

Battle of Morlaix, 1342

The Battle of Morlaix was fought in Morlaix on 30 September 1342 between the Anglo-Breton and Franco-Breton forces in Brittany. The Anglo-Breton under English command besieged the town, but a Franco-Breton relief force arrived. The English constructed a strong defensive position. After repeated attacks, the French forced the English to retreat into the woods, and the French force then withdrew.

The English were commanded by William de Bohun, Earl of Northampton. The French by Charles de Blois. The sources are rather sparse for the battle, but what seems to be clear is that the English were alerted to the approach of the French army coming from the east along the road from Lanmeur. The English had time before the French arrived to prepare a defensive position protected by ditches and hidden pits. Their rear was protected by a wood where they also had their camp.

The French approached the next morning arrayed in three divisions one following the other towards the English. We will call them battles or waves in this scenario. Each of the French waves attacked one at a time and in theory each was large enough on its own to defeat the English. The first wave was probably thrown back before they reached the hidden pits - presumably by arrow fire. The French then held a council of war and decided to attack again. This time they reached the English lines, but the French cavalry was thrown into confusion by the pits and fled with great losses. The third French wave now approached, and the English who were running low on arrows decided to retreat to the woods before they were overwhelmed. The French tried to break into the English defences in the wood, but the position was too strong. The French withdrew and the English did as well under cover of night.

To recreate the battle as a wargame some additional rules have been introduced, including limited ammunition for the English archers, the English field defences, and the possibility for the English to retreat to the wood.

Objectives

The French player's objective is to defeat the English army in open battle and also to prevent them retreating to the wood.

The English player wins by either defeating the whole French army (which is much bigger), or by being able to disengage from combat and retreat to the wood behind their position. They can only do this after the French third battle is released to fight.

Forces

English Army

Seven 6" sections of pits

4 Archer units

1 Foot Knights unit

French Army

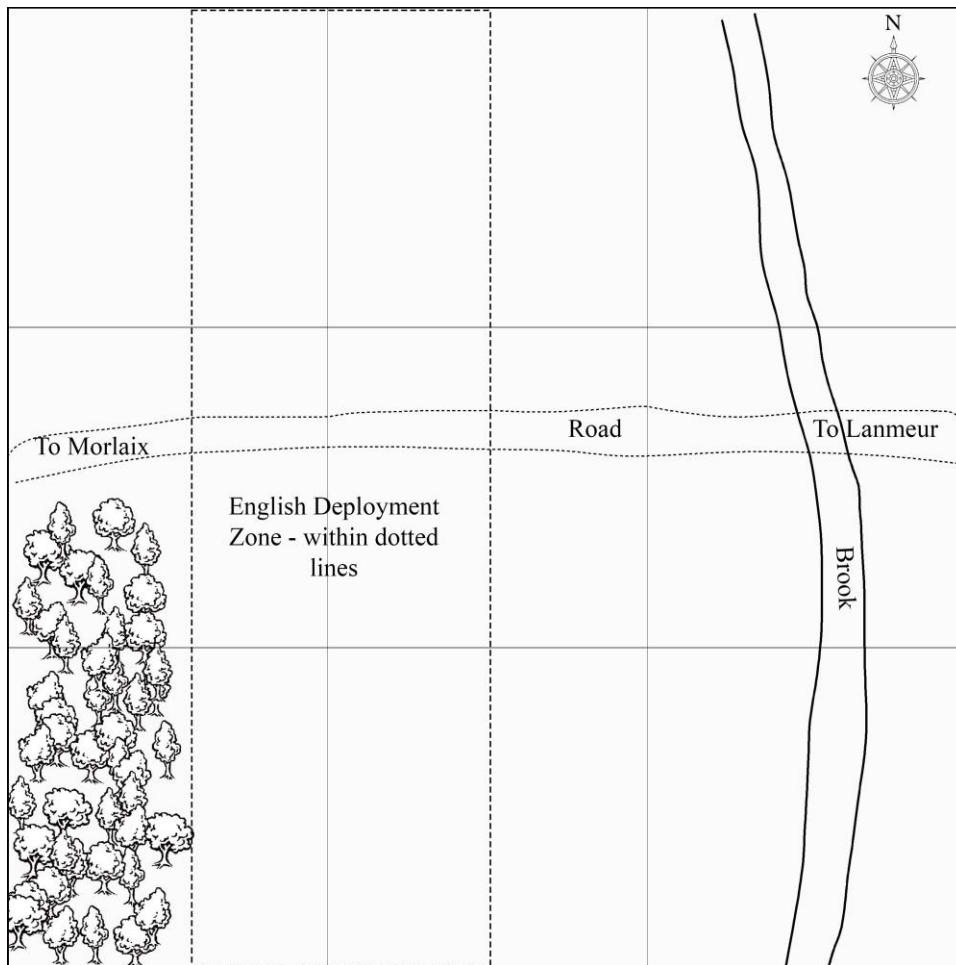
6 Mounted Knight units

2 Archer units

3 Infantry units

Organised in Three Battles or Waves of attack. The French player determines before the battle which units are in which Wave. There must be between 3 and 4 units per Wave.

Battlefield



Brook:

Can be easily crossed but treat as difficult ground.

Wood:

Exception to normal rules, can be moved into by English units only once the French 3rd wave enters the battlefield.

Road:

No effect on movement

Deployment

The English are free to deploy anywhere within their deployment zone on the Battlefield. When deploying pits these must be within the deployment zone.

The French player enters with each wave from the Eastern table edge from the direction of Lanmeur. Second and Third waves enter the eastern table edge as follows:

Second Wave: when there is only 1 remaining unit from the first wave.

Third Wave: When there is only 2 remaining units from the second or first wave.

First Turn

French

Special Rules

There are a number of special rules in this scenario.

Ditches and Pits

Use the new rules for Pits - see below.

Treated as difficult ground for movement purposes, so half move for all Units. Can either be a linear static defence - such as stakes or an area static defence such as pits or ditches. Area static defences are 6" by 3".

Cavalry must also pass a Unit Courage Test to cross the static defences (must roll 7 or less on 2d6, 8 or less if General with them). If failed, they do not break but remain stationary for that Round. They may attempt to cross again next Round or move away. If moving away through area static defences they do not need to pass a test, but their movement is still halved.

Ditches Filled

After two waves of attacks some historians believe that the ditches became trampled down and filled with bodies, meaning that their effectiveness as a defence diminished. To represent this, once two French Units have entered and left a 6" section of ditches that terrain item is removed. The French unit can leave of its own accord or be removed through a Unit Courage Test.

Limited Arrow Supply for English

6 Turns of shooting allowed. Use a dice next to each Archer unit to track.

English Retreat to the Woods

The English may attempt to retreat to the Woods once the French third wave enters the battlefield.

If they manage to get 3 units into the woods, then they win the battle.

Duration of the Battle

Until one or both armies fail an Army Courage Test or until English retreat to the Woods with at least 3 units.

Victory Conditions

An army wins when the opposing army fails an Army Courage Test and they do not. If both armies fail an Army Courage Test the battle is a draw.

The English can also win if they retreat to the Woods with at least 3 units.