

GAME OVERVIEW & DESIGNER'S NOTES

Want to have a quick overview of the game concepts? What's behind the game engine? Want to learn more about the Campaign? Feel free to read the below Game Overview & Designer's Notes.

1. Background

In 1796, the young French Republic was no longer at bay, having knocked Prussia, the Netherlands and Tuscany out of the War of the First Coalition. However, the French were still facing their long-time and toughest enemies: England and Austria. Challenging England on the high seas was out of question, because the French fleet was no longer a match for the Royal Navy. Therefore, the French Directory ruled that the best chance for victory was a decisive land campaign to force Austria to sue for peace. Two large French armies commanded by experienced Generals Jourdan and Moreau were to advance into Germany toward Vienna. In the meantime, a small French force was to undertake a diversionary movement in Northern Italy. This operation, on a lesser theater, was entrusted to a young Corsican General named Napoleon Bonaparte. However, while the main French armies were eventually stalled in Germany, Bonaparte gained international fame when

his Army of Italy defeated the Sardinian and Austrian troops during the Campaign of Montenotte, forcing a peace on Sardinia. Bonaparte then captured Milan and laid siege to the Austrian fortress city of Mantua. The Austrians reacted by sending an army under one of their ablest commanders, General Dagobert Sigismund, Count von Wurmser, with the intention of relieving Mantua and teaching the French upstart General a lesson, setting the stage for what was later known as the Castiglione Campaign.

2. Overview

Bonaparte in Italy – The Castiglione Campaign is a two-player game of strategy and tactics about the Campaign of Castiglione which took place in Northern Italy in late July/early August 1796. One player controls the French Army of Italy under Napoleon Bonaparte while their opponent leads the Austrian forces of General Wurmser.

The game only deals with a part of Bonaparte's Italian campaign, the Austrian first attempt to relieve Mantua. This is in order to keep the size of the map and the number of counters reasonable enough. However, if the sales are good, the idea is to create a series of operational level games about various Napoleonic campaigns, including other episodes of Bonaparte's campaign in Italy.

The game is played on a point-to-point map representing the region of Mantua and uses a simple system stressing the importance of command and supply. Game counters represent Brigades and historical Leaders that fought during the campaign. Combats take into account the role of leadership, cavalry and artillery. The players must carefully monitor the cohesion status of their troops throughout the campaign and choose the most appropriate time to use 'Forced Marches' and 'Marches to the Sound of the Guns' to win the decision. Additional chromes include rules for the siege of Mantua, bridge destruction, garrisons, cavalry pursuits and optional rules for Leader casualties, the Fog of War and reconnaissance. The design intention is to get the players to use actual Napoleonic strategies, such as the Strategy of Indirect Approach, the Strategy of the Central Position or the '*Bataillon Carre*', if they want to win the day.

It is up to you as the Austrian player to put an early stop to Napoleon's career, or as the French player to duplicate one of the Little Corporal's first glorious feat of arms.

Will you be up to the challenge General?

3. Opening Move



The political and social changes caused by the French Revolution and the dire military situation faced by the young Republic offered the perfect opportunity for enterprising young men to rise to unexpected levels.

Bonaparte was among those men. An artillery officer, Bonaparte was only a Captain when the wars of the Revolution started. But in several occasions, he happened to be the right man at the right place. In 1793, as commander of the artillery at Toulon he successfully organized the recapture of the city from the British and Spanish forces. In recognition for his service, he was promoted to Brigadier General.

In 1795, in Paris, he used his guns to quell a royalist uprising threatening the Republic. This action earned him the recognition of the Directory (the governing five-member committee of the French First Republic).

However, his meteoric rise made him some political enemies as well. In view of the situation, while the Directory was preparing an offensive against Austria it was out of question to entrust the young talented, but inexperienced, General, with a major command. On the other hand, keeping Bonaparte idle in Paris would have been a waste of resources. That's probably why, thanks to Barras, his patron in the Directory, he was named commander of the Army of Italy in March 1796. Italy was merely a sideshow for the main French offensive that was to take place in Germany. As a matter of fact, the Army of Italy was considered as a ragtag band of unruly and demoralized soldiers lacking supplies, horses, weapons and even proper clothes. Nothing decisive was expected from Bonaparte and his soldiers.

But in a matter of four months Bonaparte defeated the Austrians and their Sardinians allies (who signed a separate peace treaty), threatening the Austrian southern flank. The only think that stopped the French from advancing toward Vienna was the fortress city of Mantua. The city had to be captured, before Bonaparte could resume his march to the Austrian capital. However, lacking a siege train, the French were not able to storm Mantua. The only alternative was to surround the city and wait for its garrison to surrender, out of starvation.



That's when entered Dagobert Sigmund, graf von Wurmser von Vendenheim zu Sundhausen. The Austrian Field Marshal, was a very different character than Bonaparte. A veteran of the Seven Years' War, the War of the Bavarian Succession, and of the campaigns in the Rhineland against the armies of the French Revolution, 72-year-old Wurmser was without a doubt and experienced and competent general. His goal was to relieve Mantua and decisively defeat the French Army.

The campaign started with a strategic blunder for the French as old-man Wurmser, outfoxed his younger opponent, 26-year-old Bonaparte, with his opening move.

Bonaparte was expecting the Austrians to attack from the east, coming from Bassano (not represented on the game map) via Vicenza or from the north-east coming from Trent along the Adige River valley via Rivoli.



He positioned his troops accordingly. Massena around Verona and Augereau protecting Legnago, while Serurier was besieging Mantua. The French western flank, in Salo, guarding the approach road to Brescia (a French supply center) was only protected by Sauret's weak Division consisting in two brigades.

Wurmser strategy for his relief attempt of Mantua was a classic pincer movement. He divided his forces into 3 groups. A small column under Meszaros would act as a diversion, coming, as expected by Bonaparte, from Vicenza. A large column under Wurmser would come from Trent and move along the eastern bank of Lake Garda, just as expected by Bonaparte.



However, what Bonaparte did not anticipate is that a 3rd column, almost as large as Wurmser's one, under Quasdanovich would move along the western bank of lake Garda to strike at the weakest point of the French defensive positions, threatening the French lines of communications.

It was Bonaparte's and his divisional commanders' reactivity that would eventually save the day. Skillfully using the Strategy of the Central Position, the principle of concentration of forces and the high mobility of his troops, Bonaparte saved his army and started a meteoric career that would eventually lead him to sit on the Imperial Throne.

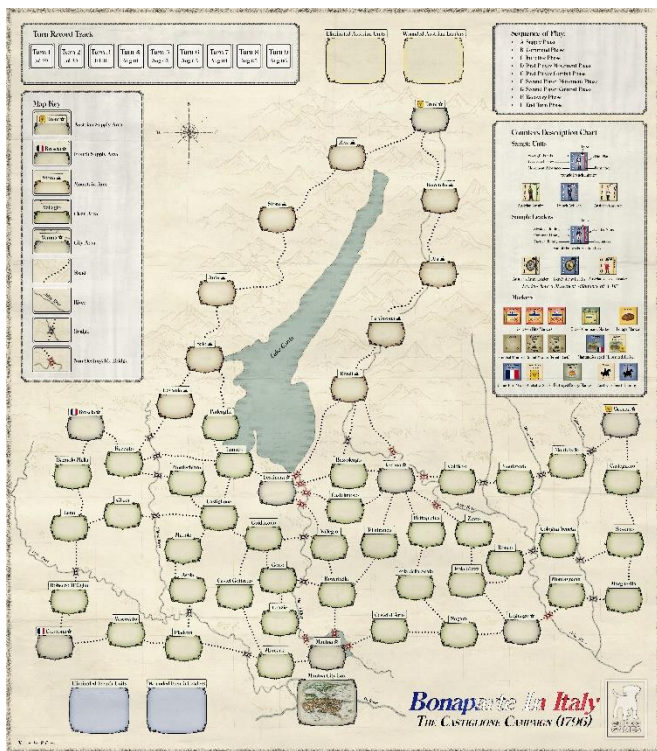
Recommended reading:

The Italian campaign of 1796 has indeed 'The Birth of a Strategist' as described by French historian Stephane Beraud in his book '*Bonaparte en Italie - Naissance d'un Stratege*'. If you read French, I highly recommend this book which is an invaluable source of information, not only about the Campaign of Italy, but about the basic principles of the Napoleonic strategies. The game is indeed intended to give you the opportunity to apply these strategies whether you play the role of Bonaparte or Wurmser.

4. Game Components

- One Rule Book (including Design Notes)
- One Play Book (including Optional Rules)
- One Extended Example of Play Book
- Player Aids (Game Tables)
- One Combat Board
- One 25' x 22' Game Map
- 176 5/8" double-sided game counters

5. The Map



The game uses a point-to-point map. This type of topographic modeling is in my opinion ideal for representing Napoleonic Campaigns, since units almost exclusively relied on road networks for movement and supply. Each 'point', called an Area in the game, is linked to other Areas via road connections. Each Road Connection represents a distance of about 10 to 15 Km (6.2 to 9.3 miles). Roads are sometimes crossed by bridges, which the players may destroy (in order to cut the enemy supply sources or to try to hinder their movements) and repair.

Each Area features a predominant type of terrain.

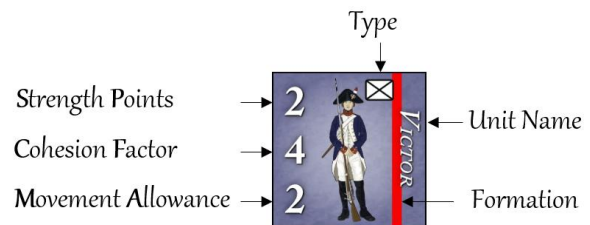
- Clear Areas representing flat ground and/or low hills including towns and villages typical of Northern Italy.

- Mountain Areas representing mountain passages and high hills.
- City Areas representing major urban centers, such as Peschiera, Legnago and Verona part of the famous 'Venetian Quadrilateral', and their environs.

Each type of terrain has different effects on movement and combat. There are also some special Areas, such as Supply Sources (which are also City Areas) and the City of Mantua, which is Austrian controlled, but under (a loose) siege by the French.

The map also features various, boxes used to run the game, as well as the Turn Record Track. Each Game Turn represents about one day of real time and there are a total of 9 turns (from July 29 to August 6, 1796).

6. The Units



Sample French Infantry



Austrian Cavalry French Artillery Austrian Garrison

The basic combat units in the game are Brigades. Like in many other Napoleonic games they come in three flavors: Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery. Each having some special characteristics. The infantry units are there to absorb and cause damages to the enemy, the infantry grunts are the mainstay of both Players' armies. The more mobile cavalry can be used for flanking maneuvers to cut enemy Lines of Supply, as mobile flank-guard (to prevent enemy flanking), to quickly support a threatened friendly force or for recon (if you use the optional Fog of War rules). But more importantly the Cavalry is essential for a crucial part (often overlooked in many games) of any Napoleonic battle: The Pursuit. As Napoleon used to say: "*Without cavalry, battles are without result.*" The Artillery is used to bombard the enemy and inflict damages on the opening stages of a battle. There is a fourth, subtype, of units: garrisons. They are used to control cities, and cannot move.

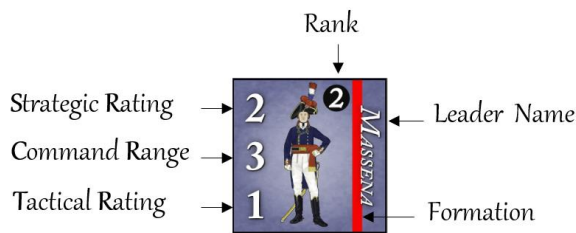
Units are rated with three numerical values:

- The Unit Strength Points (abbreviated as SP), represent the Unit combat strength. One SP is about 500 to 1,000 infantrymen, 250 to 500 cavalymen or 6 to 12 guns.
- The Unit Cohesion Factor (abbreviated as CF) represents the Unit effectiveness. The Cohesion Factor is used to perform Cohesion Checks (more on this in a subsequent chapter)
- The Unit Movement Allowance (abbreviated as MA) is the measurement of the Unit mobility. It is expressed in Movement Points, abbreviated as MP.

Note: The soldier silhouettes on the counters are here for aesthetic purpose only, and don't have any impact over gameplay. For example, while some Cavalry Units have Dragons silhouettes and other Hussars ones, they are both just Cavalry Units in game terms.

The Units are grouped in Formations (a French Division or Austrian Column) under a Leader, which leads us to the next chapter: Leaders.

7. Leaders



Sample French Formation Leader



Austrian Army Leader



Austrian Generic Leader

Leaders represent the Generals and their staff involved in the Campaign. They are either Formation commanders (each commanding a French Division or Austrian Column) or Army Leaders (Bonaparte and Wurmser).

Leaders are rated with three numerical values:

- Strategic Rating (abbreviated as SR) represents the Leader's ability to command and move troops.
- Command Range (abbreviated as CR) indicates under which distance (in number of Areas) the Leader can command friendly Units.

- Tactical Rating (abbreviated as TR) represents the Leader's ability to influence the outcome of combat and to rally troops.

Leaders can give bonuses to Units. Bonuses for Force Marche Movement and to March to the Sound of the Guns, bonuses when resolving Combat, bonuses to recover cohesion. Leaders have a fixed movement rating of 4 MP.

8. Player Aids

The game come with various Player Aids, used to resolve gaming situations as well as a Combat Board that can optionally be used to place units when resolving Combat.

9. Sequence of Play

The game uses a rather classic sequence of play.

- Supply Phase** Both players check for the control of Cities. They check the Supply Status of their Units and perform Attrition Checks for their unsupplied Units. Unsupplied French units may Forage. The French player checks if Mantua is still sieged. If Mantua is Liberated and Austrian Units are in Mantua Area, they may join the Mantua City Box.
- Command Phase** Players check the Command Status of their Units. Units that are Out of Command receive an 'Out of Command' Marker.
- Initiative Phase** Players checks who is the first player during the Turn. The Austrian Player is the first player during the first two Turns. For the subsequent Turns each player rolls a die to check who gets the Initiative. The winner chooses who goes first.
- First Player Movement Phase** The First Player moves their Units and Leaders and may perform Forced Marches and bridge destructions and repairs.
- First Player Combat Phase** The First Player declares Combat in Areas occupied by Units from both sides. The Second Player may perform Marches to the Sound of the Guns. Players perform Artillery Bombardments (if possible) then proceed to up to two Combat Rounds per combat until one side is eliminated, defeated or chooses to Retreat. In case of a Retreat the winning side may Pursue.

- F. **Second Player Movement Phase** The Second Player moves their Units and Leaders and may perform Forced Marches and bridges destructions and repairs.
- G. **Second Player Combat Phase** The Second Player declares Combat in Areas occupied by Units from both sides. The First Player may perform Marches to the Sound of the Guns. Players perform Artillery Bombardment (if possible) then proceed to up to two Combat Rounds per combat until one side is eliminated, defeated or chooses to Retreat. In case of a Retreat the winning side may Pursue.
- H. **Recovery Phase** Both players check the Supply Status of their Units and roll for Cohesion Checks in order to see if their supplied units recover from Cohesion Hits.
- I. **End of Turn Phase** Advance the Game Turn Marker one space on the Game Turn Record Track and proceed to next Turn (return to phase A.). Upon completion of the last Turn check for Victory.

10. Cohesion is Everything



One of the game system's main feature revolves around the concept of Cohesion Factor. The Cohesion Factor (CF) of a Unit represents its soldiers' effectiveness, morale, training, willpower as well as their commanding officer's skills and initiative. The CF is tested by performing a Cohesion Check. The player rolls a die (1D6). If the die roll result is equal or less than the Unit current Cohesion Factor the Unit successfully passes the Cohesion Check, otherwise, it fails. For the purpose of this test the CF may be modified by various factors depending of the gaming situation.

The CF is essential in matter of mobility. Out of Command Units cannot move unless they succeed in their Cohesion Check.

Units also need to perform Cohesion Checks to March to the Sound of the Guns, that is marching in reaction to the opponent's movement in order to join a battle initiated by the enemy.

Units may Force March (to get additional Movement Points), but by doing so they might suffer from Cohesion Hits, each Hit reducing their Cohesion Factor. Once a Unit suffers from a 4th Cohesion Hit it is eliminated. The Unit status is simply recorded by placing a Cohesion Hit Marker on top of the Unit's counter, or alternatively with an easy to use 'Units Status Record Sheet'.

Force Marching is not the only reason why Units may suffer from Cohesion Hits. Having their Lines of Supply cut results in a Cohesion Hit for the unsupplied Units. This is where the French, who don't rely in a rigid depot system for supply, have an advantage. They may forage (another word for pillaging) to avoid suffering from a Cohesion Hit, by performing a successful Cohesion Check. However, while foraging these units cannot Force March, nor March to the Sound of the Guns.

Of course, one of the main reasons why Units get Cohesion Hits is Combat. The presentation of the Combat system will be detailed later but it suffices to say that its purpose is to cause Cohesion Hits to the enemy Units.

Thus, step by step, units, Force Marching, suffering from lack of supply and fighting will lose their Cohesion Factor, and this will make them less efficient in moving and combating, forcing the player to withdraw them from the 'front line' in order to allow them to recover.

During the Recovery Phase of each Turn, Units that suffered from Cohesion Hits might recover from one of those Hits, by, as you might have guessed, performing a successful Cohesion Check. Again, for the purpose of this test the CF may be modified by various factors depending of the gaming situation. Of course, the more Cohesion Hits a unit suffered, the more difficult, and the longer it will be to recover from those Cohesion Hits.

11. Strength is Everything as Well

The Strength Points (SP) represent a rough translation of a Units firepower as well as the measurement of the unit's manpower. SP is mainly used for Combat (as explained in the Combat Chapter). In Combat the more SP, the merrier.

The SP in also a measurement of a Unit 'footprint'. There are (simple) rules for traffic jams (especially along the narrow mountain roads of northern Italy). Once a threshold of SP is reached in an Area, further units entering this Area must pay an additional MP to enter it. This either prohibits the unit from entering the Area, thus, realistically creating columns of units spread over several areas, or causes it to use Force March with potential risks of suffering from Cohesion Hits (simulating the disorganization of units caused by the traffic jams).

12. Supply



Supply in the game is handled in rather classic and uncomplicated way. In order to be supplied a unit needs to trace a path, free of enemy units (and of destroyed bridges), from the Area where it is stationed to a friendly supply source (Brescia or Cremona for the French and Trent and Vizenca for the Austrians). As mentioned previously, the cost for being unsupplied is paid in Cohesion Hits.

13. Mantua



The fortress city of Mantua deserves a special game treatment. The City is considered occupied by Austrian troops besieged by the French. During the Supply Phase the French player checks if Mantua is still under siege. Mantua is under siege as long as there are at least 10 SP or more worth of French Infantry Units occupying the Area.

Mantua was a thorn in Bonaparte's side. The French needed to capture the fortress and its garrison, if they wanted to have any chance of resuming their offensive toward Vienna. However, the Army of Italy lacked the proper siege train and engineers to storm the City. The only alternative was to surround the Austrian fortress and wait long enough to force its garrison to surrender out of starvation. For the Austrians relieving the City was paramount for strategic reasons: as long as Mantua remained in Austrian hands Bonaparte was forced to remain on the defensive.

14. Command



Command plays an important part in the game but is handled in a simple way. Leaders can command units of their formation (or of any formation if they are Army Leaders) within their Command Range (provided they can trace a path of road connections free of enemy units). Out of Command units are restricted in their ability to move, which is, by Napoleonic standard, bad news. Out of Command Units can only move provided they succeed in passing a Cohesion Check. This can be rather easy for intact units, but for Out of Command Brigades that in addition suffered some Cohesion Hits this can be a real problem.

Note: Competent players, will seldomly find their units out of command, or unsupplied, largely due to the relatively small size of the area of operations and the small number of units involved (at least when compared to other

Napoleonic campaigns). So why having included those rules in the game? As a matter of fact, if the sales are good Bonaparte in Italy – The Castiglione Campaign might be the first of a Series of games dealing with Napoleonic warfare at the operational scale, all using the same set of rules. Those command and supply rules would be crucial on larger theaters of operations, such as Germany or Russia.

15. Initiative

On each game turn (except for the 1st two turns) players rolls to check who has the initiative, with the French player having more chances to get the initiative. The initiative player decides who moves first during the sequence of play. During the 1st two turns the Austrian player has the initiative and moves first (simulating the strategic surprise) but as from turn 3 it is likely that the initiative would shift into French hands (simulating Bonaparte swift reaction to the Austrian offensive).

16. Movement

Movement is handled in a very classic way. Units move from Area to Area via road connections spending movement points to do so. If the players feel their units don't have enough movement points to reach their objective, they can try to have them performing Forced Marches, rolling on a special Forced March Table. This table grants additional movement points to the moving units, but might also result in Cohesion Hits. So, in order to win the players will have to learn when and how far to push their units.

Units can move into an enemy occupied Area but must immediately stop their movement. The encounter between opposing forces will be resolved during the Combat Phase. However, the non-phasing player does not stay idle during their opponent's turn as units may March to the Sound of the Guns.

17. Marching to the Sound of the Guns

The Napoleonic strategy of the 'Bataillon Carre' (Square Battalion) consisted in having the various units of an army staying within marching distance of each other, so as to be able to support each other quickly in the event of an encounter with the enemy. The players can implement this strategy by using the March to the Sound of the Guns rules. In the game this represents Division Commanders and Brigadier Generals marching their troops on their own initiative to join the battle. As usual this is done by rolling for Cohesion Checks. Of course, the more Cohesion Hits a unit has, the less it is likely to be able to March to the Sounds of the Guns.

18. Combat



Combat takes place when enemy units are in the same Area and is handled during the Combat Phase.

Each player totals the number of their SP and each player rolls a die on the Combat Resolution Table applying various modifiers depending of the gaming situation, causing enemy units to suffer from Cohesion Hits.

The combat system stresses the importance of the various components of a Napoleonic Army and of combined arms: Artillery, Infantry, Cavalry. The Bombardment Phase allows the Players to soften the enemy with their Artillery. The (poor bloody) Infantry is there to hold ground and absorb losses while Cavalry plays a crucial role in one of the most important phases of a Battle: pursuit. Without cavalry superiority a victory is often inconclusive. As a matter of fact, although he skillfully managed to outmaneuver his enemy, thwarting every Austrian attempt to break the siege of Mantua, Bonaparte was never able to entirely destroy the Hapsburg Army until February, partly because his cavalry was outnumbered. It was only after the victory of Rivoli and the fall of Mantua, in February 1797, after an 8-month siege (the longest siege of the Napoleonic Wars) that the French were eventually able to resume their offensive toward Vienna.

Players might find battles to be inconclusive, even for the French (remember the man in charge is still Bonaparte of 1796, not Napoleon of 1805). The fact is that the game system stresses the importance of maneuver over brute force. In order to force your opponent to concede you'll need to out-maneuver them, cut their lines of command and communications, threaten their geographical objectives and keep them off balance so their troops cannot recover from the effects of Cohesion Hits.

19. Recovery

With the importance of the Cohesion Factor, it is not surprising there is a game phase all dedicated to units' recovery. As you might now have guessed, in order to recover from Cohesion Hits a unit must successfully pass a Cohesion Check. However, units must be supplied in order to be able to recover. The presence of leaders and being positioned in a City will also help when rolling for the Cohesion Check.

20. Victory

The victory in the game is tallied in Victory Points (VP). Players earn VP by destroying enemy units, but also by

occupying some Areas, or keeping them safe from enemy occupation.

21. Optional Rules



The game comes with an 8-page Play Book that includes Fog of War Rules.

With these rules the units operate 'hidden' (face-down) with the back of the units' counter only featuring the national flag, leaving the opponent uncertain about the exact strength and nature of these units.

The Fog of War Rules also use 'Dummy' counters, that represent false rumors about the position and exact strength of the enemy but also small sized cavalry units used for picket duties, raiding, screening, scouting and as decoys. They add further uncertainty about the enemy forces' real position.

There are also special rules about reconnaissance that stress the importance of cavalry units.

Last but not least there are rules for Leaders casualties. Now, Bonaparte, and his fellow (and enemy) commanders can be killed or wounded, being replaced by less talented men. The potential death of Bonaparte does not cause the French player to lose the game. In 1796 Bonaparte was still considered as a young expandable Corsican General.

22. Strengths and Weaknesses

The French have better Leaders. Their troops have a better overall Cohesion Factor. They are more mobile (having bonuses for Forced March), and less subject to attrition if unsupplied (they can forage).

Is the Austrian cause a lost one? No, not at all.

The Austrian have more Strength Points (meaning they can hit harder than the French during a battle). They have more Cavalry (meaning they can more easily pursue a defeated foe, and can generally withdraw without suffering additional losses if they happen to lose a battle). They have more artillery, which means they can inflict Cohesion Hits to the French before they could even return fire. Furthermore, at the beginning of the campaign their troops are concentrated in large columns, while the French are dispersed over a wide area.

Each army has its strengths and weaknesses, so, it is likely that the winner would be the one that would be the best in applying the *Little Corporal's* lessons about the conduct of war.

Good Luck General!