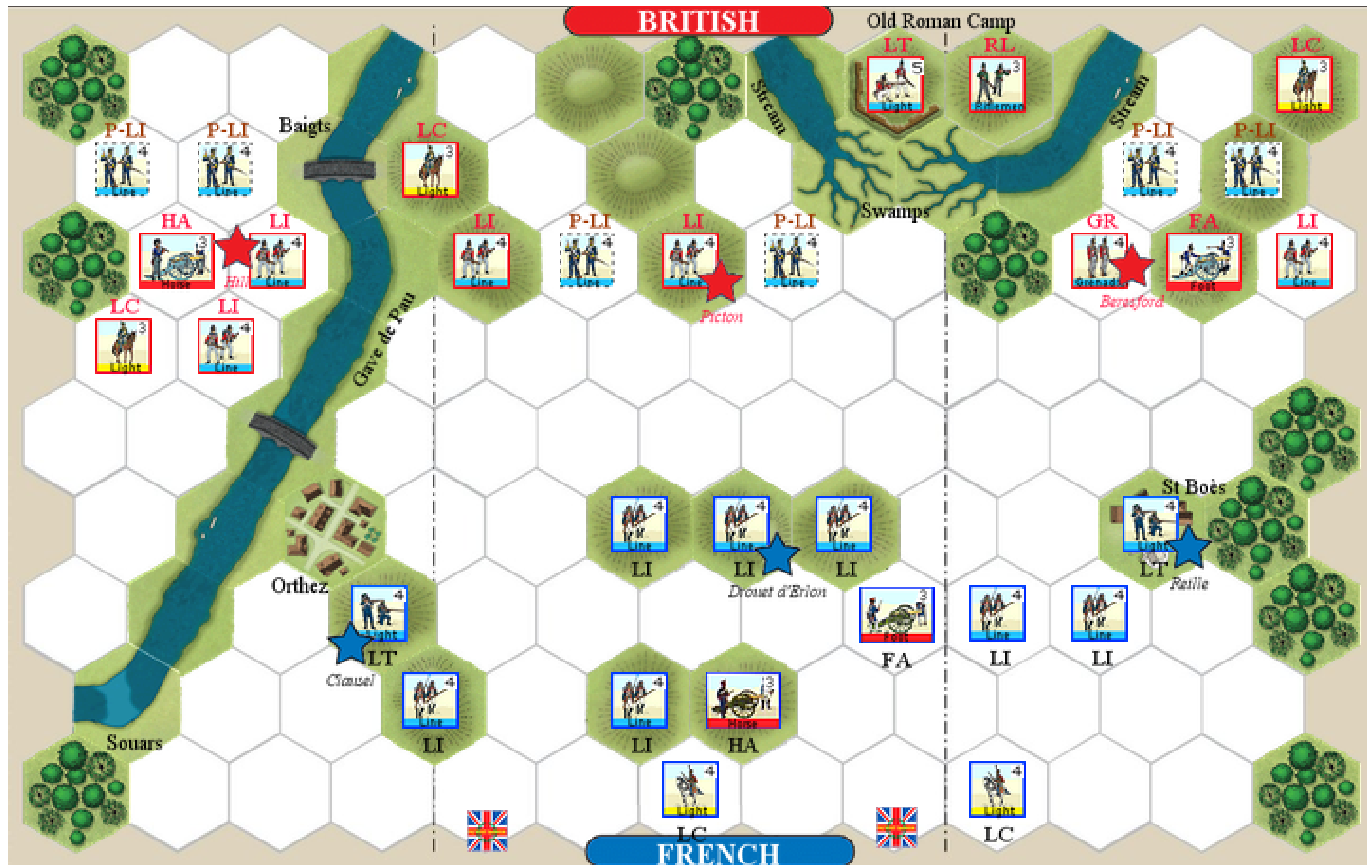


Orthez - 27 Feb 1814



Historical Background

After failing to defeat Wellington, Soult tried to confine the Anglo-Allied army in the extreme southwest corner of France. From December 1813 through January 1814, heavy rains brought operations to a standstill.

Finally, on February 14, Wellington launched his offensive. Soult assembled his remaining six divisions and his reserve behind the Gave d'Oleron River. Wellington quickly manoeuvred the French army out of its position on the Gave d'Oleron and Soult pulled back to Orthez on the Gave de Pau River.

To open the battle, Beresford's divisions attacked Taupin's and Paris's men near the church and village of St-Boès. They captured the church but were unable to force their way into St-Boès. The French right-wing commander, Reille launched a counterattack that drove the British out of the church as well.

Watching this reverse from his command post near an ancient Roman camp, Wellington changed his plans. His holding attack with the 3rd and 6th Division would be converted into a head on assault. Meanwhile, he committed the Light Division between Beresford's effort against the French right and Picton's attack against the French center. Led by the 1/52nd Foot, the Light Division advanced up the narrow spur from the Roman camp. This move drove a wedge between Reille's right wing and D'Erlon's two center divisions. Hill's men crossed the river and started to envelop the French left. Picton's force fought his way onto the ridge in the centre.

Soult, seeing his defences compromised, ordered a retreat : the French escaped across the *Luy de Bearn River* at *Sault-de-Navailles* in some disorder, blowing up the bridge behind them. (Source : Wikipedia)

The stage is set. The battle lines are drawn and you are in command. Can you change history?

Battle Notes

British Army

- Commander : Wellington
- 6 Command Cards
- Move First

French Army

- Commander : Soult
- 5 Command Cards

Victory

7 Victory Banners

Special Rules

- None, but note that the *Gave river* is impassable except on the Bridges and the Ford. The Streams and Swamps around the old Roman camp are fordable. Note also there are two temporary victory banners objectives for the Anglo-Allied army (*corresponding to the french line of communication*)..

by Pascal Dumat & François Gonçalves – Feb 2011