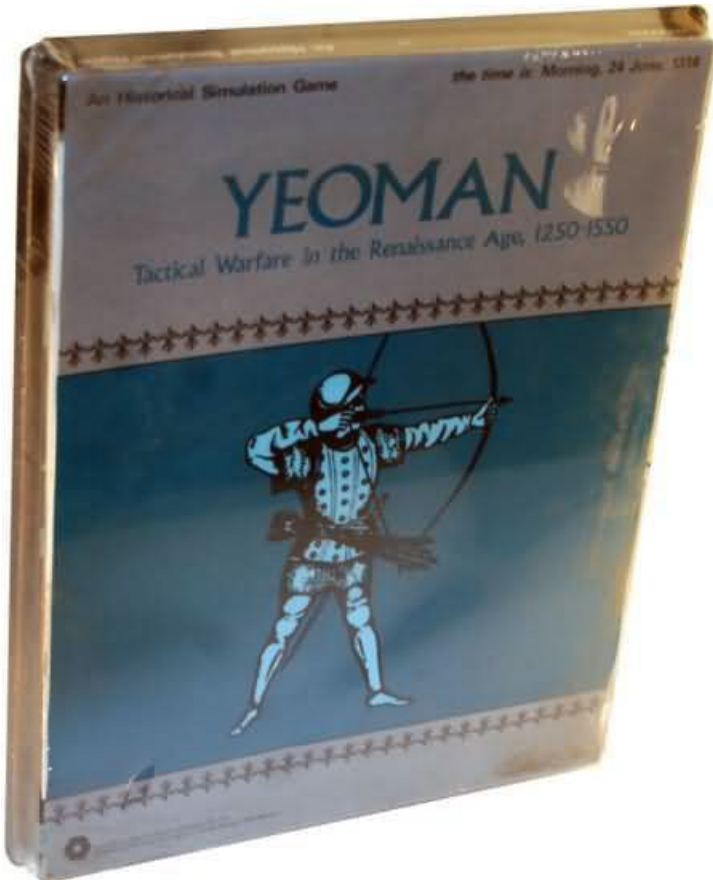

Yeoman, SPI 1975

Replay by Andrew Hobleby

Yeoman – SPI Publications



***Yeoman** offers us tactical combat from the era of the Renaissance – covering the years 1250 to 1550. It gives us the chance to re-fight the battles of Bannockburn, Crecy, Bicocca, Agincourt, and many others in this multi-scenario, small-unit simulation. Seventeen individual scenarios shine in this production.*

***Yeoman** offers the gamut of warfare in this era, with six scenarios from the pre-gunpower period, five in the early gunpower days where longbows were still vital, and another six from the 16th century. The system offers contests between the English, French, Italians, the Holy Roman Empire (which was neither) and many more.*

*This game was part of **PRESTAGS** package of five games updated from earlier versions and now designed to use the same rules. Each period, though, offers exclusive rules to adapt the system to the realities of the new era. **PRESTAGS** was an acronym for Pre Seventeenth Century Tactical Game Series, and it predated – or jump started – the concept of the quads. **Yeoman** replaced the earlier game, **Renaissance of Infantry** which had been one of SPI's earliest tactical games, released in 1971. The differences are in the streamlining of the rules, now that wargamers had become accustomed to the concepts.*

The warfare of the era was ugly, however the games do provide many heart-in-your-throat moments. Perhaps the biggest of those moments, when the unarmored English bowmen faced the pride of France in the age of chivalry. Andrew takes us back to experience the battle of Agincourt! – RHG

Oh You Happy Few....

In June of 2015, I found I had been a bit short of anniversary games to play. Then I realized I had **Yeoman** and that had an Agincourt scenario. I'm not sure when I last got this game out – some 35 years ago perhaps, but I have kept it in my collection as I have happy memories of it – and it also covers a period I have nothing else for. So 600 years to the day, and having read the relevant bit of Shakespeare's Henry V to get me in the mood - and the rules to remind myself of how the game went - it was down to battle on St. Crispin's Day – Agincourt!

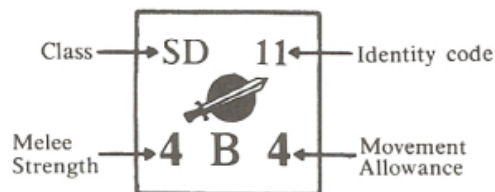
Rules Overview:

A fairly simple mechanic of fire, move, defensive fire, then melee. Only 'fire' units - ones with longbows and crossbows – may *Defensive Fire*, and the range is short – 3 hexes tops. But if you fire, remember you cannot fire in the next player turn - which calls for some planning to keep units in reserve for defense fire. *Only these fire units exert a ZOC* (even if fired).

Leaders add the flavor. You need them to move at full speed (unless mounted exempt), add combat factors to melee, plus units stacked with Leaders prevent Disruption - more on this later.

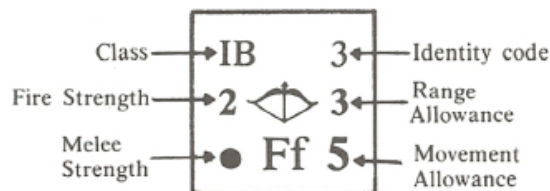
More Rules

[3.31] Sample Melee Unit



- *Disrupted Units may not Initiate Combat, Fire, or Move!*
- *When Disrupted units are attacked, the Attacker gets a +1 Die Roll Modifier.*
- *If Disrupted units suffer another Disruption, they are eliminated.*
- *Disrupted units return to normal at the End of the NEXT Player Turn.*
- *If Defender Eliminated in Melee, the Attacker may advance into vacated hex.*

[3.32] Sample Fire Unit



Class ratings – the big letter in the bottom row.

Militia and Spearmen are Class A.

Infantry troops - Swordsmen, Axmen, Barbarians are Class B

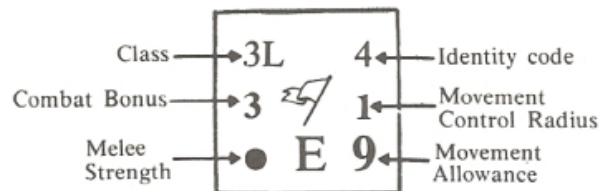
Cavalry are Class C.

Foot troops with Fire Weapons – Bows and Slings – are Class Ff.

Mounted Fire Units – Cavalry with Bows – are Class Mf.

Leaders are Class E and never suffer Disruption.

[3.33] Sample Leader Unit



Main reason Class matters: Stacking

Ranged Fire:

Range / Unit-	1 hex	2 hex	3 hex
LB	3	2	1
CB	2	1	½
BW	2	1	-
IB	2	2	1
HB	1	½	-

UNIT STACKING:

Class D and E may stack with any Class

Class Ff may stack with Class A or B.

Class Mf can stack with Class C

Below is a quick rules reference chart to help you follow the action.

SPI PRESTAGS

RULES REFERENCE SHEET (TEC for Yeoman)

Sequence Of Play:

Chariots Move (Any unused points can be used in Movement Phase)
 Fire Combat (with Class Ff and Mf units that did not fire last player turn)
 Movement (Full MP if unit within Leader Command Radius, otherwise, ½ MP)
 Defensive Fire (Non Phasing Player Ff and Mf units that did NOT fire previous Player Turn)
 Melee Phase (Phasing unit may not Fire and Melee same Player Turn)
 Mutual Disruption Removal (Remove Disruption from PREVIOUS Player Turn)
 End of Player One's Turn—Repeat Seq of Play for Player Two, then advance Turn marker. Repeat.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Fire Units cannot Fire in successive Player Turns!
 Units within Leadership Radius move Full MP otherwise ½ MP [min of 1]
 [EXC: When Class C exempt by Scenario rules]
 Units must end movement when they move adj to Mf or Ff Units.
 [EXC: if using Facing, only stop if they enter FRONTAL hex]
 Fire Strength compared to Terrain Defensive rating
 Melee compares Attacker Strength vs Defender's Strength
 Units may be attacked only once per phase. Fire attacks combine all Fire vs a Unit; Melee Attacks combine all Melee strengths.
 Disrupted units may not move, fire, or attack. A second Disruption eliminates the unit.

COMBAT ADJUSTMENTS:

- Strength means unit may NOT initial melee. If defending, strength is 1.

[] around Strength means Melee Defense Strength is halved. (Attacker Strength normal)
 Flank Attacks – Defender's Strength is Halved. Retain Fractions.
 Flank Attack means ALL 6 adj hexes are adj to the Attackers – unit is 'surrounded'
 [EXC: if using Facing rule, any attack through the 3 Flank hexsides are a Flank Attack]
 Add 1 to attacker's Die Roll where the Defender is Disrupted
 Leaders add Combat bonus to Melee (bonus # or 1 if '•')
 Leaders stacked with Units in prevent Disruption in Fire and Melee attacks. But if in MELEE, LEADER suffering a disruption is reduced 1 level. (Level 4 leader is eliminated.)

ELEVATION EFFECTS:

Class A and B attacking from Ground to Slope or Slope to Hilltop ½ Melee Strength
 Class A and B attacking from Slope to Slope ½ Melee Strength
 Class A and B on Slopes do NOT Disrupt from Melee or Fire!

UNIT STACKING:

Class D and E may stack with any Class
 Class Ff may stack with Class A or B.
 Class Mf can stack with Class C

[9.0] TERRAIN EFFECTS CHART

Terrain Type	Movement Point [MP] Cost to enter hex	Fire Protection Strength	Effect on Fire when Firing Unit is in hex	Effect on Melee Strength when Unit is in hex and is...	
				...Attacking	...Defending
Clear	1 MP	2	none	none	none
Village	1 MP	4	none	none	doubled
Woods	3 MP	3	none (see 6.3)	none	doubled
Slope	2 MP (see 5.6)	3	none (see 6.3)	none	none (see 14.0)
Stream	2 MP	1	No Ff Fire	halved	none
Swamp	3 MP	1	No Mf Fire	none	doubled
Road	1 MP (see 5.5)	2	none	none	none
Bridge	1 MP (as road)	1	none	halved	doubled
Ford	1 MP	1	No Ff Fire	halved	none

TERRAIN KEY



[3.1] Fire Unit Range Effects

Range / Unit-	1 hex	2 hex	3 hex
LB	3	2	1
CB	2	1	½
BW	2	1	-
IB	2	2	1
HB	1	½	-

[10.4] Effects of Combat on Leaders

Indicated Combat Result	MELEE COMBAT		FIRE COMBAT	
	Leaders	Others	Leaders	Others
D	Reduced	•	•	•
½E	Reduced	½E	•	½E
E	E	E	•	E

[8.0] COMBAT RESULTS TABLE

Die Roll	Combat Odds									Die Roll
	1-2	1-1	2-1	3-1	4-1	5-1	6-1	7-1	8-1	
1	•	•	•	•	D	D	D	½E	E	1
2	•	•	•	•	D	D	½E	½E	E	2
3	•	•	D	D	D	D	½E	E	E	3
4	•	D	D	D	½E	½E	E	E	E	4
5	•	D	D	½E	½E	E	E	E	E	5
6	D	D	D	½E	E	E	E	E	E	6
7	D	D	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	7

Attacks at less than 1-2 are not permitted; treat greater than 8-1 as 8-1.

The Forces



[10.1] AGINCOURT (25 October 1415)

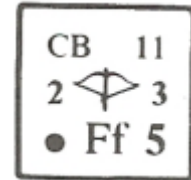
French: 20MI, 14HC, 2CB, 2"3". VP 112, PL 34.
Deploy: S-5. Stacking: 2.

English: 3HC, 10LB, 1"2". VP 59, PL 24. Deploy:
N-2. Stacking: 3.



Game Length: 15 Game-Turns.

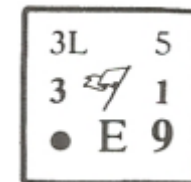
Victory Conditions: **French** must control hex "N" and the adjacent village hex. **English** must achieve a Substantive Victory and avoid French conditions of victory.



Terrain Modifications: No unit may enter a woods hex. All mounted units must pay double terrain entry costs unless moving through the terrain from road hex to road hex.



Special Rules: Use Dismount Rule for all HC units.



Range vs Melee power. We all know the story, but can the game deliver? The French have it all – 14 Heavy Cavalry vs 3 for the English. 20 Militia with their pikes vs 10 Longbows? Not looking good. Only in Leadership does the English have a clear advantage – with a range of 6 hexes. But they have only one leader, where the French have two of precisely half the quality!

English Advantages:

Scenario rules: *the movement costs are DOUBLED for all units unless using a road.* Mud. Gotta hate mud.

Exclusive Yeoman rules: *The Feudal Rule* forces the Knights to act with excessive 'honor', meaning they will race to engage the nearest enemy unit. This is an added mess for the French. Each turn the Heavy Cavalry determine the nearest enemy unit in line of sight, and if within 14 hexes, use their full movement points to close with them, by the SHORTEST (in MOVEMENT POINTS) possible. This path IGNORES any friendly troops in the way, which leads to more trouble.

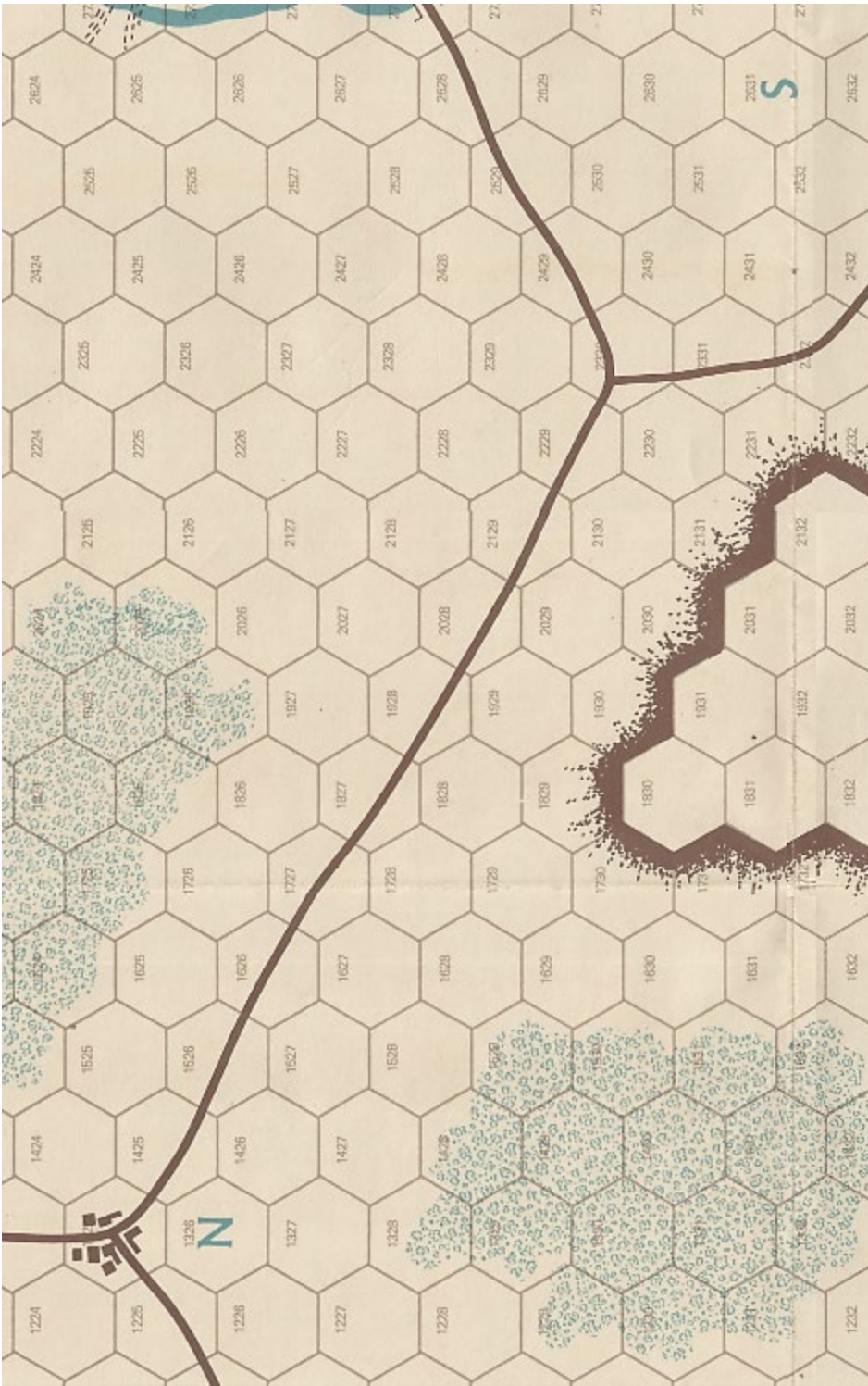
IF a heavy Cavalry unit *enters or ends in* a hex with a friendly unit, roll 1 die:

1-4	No Effect.
5-6	Disrupted.

NOTE: If the Heavy Cavalry ENDS in a hex with friendly units, AND the stacking limit is exceeded, then the non-HC units are *automatically* disrupted and moved to an adjacent hex.

If they cannot move into an adjacent hex without violating terrain stacking limits, *these disrupted units are eliminated!*

Also Note - in Yeoman Heavy calvary are worth 6 Victory points, not 2. The loss of 6 would exceed the French Panic Level. To win, the English need a 2:1 advantage in VPs, and NOT lose Hex N or the village. Can they do that?



Set Up

The French deploy within 5 hexes of Hex S. The English deploy within 2 hexes of Hex N.

Stacking is two for both sides. Cavalry movement costs are doubled unless you are using road movement.

The English longbow has a range of three, but the firepower attenuates with the distance. Fire is referenced to the terrain, and clear in this game is 2.

The Cavalry is beset with the sense of honor that forces them to be the first to engage any enemy, striving for glory. But the soft ground hampers the calvary's movements for both sides, unless they use the road. Thus, historically in this battle the Cavalry dismounted to melee on foot.

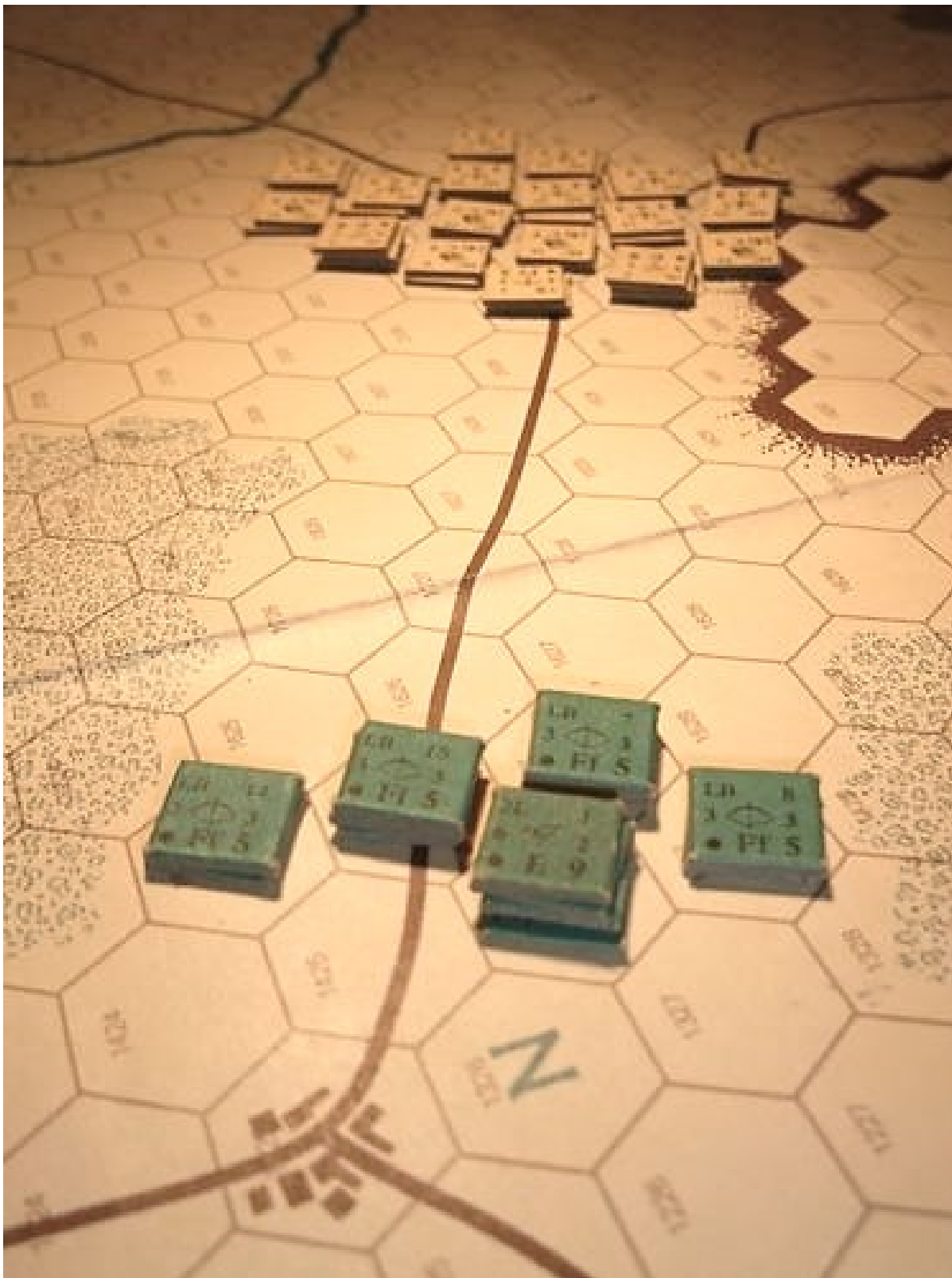
At three hexes, almost all the English archers would have to target the same hex to get an assured result. Six Longbowmen at 3 hexes (1 FP) would get a 6:2, or 3:1, which is a miss 1 out of three chances.

Mounted the knights would then close to 1 hex, and have to survive an attack of two archers at the same odds – but 3 archers at 1 hex would guarantee those knights would not be a problem!

Both sides need a lot of courage in this game.

Let's join Andrew and see how this plays out!]

“He’ll remember with advantages the feats he did that day”



I set up the French with the knights and crossbows in front, the rabble behind. The English were in front of the village, longbows in front; Henry and the knights behind.

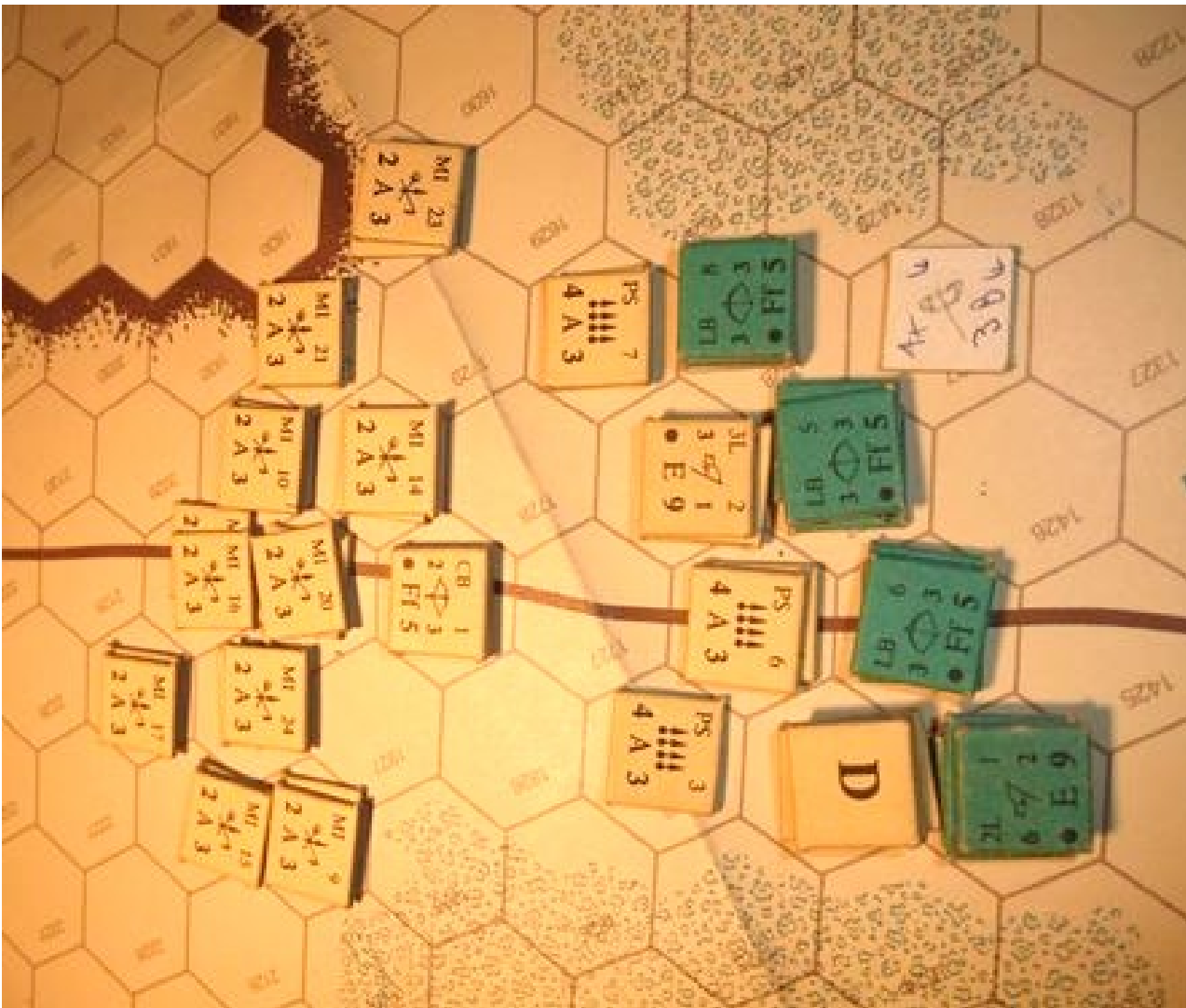
– **We few**

Because of the mud cavalry move at half speed so most of the French knights and all the English dismounted (turning into Professional Spearmen). Six of the French knights and the crossbowmen advanced – *playing the Feudal Rule knights must advance if they see the enemy* – to soften up the English lines.

The crossbow men troubled the English line for a while (disrupting one

stack of longbows which meant they could not fire or move) – until the knights rode through them and blocked their view. The longbows disrupted the cavalry, the dismounted English knights finished them off. Archers put down their weapons and took up swords and axes (no counters in Yeoman for axe men so I had to draw the stats on the backs). This gives each part of the English line some attacking ability.

Clash of Arms



First the mounted French nobility, then those on foot fell until the French army broke and fled – all but those in contact who were disrupted, could not move were finished off where they stood.

A Decisive English Victory, 58 VP to no loss. And just like history.

“Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills”



Advance to contact

But the second group engaged the archers and then the other knights rounded the end of the wood and trapped the English. They died hard, shooting down knights and cutting into the French rabble. But surrounded and outnumbered the English slowly fell; the last to fall being King Henry and his bodyguard.

