

Marching Eagles - Marengo AAR - Part 1

I chose the Castiglione historical scenario as this scenario contains all the elements of Napoleon's genius. Of course I was going to be the French player :)

The challenge was to repeat Napoleon's success.

The battle options I chose were - All options and Normal FOW. Event cards introduce an element of unpredictability so I have included them in the Options screen. First turn and -



Turn 1 - FOW in play resulted in only a few Austrian positions in view. I needed to move my cavalry forward to scout the area in the open plain around Medolano. First order was to move the 20e Dragoon Regiment (2e Cavalry Div) to the defile in front of Monte Medolano backed up by the 24e Chasseurs. General de Brigade Beaumont was moved into an area suitable to command the 2e Cavalry Division. These moves revealed little new in terms of the Austrian positions. I needed to move the infantry forward on the ridge with the remaining Command Points.

The Light Infantry of the French 3e Division moved in Grole with General Augereau. The 17e and 22e Legere of the 1e Division moved up to Castel della Spada. The 32e and 75e Ligne Regiments moved towards Porte Rosse finally revealing 2 Austrian infantry Line battalions stationed there.

Suddenly Austrian artillery opened up from a fortified position near Solferino on my advancing Light Infantry of the 3e Division. Immediately afterwards, the Alvinczi Infantry Regt 19 of 3 Line battalions attacked the same French Light Infantry just North of Grole in the woods and vineyards. A fire fight broke out. Austrian guns also fired at the French 20e Dragoons from a fortified position on Monte Medolano

Turn 2 - The 20e Dragoons were ordered to move round Medolano and charge Austrian positions in the open plain. They overran an Austrian field artillery battery but suffered heavy losses in the process. At this point I decided to bring the full force of the 2e Cavalry Division in to action, charging the 1e Hussars against an exposed Austrian Line Regiment located between Medolano and the ridge. They immediately formed square. This gave me an opportunity to move up a horse artillery battery to pound the Austrian square.



I moved a combination of Light and Line Infantry from the 3e Division up to Barche di Solferino and encountered more Austrian resistance. Finally with the last of my Command Points, I launched an assault on Porte Rosse with 6 Line Infantry battalions. The Alvinczi Infantry Regt 19 made progress against the French Light Infantry at Grole and Austrian artillery bombarded the 20e Dragoons who now found themselves isolated and surrendered to the local Austrian infantry unit.

The Austrians counter attacked with their cavalry in the plain. 2 squadrons of the Erdody Hussar Regt 9 charged the French 1e Hussars to relieve pressure on their infantry in square but they suffered badly at the hands of the French. A further Austrian charge by 8 squadrons of Hussars against the French 24e Chasseurs North of Medolano resulted in the loss of 1 Strength point for the French.

Turn 3 - I needed to halt the Austrian Hussars North of Medolano so with Beaumont in the area, he sent in 7 squadrons of Hussars. Unfortunately the Austrian cavalry counter charged and in the ensuing melee many French Hussars were lost. Another Strength point down. Meanwhile the French infantry and artillery on the ridge continued to advance but now were encountering determined resistance around Solferino.



The Austrian artillery on Monte Medolano continued to hit the French cavalry. I needed to take that fortified position quickly before more cavalry were lost.

The French attack on Porte Rosse had stalled even though I had sent in 6 battalions against 2 Austrian battalions. The Austrian high position and fortified walls of Porto Rosse held back the French. The French Light Infantry attacking Castle Tower near Solferino had made better progress and weakened the Austrian Carlstadt Grenz Infantry Regt. The Austrian Hussars North of Medolano split into two forces intent on conducting a flanking attack but 2 squadrons routed and suffered significant losses halting the attempted flanking attack on the French Hussars.

Turn 4 - The time was 09.30 and General de Brigade Fiorella of the French 4e Division attacked the Austrian rear. Napoleon's trap had sprung but a little early and the main French force was still heavily engaged against the Austrian front line units. Fiorella will have to do as much damage as possible on his own. Accordingly Fiorella sent in the 5e Dragoon Regiment against the Austrian second line. The Dragoons routed an Austrian position battery but not before losing 1 Strength point.



Turn 5 - 10am - Napoleon now released his strike force to take Monte Medolano and the Austrian guns.



Steady fire by the horse artillery battery of the 2e Cavalry Division took its toll on the Austrian square (Mittrowsky Infantry Regt 40) and ultimately the surviving Austrian infantry routed. The 1er Hussar Regiment then charged in and eliminated the routed infantry.

The 10e & 22e Chasseur Regiments moving past the Medolano defile charged the Archduke Joseph Hussar 2nd Regiment and routed 3 of its squadrons. Meanwhile, at Porte Rosse, the Austrian commander, Wurmser (Computer AI) responded to my assaults on the village by initiating a flanking attack with 4 Line Infantry battalions. To counter this threat I moved in 6 battalions from the 2e Infanterie Division plus a foot artillery battery. These troops gave the Austrian flanking move a bloody nose and 2 Austrian battalions were lost. The assault on Porte Rosse continued.

I also brought in to the fighting around Grole, 3 battalions of the 18e Ligne Demi-Brigade 3e Division. These fresh troops pushed the Austrian Line infantry out of the woodlands and vineyards around Grole and secured the road to Barche di Solferino where the French Light Infantry was in action.

Napoleon's strike force (Army of Italy Reserve) moved forward with a battery of horse artillery rushing to the defile and setting up counter battery fire on the Austrian guns at Monte Medolano.



Light Infantry sharpshooters eliminated the Carlstadt Light Infantry Regt at Castle Tower near Solferino.

Considerable fighting occurred on turn 5 and as the initiative was with the French there was only just sufficient Command Points to address all the key areas on the battlefield.

Turn 6 - Imperial Indecision Event Card - My elite and veteran units were not allowed to move this turn.



The Event Card forced me to move my attention to the 5e & 6e Infanterie Divisions just arrived from Castiglione. These units were moved up to support the attack on Solferino and the adjacent Austrian fortified position. Napoleon's expected attack on Monte Medolano was temporarily stalled. Fiorella's 4e Division moved passed S.Cassiano and linked up with Beaumont's 2e Cavalry Division in the open plain.

The Austrians made further attacks on the surroundings of Grole and 2 infantry battalions penetrated further along the road towards Castiglione. Napoleon's tactics were working, pulling the Austrian units out of their defensive positions in a counter attack. Now is the time to hit the Austrian infantry in the open terrain.

Heavy fighting was occurring across the whole battlefield. The French guns at Grole made the advancing Austrian Line infantry pay a heavy price for their dispersed uncoordinated attacks. The fire fight in the open area South of Porte Rosse ended with the outnumbered Austrian force being defeated. The cavalry clash North of Monte Medolano continued but only the equivalent of 2 squadrons of Austrian cavalry now remained. Finally after 2 hours of fighting around the Castle Tower near Solferino, the area was secured by the French veteran Light Infantry of the 1er & 2e Division.



Turn 7 - 11am - The counter attacks made by the Austrians had cost them dearly and their army had suffered significantly more losses than the French. As Napoleon said - now is the time to launch an all out attack.



There are 20 turns in this scenario and progress appears to be going to plan. At this point I was confident of a Minor or even a Major Victory at game end. But the enemy did not stand still. The remaining game turns are described in Part 2 of this After-Action Report.