

Against all odds

The battle of Nonantola, 1643, July 21st



“La battaglia di Nonantola” - Oil painting exposed in the Nonantola Major office.

13.0 SCENARIO RULES

Against all odds is a simulation of the battle that took place on 21 July 1643 near the fortified town of Nonantola, few kilometers from Bologna, in Italy, during the First War of Castro. In this battle a large Papal army was defeated by a Modenese Army led by Field Marshal Raimondo Montecuccoli, recalled to Italy by direct demand to the Austrian Emperor by the Duke of Modena. Using light artillery pieces in a completely new tactical use, in few hours he was able to achieve an amazing victory with minimum losses, forcing the Pope to sign a truce.

13.1 Game scale

Each hex on the game map is approximately 200 meters across. Each combat unit represents 100 horsemen or 200 soldiers for the Coalition and twice as many for the Papal Army. Each Game Turn is 1/2 hour of real time.

13.2 Game setup

The Papal Player is the first to setup his units, while the Coalition Player is the First Player during all Game Turns.

13.3 Movement

Until the end of the fourth Game Turn, neither Mattei nor his CUs can be moved unless one or more of them are attacked by a coalition CU.

13.4 Demoralization

The Coalition Army is demoralized when it loses 20 CPs, while the Papal Army is demoralized when it loses 30 CPs. Commanders are not calculated towards demoralization.

13.5 Victory conditions

Each eliminated Combat or Command Point gives 1 VP to the enemy. If the Coalition Army breaks the siege of Nonantola (even for a single Turn), it gains 10 VP. If the Papal army occupies both Navicello and the bridge, it gains 10 VP. A 2/1 VP ratio is a decisive victory. A 3/2 VP ratio is a marginal victory. Any other result is a draw.

13.6 Battle rules

13.6.1 - Pànaro river can only be crossed by bridge.

13.6.2 - Game starts with Nonantola under siege; this town remains in this condition until

the Papal army controls both the rampart hexes (1204 e 1403); when it loses control of at least one of them, siege is broken. Until under siege, commanders inside Nonantola can only use their capability on the CUs inside. Nonantola and Navicello (0206) hexes don't exert ZoCs and the CUs inside are not forced to attack enemy CUs in the surrounding hexes. However, if they decide to attack, all combat rules apply. Use a +1 die roll modifier to any artillery fire against Nonantola.

13.6.3 Montecuccoli - Montecuccoli counter includes a light gun battery that can move and fire. At the start of every combat phase, the Coalition Player can disorder a Papal CU within two hexes from Montecuccoli counter (including the Papal CU hex, but not the Montecuccoli hex) and in its LoS.

13.7 Set up

13.7.1 Papal Army

1 x 2-8 "Valenzè" leader
1 x artillery.
10 x 3-4 "Papal" infantry CU
4 x 4-4 "Valenzè" infantry CU
3 x 4-8 "Valenzè" cavalry CU

The Papal Player must place its artillery unit within two hexes from Nonantola, 2 CUs on the rampart hexes and all other CUs inside the Valenzè setup area.

1 x 1-8 "Mattei" leader
6 x 3-4 "Mattei" infantry CU
10 x 4-4 "Mattei" infantry CU
2 x 4-8 "Mattei" cavalry CU

All CUs must be placed inside the Mattei setup area.

Reinforcements enter on the map via the road in hex 0822 (from Castelfranco). If this hex is occupied by enemy CUs or in their ZoC, reinforcements enter via the nearest SE free hex on the map border.

Turn 5:

1 x 2-8 "Gonzaga" leader
2 x 4-4 "Gonzaga" infantry CU
1 x 4-8 "Gonzaga" cavalry CU
2 x 4-8 "Papal" cavalry CU

Turn 6

1 x 1-8 "Barberini" leader
4 x 4-4 "Barberini" cavalry CU

13.7.2 Coalition Army

In Nonantola:

1 x 2-8 "Saint Martin" leader
1 x 5-4 "Venetians" infantry CU

Within the Coalition setup area:

1 x 3-8 "Montecuccoli" leader
1 x 5-4 "Montecuccoli" inf
1 x 4-8 "Montecuccoli" cav
1 x 2-8 "Panzetta" leader
2 x 4-8 "Panzetta" cavalry CU
1 x 2-8 "Francesco I" leader
1 x 1-8 "Altenburg" leader
1 x 5-4 "Colombi" infantry CU
1 x 5-4 "Rangoni", infantry CU
2 x 5-4 "Cincinelli" infantry CU
1 x 5-4 "Modena" infantry CU
12 x 3-4 "Coalition" infantry CU
3 x 3-8 "Coalition" cavalry CU
2 x 3-8 "Sittoni" cavalry CU

DESIGNER NOTES

In the first half of the seventeenth century, while in Europe the Thirty Years' War was fought, in Italy a conflict broke out between the State of the Church and the Duchy of Parma with its allies (Tuscany, Modena, and Venice). The reasons of this war that began in 1641 were the debts that Odoardo Farnese, Duke of Parma, had incurred with Roman family Barberini. He gave as guarantee a small fiefdom in Lazio, the Duchy of Castro, that was extremely valuable because it was allowed to mint. These notes are not the right place to describe the development of all the events that led to the war. In short, they were a series of moves made rather out of spite that eventually degenerated into conflict.

The first battles of this tragedy were fought in Central Italy. At the beginning, the Northern armies were able to keep at bay the Papal army, but in 1643, they were losing the war. Thus, Francesco I, Duke of Modena, asked Austrian Emperor to recall one of his best men, commander of the Imperial Army cavalry wing in Germany. As soon as the Emperor read the message, he ordered Count Raimondo of Montecuccoli to head for Italy with an unwelcome surprise for the Pope.

After he swiftly entered Modena and organized a war council with the Duke and his subordinate

commanders, Montecuccoli moved in on Nonantola with 4,000 soldiers and 2,000 horsemen to beat the Papal force that was seizing the fortified town with 20,000 men and 4,000 horsemen. Except for few units, the Coalition troops were low quality local militia, but they had better Commanders.

On 19 July 1643 evening, Montecuccoli took Navicello and the bridge on the Pànaro river; the day after, Montecuccoli moved his men with speed and precision never seen before in Italy and, supported by two small guns designed by himself, named “Raimondini”, he overwhelmed the enemy positions one by one, while all enemy guns were bombing Nonantola.

Battle raged all day long: in the morning the Papal Army tried to regain Navicello, but it was forced back in disarray and pursued; at noon the entire Papal front was under attack and not even the reinforcements coming from Forte Urbano, led by Cardinal Barberini (Pope’s nephew), were able to block the tide. At the sunset, Pope’s army was in rout, leaving on the battlefield about 1,000 prisoners and/or dead (including the Duke of Gonzaga), while Coalition lost less than 100 men. The year after, since the Duke of Modena was unable to regain Ferrara (lost by his family forty years before) and the Pope had no commanders as much worthy as Montecuccoli, the peace was signed, leaving Bologna and Modena land ravaged by war.

The battle of Nonantola: the game.

Designing a battle like this, with a side greatly outnumbered by the other, is not an easy task. I decided to modify the combat point totals of both armies, shifting their ratio in favor of the Coalition Army, because I took into account the great capability that Montecuccoli proved during his whole life and the existing chronicles of the battle. The game starts about at noon rather than at dawn: indeed, otherwise more than half the game would have been spent only to move the armies uselessly from one side of the river to the other. Thus, I opted for a more dynamic solution.

As for the two Montecuccoli’s modified guns, I could have doubled all Coalition CU values since the turn Montecuccoli declares a “General Assault”, but this was unrealistic as there were only two guns. Rather, I gave Montecuccoli the capability to disorganize a CU within his command range before every Combat Phase.

Rules forcing Mattei’s units to stand still until the end of the fourth turn or the first attack

against them (6.0 on the Rulebook) make Coalition Army able to concentrate its units for the attack and/or begin to outflank the enemy units before they receive the reinforcements from Castelfranco. Nonantola hex is decisive, giving 10 VPs to the Papal Payer if he occupies it. Playtesting reports proved that both armies have the same chance to win the battle. Luck obviously is important, but victory ratios are calibrated in such a way that simple numerical superiority is not sufficient to win.

Raimondo Montecuccoli concluded his battle report to the Prince Mattia de’ Medici, his friend, with these words: “With this dynamic operations I hope that Your Highness too will have the occasion to demonstrate to the priests that the war is not a good bargain for them.

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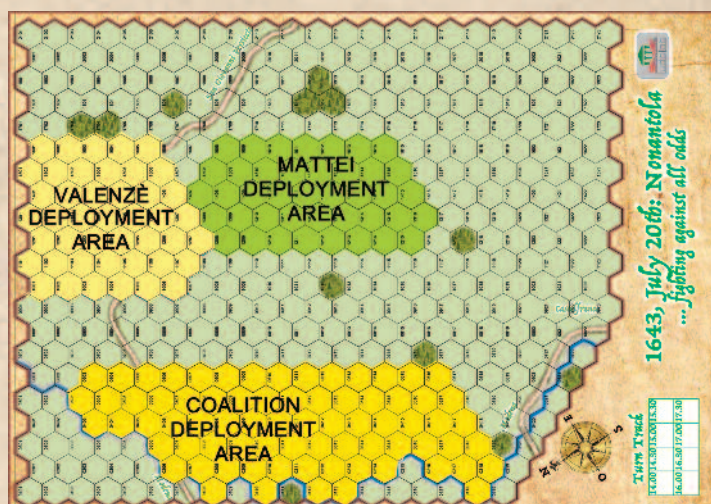
Rules review

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4.1 SEQUENCE OF PLAY

A	Reorganization phase
B	Artillery fire phase
C	Movement phase
D	Combat phase

5.1 ARTILLERY PHASE

Range in hexes	Range in hexes			
	1	2	3-5	6-10
1	Dd	Dd	Dd	Dd
2	Dd	Dd	Dd	Ne
3	Dd	Dd	Ne	Ne
4	Dd	Ne	Ne	Ne
5	Ne	Ne	Ne	Ne
6	Ne	Ne	Ne	Ne

Dd - Defender disrupted
Ne - No Effect



TERRAIN EFFECT CHART

Hex	Terrain	MP	Mov. Eff.	Cbt. Eff.	Hex	Terrain	MP	Mov. Eff.	Cbt. Eff.
	Clear Level 1	1	None	None		Clear Level 2	1	None	None
	Slope (c. down)	1	None	None		Slope (climbing)	2	None	Defender on high ground x2
	Stream	+1	None	Defender doubled		Camp	1	None	None
	River	+2*	Only traversable by bridge or ford	Defender Doubled		Town	1/2**	None	Attacker die roll -1
	Main river	P*	Only traversable by bridge or ford	P		Walled Town	1	Only enter by road	Defender Doubled
	Wood	2	Cavalry CU only enters by road	Cavalry no attack		Ramparts	1	None	Defender doubled
	Bridge	1	None	Defender doubled		Road	1	None	None

NOTE

* Take a look to scenario special rules ** If not entering by road

COMBAT RESULTS TABLE

Attacker/Defender Odds	Attacker/Defender Odds									
	<1/4	1/4	1/3	1/2	1/1	2/1	3/1	4/1	5/1	>5/1
1	Ad	Ne	Ne	Dx	Dd	Dd	Dd	De	De	De
2	Ad	Ad	Ne	Ne	Dx	Dd	Dd	Dd	De	De
3	Ad	Ad	Ad	Ne	Ne	Dx	Dd	Dd	Dd	De
4	Ad	Ad	Ad	Dx	Ne	Ne	Dx	Dd	Dd	Dd
5	Ae	Ae	Ad	Ad	Dx	Ne	Ne	Dx	Dd	Dd
6	Ae	Ae	Ae	Ad	Ad	Dx	Ne	Ne	Dx	Dd
Ae	All attackers CU are eliminated									
Ad	All attackers CU are disorganized									
Dx	Defender CU, and attacker CU with a total combat value equal or greater than the defender one, are disorganized.									
Dd	attacker CU are organized									
De	which total combat value									

