

## VILLERS COTTERETS

France, 1 September 1914

By Brad Smith & Russell Nicholas

### Background

After delivering a "stopping blow" against the pursuing Germans at Le Cateau, the BEF continued its retreat south. Rearguard actions were fought at Etreux and famously at Nery. On the same day as Nery, the 4<sup>th</sup> (Guards) Brigade deployed north of Villers Cotterets near the Foret de Retz. The German 5<sup>th</sup> Division attacked the brigade and a confused, close quarter battle ensued through the woods as the Guards conducted a stubborn withdrawal in the face of increasing enemy numbers.

### Scenario

The game table is approx 8'x 6'. The game lasts 6 moves. Woods are open but to aid play troops move at a maximum of 4" if the whole or part of their move is through woods. Buildings are stone and start intact. The southern edge of the table is British lines and the northern edge is German lines.

Points are awarded for eliminating enemy forces (by destruction, rout or surrender) as follows: Guns - 4 points; infantry - 1 point. To win, the Germans must obtain at least 100 casualty points and at the end of the game have at least 30 points worth of forces south of the line A-B. To win, the British must inflict 125 casualty points and at the end of the game have at least 15 points worth of forces north of the line C-D. If both sides achieve their objectives, or neither side does, it is a draw.

### Sources

"It Was Terrible Confusion" David Bickley (Miniature Wargames article)

"Mons 1914" David Lomas (Osprey Campaign series 1997)

### British order of battle (4<sup>th</sup> Guards Brigade)

2<sup>nd</sup> Grenadiers (test @ 20)

HQ - CO + 7 figs, MG

4 x Coys - each 8 figs

9<sup>th</sup> Bty RFA - 18pdr (84mm), 4 figs

17<sup>th</sup> Bty RFA - as above

2<sup>nd</sup> Coldstream - as per Grenadiers

3<sup>rd</sup> Coldstream - as above

1<sup>st</sup> Irish Guards - as above

Bde HQ - CO + 3 figs

## **British scenario rules**

British forces start on table as per the map. British troops are elite. British infantry in the open have dug shell scrapes. These are treated as providing soft cover for visibility and firing and also provide a +1 to a defender's D6 close assault roll. Once an element moves, any shell scrape cover benefit is lost by that element for the balance of the game. OPs are treated as being on high vantage points next to their guns and connect on a D6 roll of anything but a 1. The British move second but start on reserve fire.

The British were fighting a delaying action and there was some confusion as to when units were to withdraw. To simulate this, commencing from Turn 1, a D6 is rolled for each company (other than the Bde HQ and artillery) not subject to a morale test or which has passed a morale test in its morale stage. On a roll of 1, a withdrawal order is received for that company and it must retire towards British lines (in its first movement stage) in that turn. The same die roll procedure applies in each subsequent turn. If a withdrawal takes a company off table, it is removed from play but does not count as casualties.

## **German order of battle (10<sup>th</sup> Brigade)**

I Bn 12th Gren Regt (test @ 18):

HQ - CO + 3 figs

4 x Coys - each 8 figs

MG Coy 12th Gren Regt:

2 x MGs, 8 figs

MG Coy 52nd IR - as above

II & III Bns 12th Gren Regt - each as above

Elements III Corps Art (off table)

I, II & III Bns 52nd IR - each as above

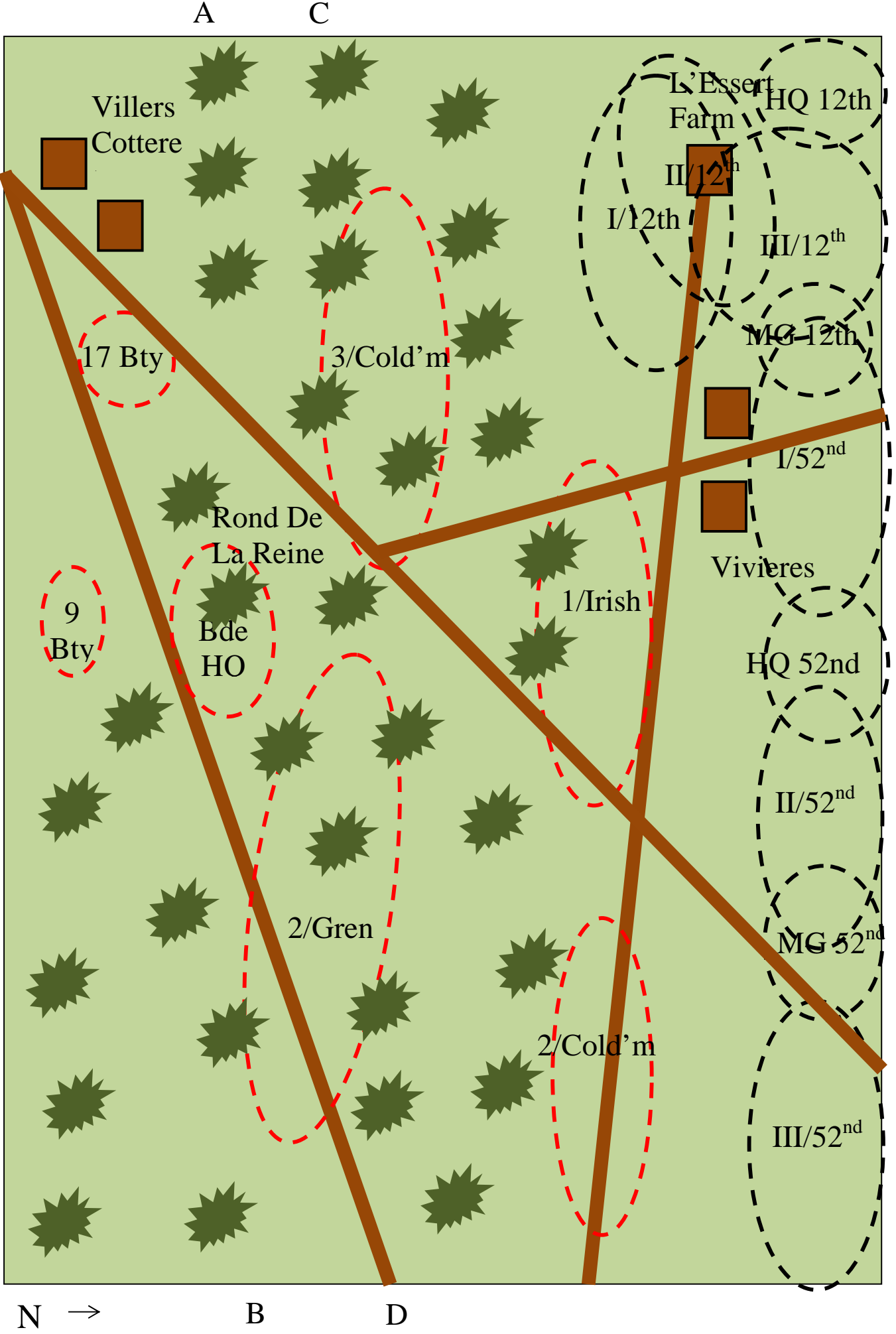
3 x 77mm, 16 figs

Regt HQ 12th Gren Regt - CO + 3 figs

Regt HQ 52nd IR - as above

## **German scenario rules**

German forces start on table as per the map. German troops are regular. OPs are off table at any point beyond the German table edge as selected by the German player each move and connect on a D6 roll of anything but a 1. The Germans move first.



A

C

Villers  
Cottere



17 Bty

3/Cold'm

Rond De  
La Reine

9  
Bty

Bde  
HO

1/Irish

2/Gren

2/Cold'm

L'Essert  
Farm



I/12th

III/12th

MG-12th



I/52nd



Vivieres

HQ 52nd

II/52nd

MG 52nd

III/52nd

N →

B

D