

Battle of Neerstadt

A fictional battle between the Hungarian army of Mattias Convinus (around 1460 AD) and the Sassanid Persians (around 600 AD). The armies are mostly mounted, with the Hungarians all knights or skirmishers, and the majority of the Sassanid mounted troops bow-armed heavy cavalry. The battle was fought on 29 July 2007. This battle was slightly smaller than the last two I had played with these armies, and I added baggage and downgraded the generals.

Order of Battle

Hungarians (Average general, +0)

1 x Hungarian nobles (U), CO heavy horse, 3"
2 x German mercenary knights (K), CO heavy horse, 3"
2 x Szekelers (Z), SK light horse, javelin, missile, 5"
2 x Hungarian light horse (L), SK light horse, missile, 5"
2 x Hungarian spearmen (P), CO heavy infantry, trained, 2"
1 x Hussite flail-men (F), CO medium infantry, trained, 2"
2 x Hungarian archers (A), SK light infantry, missile, trained, 3"
2 x Baggage, tents (T)
Total 14 units

Sassanid Persians (Average general, +0)

4 x Barded cavalry (B), LO heavy horse, missile, trained, 4"
2 x Cavalry (C), LO medium horse, missile, trained, 5"
1 x Nomad horse archers (N), SK light horse, missile, 5"
1 x Hun horse archers (H), SK light horse, javelin, missile, 5"
2 x Archers (R), SK light infantry, missile, 3"
2 x Levy (Y), CO medium infantry, poor, untrained, 2"
2 x Baggage, wagons (W)
Total 14 units

Scenario rules

Any CO troops entering the town or woods are disordered. This cannot be cured until they have left the terrain. The road has no effect on movement. Ranged missile fire is restricted to 1" range within woods or town. Units must be on the edge of a wood or town to fire at a target outside the terrain, and can do so at normal range.

To speed the game up slightly, I decided that the first turn would be a double turn - units could move up to twice their normal move allowance with a single order die roll.

Victory conditions

The first army to lose 6 units becomes demoralized and loses the game. For this calculation, all heavy horse (on both sides) count as two units, and foot skirmishers and Sassanid levy units count as half a unit each.

Battlefield

The battle was fought on a 4' square table. It looked more or less like this:

```
--- Hungarians ---  
.....  
.....  
ww...ww....h  
ww...ww....h  
wwm.....  
hhmm.....
```

```

hhhh.....t
..hhh.....t
...hh.....t
.....
--- Sassanids ----

```

Terrain key:

- h Hill
- w Wood
- t Town (difficult going, blocks missile fire)
- m Marsh (difficult going, blocks missile fire)

Initial deployment

```

.....TT...
...ZZAU.FKK.
ww...wwPPLLh
ww...ww....h
wmm.....
hhmm.....
hhhh.....t
..hNCBBBBBC.t
...hh.YY.H.t
.....WW....

```

Note: The other Hungarian archer “A” is directly in front of the Hungarian spearmen “P”, and the Sassanid archers “R” are directly in front of the Sassanid Levy “Y” (omitted for space)

Turns 1-2

The Sassanids moved first. The Sassanid commander decided to strike rapidly at the centre of the Hungarian line, before the Hungarian nobles could redeploy around the wood:

```

.....TT...
.....U..F...
ww.ZZwwPPKKh
ww...wAA.LLh
wmm.....
hhmmCBBBB...
hhhN.....CHt
..hhh.RR...t
...hh.YY...t
.....WW....

```

Turn 3

More of the same. The Hungarian commander found his lines of communication stretched as he tried to control his unruly knights and light horse at both ends of his line, while the Sassanid commander’s excellently trained horsemen moved forward without breaking step, as if on parade ground.

```

.....TT...
.....U...F...
ww..ZwwPPKKh
ww.Z.wAA.LLh
wmm..BBBB...
hhmmC....CH.
hhhN..RR...t

```

..hhh.....t
...hh.YY...t
.....WW....

Turn 4

The Sassanid cavalry moved forward and opened fire on the Hungarians, forcing back the skirmishing archers and disordering one of the units of German knights, which responded by charging the Sassanid heavy cavalry in the Hungarians' turn. The knights charged home, but were unable to break the Sassanid line and the units remained locked in combat.

.....TT...
.....F...
ww..UwwPP..h
ww.ZZwAA.KKh
wmm..BBBBLL.
hhmmC....CH.
hhhN..RR...t
..hhh.....t
...hh.YY...t
.....WW....

Turn 5

The Sassanid right flank medium cavalry charged the Hungarian light horse, who evaded, and then followed up to contact the German knights already engaged with the Sassanid heavy cavalry. The Germans fought like lions, however, and drove back the Sassanid horsemen. The left-most Sassanid heavy cavalry charged the Hungarian archers in the wood, who evaded. In response, the Hungarians charged the second unit of German knights into the engaged Sassanid medium cavalry, and the Hungarian commander personally joined the first German knights to steady them. The Sassanids were pushed back, but the first German knights were also forced to retire to regroup.

.....TT...
.....F...
ww..UwAPPL.h
ww..ZwBA.K.h
wmmZ..BBBKL.
hhmmC.R..CH.
hhh.N..R...t
..hhh.YY...t
...hh.....t
.....WW....

Turn 6

The Sassanid commander joined his right-most heavy cavalry unit and charged the Hungarian commander's German knights, breaking their line and sending the knights fleeing through the Hungarian light horse to their rear. The victorious Sassanids pursued into the Hungarian light horse, who in turn fought briefly and then fled. Fortunately this brief respite gave the German knights time to redress their ranks, so they were ready when the apparently unstoppable Sassanids continued their charge straight into their waiting lances.

The Sassanid medium cavalry fighting the second German knights were less fortunate; outclassed, they could not withstand the knights' charge and fled. Fortunately, their less encumbered horses were faster than the knights', and they managed to outdistance their pursuers. The Hun skirmishers on the Sassanid far right charged the Hungarian horsemen opposite them, but were showered with arrows from the Hungarians and their charge was aborted.

The Szekelers charged the Sasanid medium cavalry on the far flank, but were beaten back by the Sassanids' storm of arrows with serious losses.

.....TTL..
.....F.K..
ww..UwAPPB.h
ww..ZwwA...h
wwmZ.BBB..L.
hhmmC.R..KH.
hhh.N..R.C.t
..hhh.YY...t
...hh.....t
.....WW.....

Turn 7

The Sasanid heavy cavalry led by their commander commander smashed into the German knights and routed them from the battlefield. There were no more Hungarians between the Sasanid commander and the Hungarian baggage!

In the centre, the three Sasanid heavy cavalry were ordered to charge; one failed to receive the order, one was repulsed by the Hungarian skirmishers' fire, and the third managed to reach the Hungarian shield-wall but was unable to breach it. The second unit of Szekelers tried to charge the Sasanid medium cavalry, but was again forced back by missile fire and had to drop back behind the Hungarian nobles. To the rear, the Hungarians tried to flank the Sasanid cavalry with archers and light horse.

.....TT...
.....FABL..
ww..ZwAPP..h
ww..UwwBB..h
wwmZ..B...L.
hhmmC.R.RKH.
hhh.N....C.t
..hhh.YY...t
...hh.....t
.....WW.....

Casualties: Hungarians 2 (one German knight), Sassanids 0.

Turn 8

The Sassanids make a few minor moves, and fired several units to no effect. The Hungarian commander ordered four units to charge, but his army suffered a dreadful lapse in control, and only unit actually received his order. The unengaged Hungarian spearmen charged the Sasanid heavy cavalry to its front, but the fighting was inconclusive.

.....TT...
.....FABL..
ww..ZwAP...h
ww..UwwBP..h
wwmZ..B.B.L.
hhmmC.R.RKH.
hhh.N....C.t
..hhh.YY...t
...hh.....t
.....WW.....

Casualties: Hungarians 2, Sassanids 0.

Turn 9

The Sassanid heavy cavalry charged into the Hungarian camp, while the centre Sassanid heavy cavalry finally managed to break through the Hungarian spear wall. The Hungarian spearmen fell back, through the Hussite flail-men to their rear, disordering them in turn. The victorious Sassanid cavalry followed up into the Hussites, routing them in turn. To add to the Hungarians' troubles, the Szekeler unit on their far right was destroyed by Sassanid archery. The Hungarian noble knights charged the Sassanid horse, but were disorganized by their shooting and then pushed back by the Sassanid cavalry once the fighting started. The Hungarian army was getting perilously close to defeat!

.TB. . .
.P.L. .
ww. . .wABA. .h
ww. .ZwB.P. .h
wmm.U. . .B.L.
hhmmC.R.R.H.
hhh.N. .CK. .t
. .hhh.YY. . .t
. . .hh.t
.WW.

Casualties: Hungarians 4 (German knights, Szekelers, baggage), Sassanids 0.

Turn 10

The Sassanid heavy cavalry smashed through the Hussites, routing them, while the remainder of the Hungarian camp was destroyed by the other Sassanid cavalry. On the Sassanid left flank, the medium cavalry managed to rout the Hungarian nobles, and I decided to call an end to the game there. The Hungarians were only one unit from demoralization, with several of their main units depleted, and were yet to destroy a single Sassanid unit!

.B.
.P.L.
ww. .UwABA. .h
ww. .ZwB.P. .h
wmm.C.R.B.L.
hhmm.R.H.
hhh.N. .CK. .t
. .hhh.YY. . .t
. . .hh.t
.WW.

Casualties: Hungarians 5, Sassanids 0.

Aftermath

Switching from skilled generals to average generals really made a difference, particularly to the Hungarians. Their knights might be more fairly represented as trained; the Hungarian knights were not known for being as reckless or ill-disciplined as their western counterparts, and I imagine the German mercenaries, as paid professionals, should be fairly disciplined too.

The knights are quite susceptible to being disorganized; once disorganized, they seem easy prey for the numerous Sassanid cavalry. The Hungarians suffered for their poor deployment, and the Sassanid superiority in missile units really made a difference over the course of the game. I have yet to see the Hungarian infantry achieve much more than fall beneath the hooves of the Sassanid horse; again, once disorganized, they are very vulnerable.