



BATTLE OF NÖRDLINGEN 1634

Liber Militum Tercios – Game Report



NOVEMBER 9, 2019
LOUDOUNS WARGAMERS

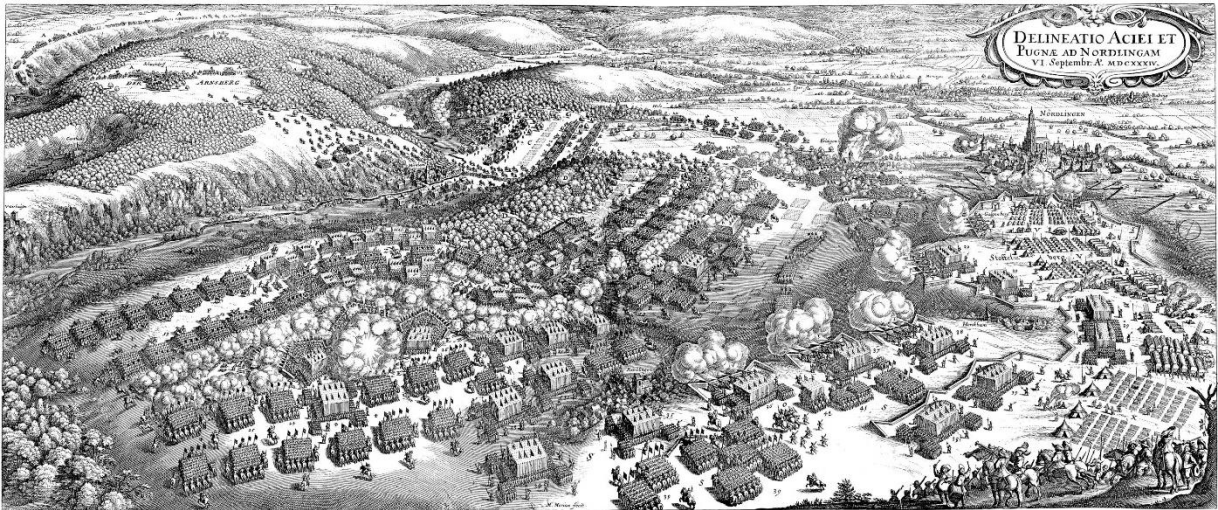
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Background

Back in April 2018 a discussion between two members of Loudoun's Regiment led to a decision to take on a large battle using the Tercios rules with 15mm scale figures. As they were discussing this on the anniversary of the Battle of the River Lech, it was accepted that this was to be the scenario to be replayed and indeed it was on November 2018, and held as the inaugural Loudoun's Wargamers Weekend.

Following the success of the event it was decided that a repeat was in order and the battle chosen this time would be Nördlingen 1634, primarily as it involved a reverse of the strengths of the forces involved.



Following a year of anticipation and further frantic figure painting we were ready to go again.

The venue this time was the Glenisla Community Hall in the Scottish Highlands, North of Blairgowrie, Perth and Kinross. Another beautiful setting but almost no mobile or data connectivity.



Preparation

Breakdown of Forces

We decided to use the same system as we had done for the Battle of the Lech last time as that seemed to work out well. This involved averaging the forces from the historical texts to the nearest 100, amalgamating smaller units into single larger units and using multiple bases to represent larger regiments. So...

1 Infantry Base = 500 men

1 Cavalry Base = 200 men

1 Artillery Base = 3 Guns



As the rules are designed around base sizes of 120x60mm (infantry) and 80x40mm (cavalry) the number of figures on each base could vary, this allowed players to resurrect previously based figs and or base as they felt fit as long as they retained the base size. So, on the day, visually, infantry units varied from 20 figures to 36 figures per base and cavalry from 5 to 8 figures per base.

The agreed breakdown was as follows:

Swedish Armies

Historically 16,500 infantry, 10150 horse and 62 cannons, became...

- 33 infantry bases
- 45 cavalry bases
- 5 dragoon bases
- 20 artillery bases (sub divided into 2 categories, retaining the historical split)

See Appendix A

Imperialists/Bavarian/Spanish Armies

Historically 28,170 infantry, 12,597 horse and 40 cannons, became...

- 56 infantry bases
- 60 horse bases
- 14 artillery bases (sub divided into 2 categories, retaining the historical split)

See Appendix B

This meant that we approximately had 3,450 figures on the table. A total of 89 infantry bases, 110 cavalry bases plus 34 cannons.

Labelling

This, though very useful last time, we managed to forgo a troop types were fairly standard across the table and units were operating in large groupings/brigades that were easily determined from their location on the table. And unlike last time positions remained relative to starting point, i.e. straight forward slugging match as opposed to mad dash to a river crossing point.

The Catholic Alliance infantry were all classic squadrons, bar two Spanish units classed as raw plus two Spanish Tercios, easily discerned by their base shape. All CA cavalry were Cuirassiers, except the Croat Light Cavalry and the Spanish who were all Modern.

On the Swedish side all Infantry were all Modern Squadrons, and cavalry all modern, all units were veterans except the 12 bases of Wurtembergers.

This meant that we printed off much shorter Tercios reference sheets to establish throws required.

Commanders/Players



One Commander (and figure) per player, only for show. No Tercio rules being applied for commanders.

- Mathias Gallas Graf von Campo und Herzog von Lucera – Stew Simpson
- Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand of Austria – Mark Goodwin
- Archduke Ferdinand King of Hungary , Croatia and Bohimia– Alistair Gray
- Bernhard Duke of Saxe-Weimar– Neil Johnston
- Count Gustav Horn of Björneborg– Rab Taylor

The Table & Scenery

It was obvious from the start that we were again needing a large table. How it was to be laid out did cause some headaches given differing accounts/maps in various books but we took two of these (see Appendix C) to come up with the following layout; though more figs than at the Lech game we were able to use a slightly shorter table.



So, we were looking now to layout scenery to depict this and on a large scale, the eventual table being 15 feet by 6 feet, roughly each square on the grid being 1x1.5 feet (300mm x 450mm). Scenery was pulled from all the players to best represent the above. Unfortunately, we had no river scenery so it became a very muddy river.



Deployment

There was a lot less debate this time round, where the maps (see Appendix C) were all fairly consistent, especially on the Swedish deployment. On the grid map we used to replicate the layout we also numbered where each unit was to be deployed. And unlike last time there would be little time before contact between armies was made.

Catholic Alliance

The Catholic Alliance had a bit more freedom as long as they remained in their sphere of influence, i.e. Left and Right Wings and centre. The only grey area was which cannon and how many cannons on the Allbuch. The decision was theirs to make, the opposition at this stage not feeling it would affect things greatly (and it didn't).

Swedish

Swedes could only deploy as dictated on the grid map.

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1- Bernhard Brigade | 5- Pfuhl Brigade | 9- Dragoons |
| 2- Thurn Brigade | 6- Wurtenbergers | 10- Cratz Cavalry |
| 3- Yellow Brigade | 7- Horn Brigade | 11- Bernhard's Cavalry |
| 4- Scots Brigade | 8- Rantzau Brigade | 12- Horn's Cavalry |



Game Sequence

Each Game Turn

Planning Phase:

- Both sides place Orders Cards besides their Troop units, face down

Roll for Initiative

- The side who wins initiative chooses which side will go first.
- Consensus as to whether battles could be played out simultaneously.

Activation Sequence (repeated alternately between each side, or opposing generals)

- Each Player of the active side Activates a Troop unit. A player may decline to do anything BUT a unit must be Activated to retain same number of activations per alternating turn (3 in our game), therefore a player may get to activate two of his units in the Activation sequence to accommodate.
- This sequence is repeated alternately until there are no Troop units left to activate on both sides, or for respective generals. The game turn is then over.

Terrain and House Rules

Some clarity given the scenario and possible gaps in the Tercios rules, meaning some tweaks we looked to introduce.

Terrain

There was not much terrain featured on the map/table which had to have predetermined consequences to movement however

Forest/Wood

Forest/Woods, we made this impassable, though on reflection this was historically wrong and did hinder movement of both sides.

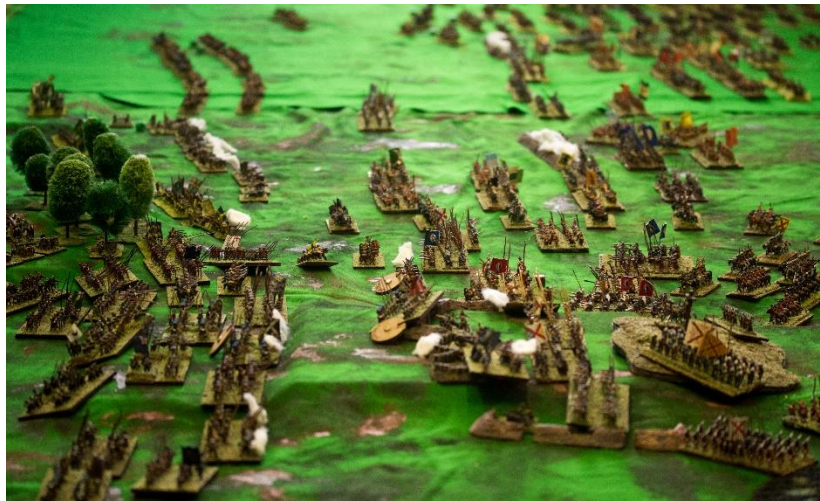
Marsh

Marsh, was impassable to horse and 'Difficult' for foote – this matched the historical accounts.



Buildings

Buildings, we were not involving occupying of them, so they were simply in our game as impassable and effecting line of site, but neither village/hamlet came into play, in hindsight we actually forgot to include a small such hamlet in the centre of the battlefield, Herkheim.



Battle Morale

In subsequent discussions following the Lech game we thought this unnecessary and as such did not apply any morale check, thinking it may be too much i.e. why would a veteran pike unit care if a raw light cavalry unit got destroyed.

Cannon

All Light and Medium cannon on the table we had assumed to have carthorses and therefore could be limbered and moved. Limbered was shown by the cannon positioned pointing away from the enemy.



Heavy cannon were to be in situ throughout the battle, though they could be turned under a Ready Order. All the heavy cannons were considered Large Batteries and could therefore fire twice per turn (more representative of them than purely increased range).

Caracole

When horse wished to attack as Caracole and approach in column to the enemy then the rules were as per Tercio, however to clarify we could reform to the rear of the other caracoling units, each unit must however do the discipline check before reform. i.e. following units can only caracole if preceding unit is successful in their discipline check, otherwise the Caracole retirement part fails and they will be in the way of the next unit - this is only if the horse are separate units having separate order cards of course.



Also Caracole reforming on the rear is only if there is room (3") to either flank to allow the preceding unit to complete the move otherwise they will remain in the way.

The Battle

All setup had been completed in about three hours on the Friday night; table laid out and troops deployed.

The Battle Day One

First roll for Activation was at 10am on the Saturday morning. The Swedes got to move first!

Initially it was agreed that all bases would be given a free movement without resorting to sequential turns, this was then followed by all cannon having their first shots, but as both sides met on the Swedish left bringing units to engagement and within engagement distance on the right it meant on turn two would see the carnage begin.



So, the game began with a general advance on both wings by the Swedes, rather uncharacteristic of their general the Spanish remained behind their fortifications on the Allbuch, whilst the Bavarian army crept forward in the centre and the Croats charged the Swedes head-on on the right.



The first turn ended with first blood to the Swedish left wing where their modern cavalry had turned the Croats, destroying one unit before they regrouped.

Turn Two

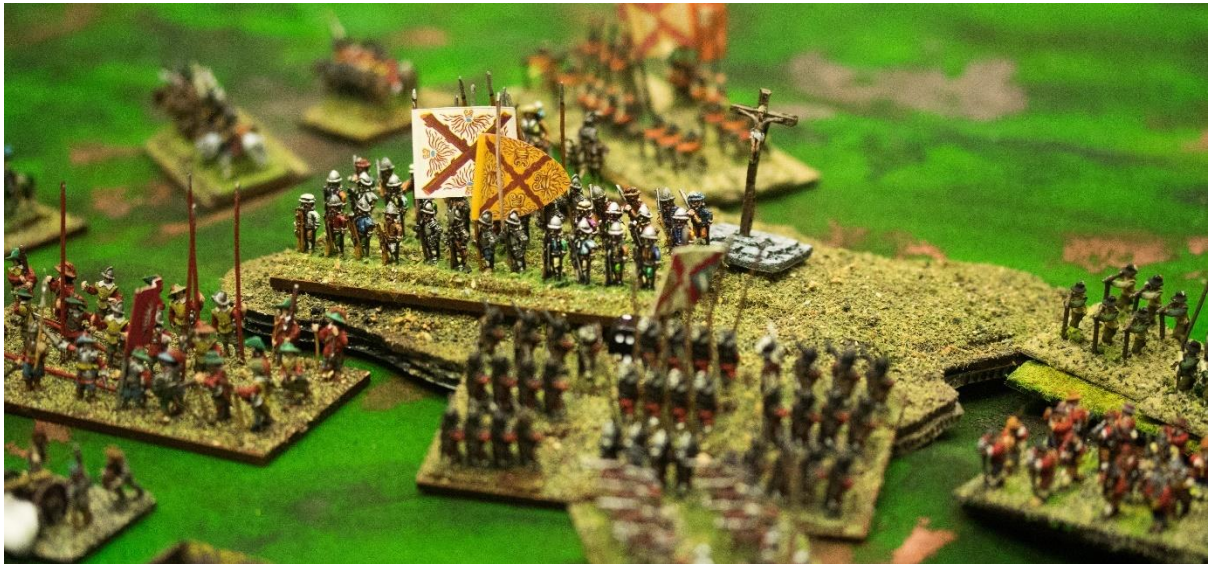
We split the wings and played out the order cards sequential but independently on each wing, the centre only when contact required.

The Spanish centre pushed forward but still some distance to go as the Swedes held solid to their initial lines.

On the right though the Scots Brigade took the emplacements on the Allbuch, destroying 3 cannons.



But this was short lived as the Spanish regrouped around the cross marking the Allbuch summit and pushed the Scots back out of the earthworks, though not without heavy cost to their infantry units.



Meanwhile, in contrast to this infantry slogging match, on the Swedish left a massive cavalry battle ensued. With the Croats and Imperialist Cuirassiers fighting it out with the Bernhard's modern cavalry.



Turn Three

The Swedish infantry on the right wing, mostly the rear of the Scots Brigade, floods round the outside of the Allbuch fortification and comes face to face with several Spanish units.

The Croats on the Imperialist right wing were still holding up against the Swedish modern cavalry of Bernhard. Though they had now lost a further 3 units. In the same area the Swedish Dragoons were taking heavy cannon fire but as yet with no loss.



In the centre of the battle the Bavarian infantry had finally reached the Swedish lines and were set upon assaulting the Swedish artillery line.

Turn Four

The Scots are back in the Allbuch, having thrown out the Spanish for a second time and destroying another two cannon and an infantry unit. But again, with further heavy loss the Spanish push back but not far, further heavy losses and more Scots with Pfuhl's Brigade push further on.

Finally, one of the Spanish feared Tercios enters the fray, the first of two Spanish Tercios, the experienced old guard.



Swedish Cavalry are the first to hit and bounce with heavy loss. Next a Swedish Infantry unit, is bounced and destroyed, and a second cavalry unit has a go and also fails but the Tercio is wavering on a single remaining wear point.

Bavarian centre had now crossed the table and threatening Thorn's artillery. Swedish German infantry who held the centre (at least to that point) and hold back the assault of 3 Bavarian foot regiments. The next initiative for turn five is going to be critical.

On the Swedish left the opposing forces are still slogging it out, the Croats have now retreated into the town but the Swedes fail to follow up as they are all but spent. The Swedes on the left are running low on units and all the reserve are engaged now, in fact only a thin line of cavalry remain.



The Swedish centre is also in dire straits and near breaking point – only the Swedish right is showing success.

One highlight for the Swedish left was a case of 'friendly fire' as an imperial cavalry unit charged what it believed to be a Swedish infantry unit, only to discover it was in fact a Bavarian unit – which managed to make all its saves as did the charging unit.

Turn Five

The Scots have taken the three Sconce on the Allbuch but not quite have full control of the hill, but are moving units to envelope. The Spanish forces behind the marsh, having remained stationery throughout, begin to move but possibly too little too late. Already the Swedes are firing on them and have cavalry sitting waiting to pounce if they ever break out.

Swedish cavalry, already on their last wear point, do a suicidal charge on the Tercio, and inflict that all important finally wear point, the Tercio is destroyed, albeit at the cost of said cavalry unit. The Spanish fill the space with more infantry as the Scots fail to exploit the Tercio loss. However, the Scots now securely hold the hill between the forest and the Allbuch.



The Swedish centre artillery line still stands intact but there is now little infantry left to protect them from the Bavarian forces however, with the last engagement of the turn and day, they take out another three Bavarian Foot units completely with a loss of only two regiments in a counter attack. But now the Imperials are moving in from right wing of the Bavarians. The Bavarians are now also drifting right to threaten the Swedish line on the hill and Allbuch.

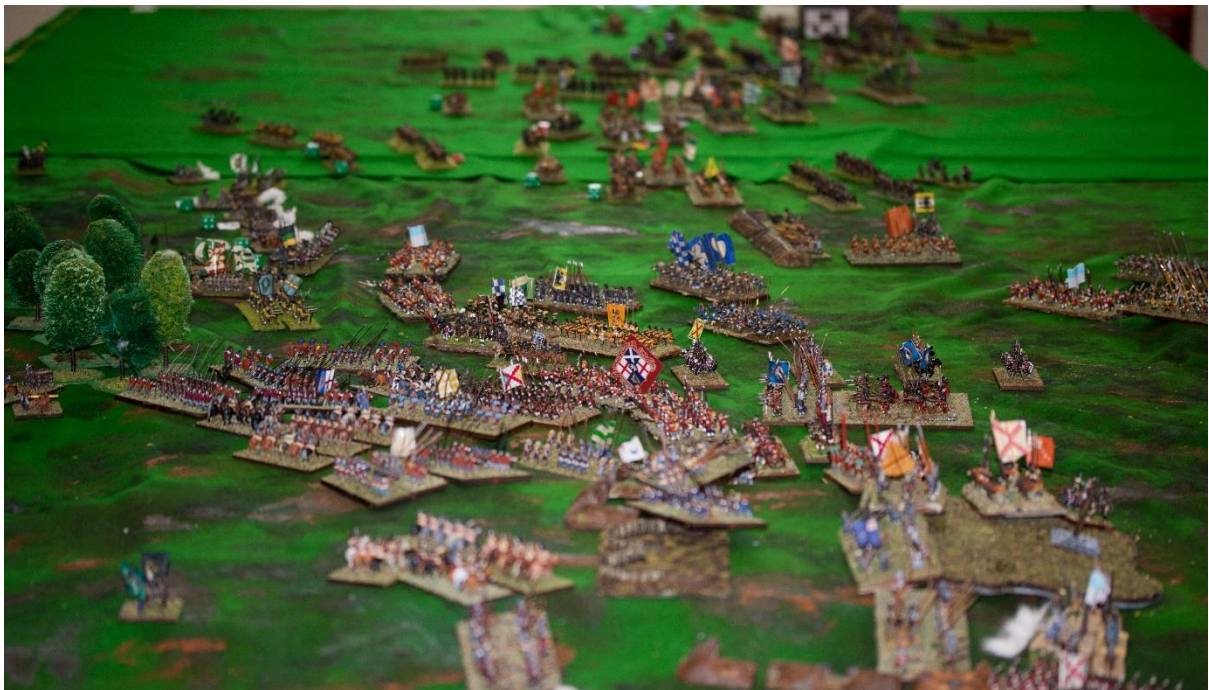
Day Two – Turn Six

10.30am - Carnage!

Spanish, having won the initiative, advance but are bounced, by the Scots and Pfuhl Brigades, indeed they are now pushed beyond the summit of the Allbuch, just. They look to be retreating off the Allbuch but as more Spanish reserves, about 5000 men (10 bases) arrive on the scene.

Swedish centre still holding but depleted almost of all infantry and cavalry, only some cannon remaining.

Swedish left has folded and the remaining troops are all moving towards the centre.



At this point the game was ended. Mixed conclusions, the Swedish right was still very strong and advancing but would it hold once the Imperialists and the Bavarians pressed its now unprotected flank – and of course there were the additional Spanish reserves moving in from the Spanish rear. But the primary historical objective was to win the Allbuch and place cannon on it, how very near that was to coming to pass.

Casualty Count

The Game

During the game the casualty count was as follows:

Catholic Alliance Armies

17 Infantry Units (approx. 8,500 men)

1 Tercio Unit (1,000 men)

17 Cavalry Units (approx. 3,400 men)

5 Cannon (15 artillery pieces)

Swedish Armies

12 Infantry Units (approx. 6,000 men)

19 Cavalry Units (approx. 3,800 men)

2 Dragoon Units (approx. 400 men)

5 Cannon (15 artillery pieces)

Historically

One account states the following.....

- Catholic Alliance: 3,500 killed or wounded
- Swedish: 21,000 killed or captured]



Conclusion

The Battle

On the battle itself it followed some similarity to that of the historical battle, certainly from the Swedish right wing; a frontal attack that held the Allbuch until overwhelmed by Spanish reserves, the agreed outcome perceived by the end of the game. The Swedish left on the other hand I believe was entirely different with much more combat than historically

Neither Swedish commander was captured, and I reckon Horn could have made good his escape in our game had his army broke, but then our Horn may be less of a risk taker.



This was our 'take' of representing the battle of Nördlingen 1634. There aren't any other factors that could be applied to change what we done, certainly not in the time we had – longer maybe would allow to see if the Spanish reinforcements recovered the Allbuch or whether the Swedes succeeded in getting their guns on it to enfilade the Catholic Alliance, and hold for the other Swedish army approaching – apparently only a few days off.

The Rules/Gaming

The fact again that we had several players with a mix of experience of either Tercios or other games meant that some aspects were brought to the game that previously had simply been missed – and thoroughly added to the carnage.

- Pike have a double increase in melee if fighting horse, simply for having pike! However, on reflection we agreed not if they played an assault card, so they only got one increase either way. As all the players have re-enacted as pikemen we believe this more logical. i.e. the bonus is for adopting the charge for horse posture with a pike, not for having a pike alone.
- And the counter to the pike advantage over horse – if an infantry unit fails to inflict any damage on an attacking cavalry unit it is simply destroyed! This we played as if they fail to save any damage inflicted by the cavalry. This needs more clarity for next time.
- Rear attacks...for both Horse and Foot. We played that Foot could react (if successful) but horse could only evade – the assessment being that foot can about turn much quicker than horse.
- Assault....any deviation from straight ahead...again both Horse and Foot. We played it as the unit nearest in line of sight.

And there were a couple of questions still to be resolved

- If opposing units are in the woods, can they see each other? Still an outstanding query.
- If a unit suffers a defeat and retreats, does terrain still hinder the retreat movement (not block but slow it down so it does not complete the distance) – especially a shameful defeat where a further distance is expected. The example is if say the terrain wasn't there, they would meet another unit and fail the retreat movement and incur an extra wear point, but because the terrain slowed their retreat, they did not reach the other unit and deemed the retreat completed.



Appendix A – Swedish order of Battle

Swedish

Infantry	Cavalry	Bases
16500	10150	33

SWEDISH ARMY

Infantry:-		
Yellow Brigade	1400	3
Thurn Brigade	1250	2
Bernhard Brigade	1250	2
Horn Brigade	1200	3
Pfuhl Brigade	1700	3
Scots Brigade	1700	4
Rantzau Brigade	2000	4
Wurtembergers	6000	12
Horse:-		
Benhard Wing	5150	25
Horn Wing	4000	20
Dragoons	1000	5
Horn DR	100	
Taupadel DR	600	
Chambre DR	100	
Ruthven DR	100	
Holtzmuller DR	100	

Bases			
Modern Foot Squadrons	16500	33	1 Base = 500 men
Modern Cav	9150	45	1 Base = 200 men
Dragoons	1000	5	1 Base = 200 men
24pdr Cannon (Medium)	20	6	1 Base = 3 Guns
3pdr Cannon (Light)	42	14	2 Base = 3 Guns

Appendix B – Catholic Alliance Order of Battle

Imperialists/Bavarian/Spanish

	Infantry	Cavalry	
	28170	12597	
IMPERIAL ARMY			
Leslie IR			
Alt-Breuner IR			
Kehraus IR			
Tiefenbach IR			
Gallas IR			
Alt-Aldringer IR			
Beck IR			
Neu-Aldringer IR			
Bennian-Lafosse IR			
Strassoldo IR			
Suys IR			
Pallant-Moriame			
Neu-Breuner IR			
Webel IR			
Neu-Waldstein IR			
Diodati IR			
King of Hungary	5000	5000	10 infantry Bases
Strozzi KUR	300		
Spinola KUR	300		
L Gonzaga KUR	300		
H Gonzaga KUR	300		
Cronberg KUR	300		
Aldobrandini KUR	300		
Neu-Florentine KUR	300		
Alt-Piccolomini KUR	300		
Rauchhaupt KUR	300		
Streithorst KUR	300		
Muhlheim KUR	300		
Vitzthum KUR	300		
Neu-Piccolomini	300		
Harrach KUR	300		
Nicola KUR	300		
Gallas Leib KUR	300		
S Piccolomini KUR	300		
St Martin ARK	300		
Rittberg ARK	300		
Loyers ARK	300		

Tornetta ARK	300		
Piccolomini DR	300		
Free Dragoon Coy	300	7000	35 horse bases
Isolano Croats			
Losy Croats			
Prichowsky Croats			
Corpes Croats			
Batthyani Croats			
Raikowitz Croats			
Forgach Croats	2000	2000	10 horse bases

BAVARIAN ARMY

Fugger IR	1234		
Reinach IR	1270		
Pappenheim IR	1000		
Reupp IR	1017		
Buck IR	839		
Hattenburg IR	1270		
Salis IR	1000	7630	15 infantry bases

SPANISH

Conde de Ayala (Neapolitan)	CAV	700	
Graf de la Tour (Burgundian)	CAV	587	
Marquis Florencia (Lombard)	CAV	500	
Lombard	CAV		
Life Guard	CAV	230	
Dragoon Coy	DRG	500	
Neapolitan & Milanese	CAV	630	
Graf Arberg (Burgundian)	CAV	450	3597 18 horse bases
"Old" Spanish IR		1800	
Lombardy IR		1450	
Prince San Severo (Naples)		1900	
Gasper de Toralto (Naples)		750	
Pedro de Cardenas (Naples)		950	
Marquis Lunato (Lombardy)		1300	
Prince Doria (Lombardy)		1000	
Rafael Sach (Swiss)		90	
Marques de Torrecusa (Naples)		950	
Conde de Paniguerola (Lombard)		800	
Graf Salm (German)		2400	
Vormes (Wurmser)		2150	15540 31 infantry bases

Bases			
Classic Foot Squadrons	28170	56	1 Base = 500 men
Cuirassier	4800	24	1 Base = 200 men
Modern Cav	3000	15	2 Base = 200 men
Dragoons	1100	5	3 Base = 200 men
Croat Light Cavalry	2000	10	4 Base = 200 men
Arquebusier	1200	6	5 Base = 200 men
Demi Cannon (Heavy)	30	10	1 Base = 3 Guns
Falconet Cannon (Light)	10	4	2 Base = 3 Guns

Appendix C – Source Maps

