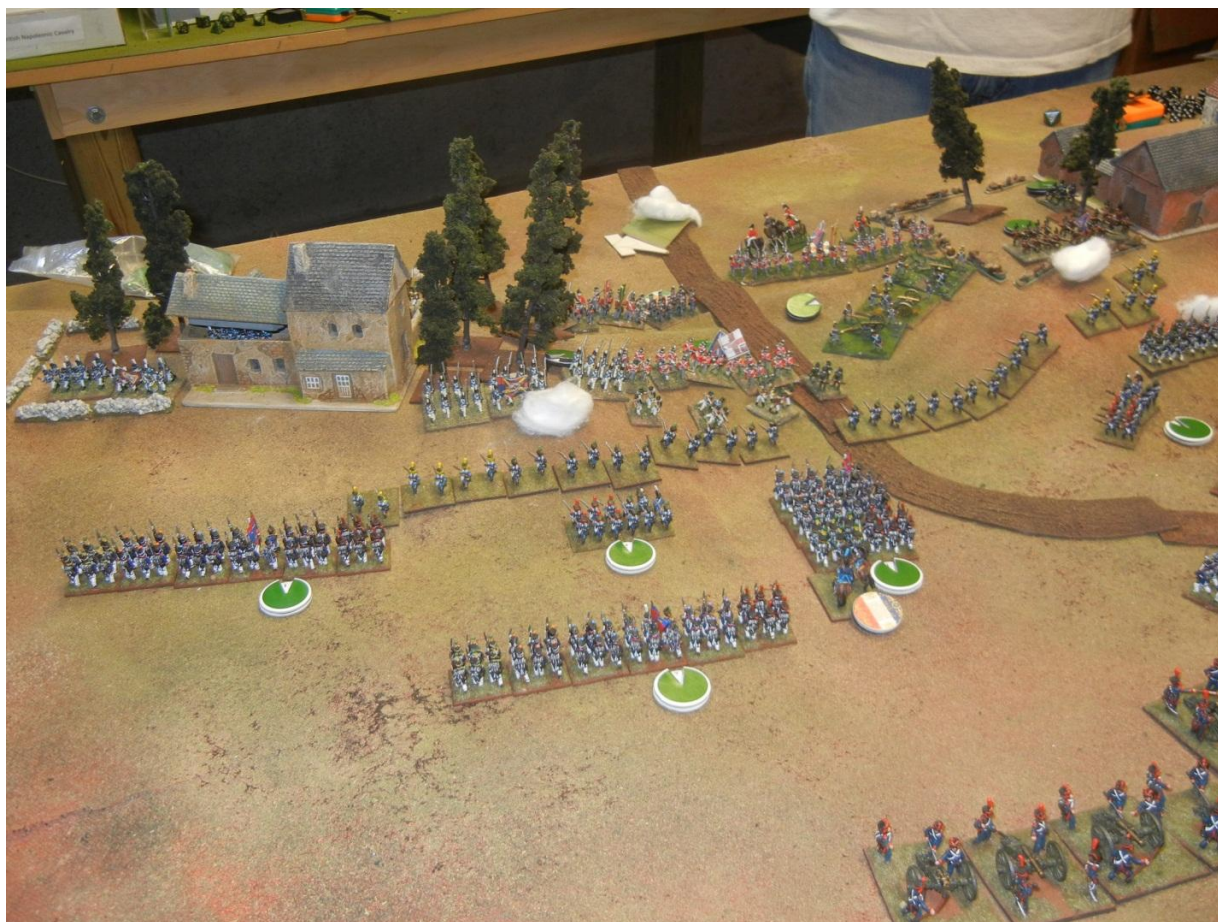


Picture 3. British/Portuguese left flank with advancing French showing unformed battalion in the foreground

This allowed the British foot battery to shift its attention to the French forces advancing on the Portuguese infantry on the allied right flank. The right flank battalion of the French left flank fixing force was struck by the combined fire of a deployed Portuguese battalion and the British foot battery. Meanwhile on the French left flank, their skirmishers cause the Portuguese Cacadores to fail a morale test. The left two lead French battalions deployed into line to begin engaging the allied units deployed in the villa and adjacent woods. However, the fire of these two line formations in cover as a British battalion advanced to support their allies. However, the British foot battery inflicted enough casualties to cause force the legere's to fall back behind the deployed French line battalions to reform. (Pictures 4 and 5)



Picture 4. French left and center showing battalion in line that retreated (right foreground) through the unformed column (center of picture)



Picture 5. French right flank showing reformed battalion column, rallied battalion in line, and limbered artillery advancing to support attack

Returning to the center, the French regrouped and renewed their advance causing the 1/95th to retire. The French found their combined batteries were now masked by advancing infantry and decided to relocate those batteries forward to provided better support. They also order their cavalry to advance and to threaten the British horse guns. (Picture 6). However, a sudden rain storm caused the battle to end.



Picture 6. French advancing against the center and left of the British/Portuguese line at game's end