

GARIBALDI'S FIRST REAL VICTORY IN SICILY, 1860

A THOUSAND AGAINST A KINGDOM

After the end of the Second War of Italian Independence in 1859, the Italian Peninsula was still far from unification, divided between four major powers: the Kingdom of Sardinia, the Austrian Empire, the Papal States, and the Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The peace agreement left many volunteers unsatisfied in their quest for the formation of an Italian national state.

By Ricardo Bixio

Giuseppe Garibaldi planned to start a popular rebellion and overthrow Bourbon rule in Sicily and then move to mainland Italy. The Sicilian revolt of 1848 had shown to the world the unpopularity of the Neapolitan government. After the end of the turmoil, the Army of the Two Sicilies established flying columns of foreign soldiers (mostly Swiss and Germans) with anti-banditry roles – basically, an occupation force.

In May 1860, Garibaldi stole two steamships (*Lombardo* and *Piemonte*) and

sailed from Quarto, near Genoa. The fleet of the Kingdom of Sardinia did not interfere. Cavour, the Italian prime minister, while condemning the action in public, stood watching at the window, ready to act to gain advantage of the situation.

Arriving off the Sicilian coast, the steamships exploited the presence of English warships to land unopposed. The Bourbon fleet had instructions not to risk a diplomatic incident with Great Britain. Garibaldi contacted local resistance leaders and soon hundreds of Sicilian volunteers joined the Thousand. In contrast, the Neapolitans were slow to act. A flying column under General Landi, a lethargic commander in his seventies, was finally dispatched to repel the 'brigands'. They met at Calatafimi on 15 May.

The initial Bourbon advance devolved into a firefight, but as that took its toll on the Garibaldini, they launched a series of counter-charges with the bayonet. This unexpected resistance worried the Neapolitan army, and despite their large numeric advantage,



a retreat was ordered. Garibaldi wisely told his men not to pursue, partly for the lack of cavalry and partly fearing the Neapolitan retreat being a trap. Garibaldi had won his first victory. The Bourbon Kingdom would collapse the following year.

PLAYING CALATAFIMI 1860

The following scenario is based on the Battle using *Rebels and Patriots*. In *WS&S 118*, I provide the stats for Italian Independence Wars Armies including the Garibaldini and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Of course, other rulesets can cover this period, such as *Sharp Practice 2* or *Black Powder*.

Suggested armies at 24 points: Garibaldini

- The Thousand (shock infantry) x3 @18 points
- Carabinieri genovesi (skirmishers who are good shots) @4 points
- Picciotti (skirmishers) @2 points

For a larger 48-point battle add:

- 3x Garibaldian volunteers (aggressive infantry that are poor shots) @12 points
- 1x light artillery @4 points
- 1x guide a cavallo (mounted skirmishers) @4 points
- 2x picciotti (skirmishers) @4pts.





Garibaldi's redshirt forces prepare to storm the outskirts of Catafimi in the face of heavy resistance.

cally applies the "pass the ammunition" status.



Leader traits

The Garibaldine trait reflects the attachment of the volunteers to Garibaldi and other Garibaldini leaders: there are many accounts (though surely exaggerated by nationalist rhetoric) of young soldiers sacrificing themselves to save their commanders. The Neapolitan trait reflects the Piedmontese propaganda of the laziness and feebleness of the Neapolitan generals' leadership. At least at Calatafimi, that was accurate.

- **Garibaldini:** *Beloved leader* – When the leader is killed, take a courage test. On a successful courage test, remove another model from the unit instead of the leader (once per game)
- **Neapolitans:** *Lazy and feeble leader* – Leader's unit movement is reduced by 2"; each unit testing courage for a friendly unit removed suffers an additional -1.

Neapolitans

- 2x cacciatori esteri (light infantry) @12 points
- 4x 10th 'Abruzzo' line infantry (line infantry who are poor shots) @12 points

For a larger 48-point battle add:

- 1x cacciatori esteri (light infantry) @6 points
- 2x 10th 'Abruzzo' line infantry (line infantry who are poor shots) @6 points
- 1x light artillery @4 points
- 1x light cavalry @4 points
- 2x skirmishers @4 points

Set-up

Use a standard 6' x 4' table. The Neapolitan army deploys in the north and the Garibaldini in the south. Use the map provided as a guide – the terrain is hilly (place at least three hills). Hills block line of sight but are not difficult terrain. Some vineyards or plantations are present (can be placed on the hills, and count as difficult terrain and cover). Walls and some buildings (up to two) can be deployed. A dry stream crosses the map, but it has no practical relevance in terms of gameplay. In the north-east zone, the map could include buildings of the outskirts of Calatafimi (presumably Landi's headquarters).

Special rules

Neapolitans

Confusing orders: all units have -1 for charge orders and for movement that would bring them nearer to the enemy.

Numerical advantage: on an activation roll of double 6, the Neapolitan player automatically receives a 4-point unit (do not apply other bonuses), up to three times per game.

Garibaldini

Low ammunition: each unit on its first double 1 roll on activation automati-

END OF THE GAME

The game ends after ten turns: If the Garibaldi forces have destroyed more units than the Bourbon forces, the Bourbons will retreat. The Army of the Two Sicilies and its general did not expect such an intense resistance, therefore they retreated even while having a numerical advantage. **WS&S**

