

## Steel 71

### *Chapter 71: Cavalry Charge*

The sound of the horn echoed throughout the campsite in which Berengar's forces had gathered, signaling it to be dawn, thus being time for the troops to rise from their tents. Berengar was already awake and taking care of his horse; it was a solid black destrier of noble stock. The beast was truly magnificent as its shining obsidian coat glistened under the rays of the rising sun. Berengar had named this horse Erwin after the famous German general from his previous life. The young Regent had spent quite the sum acquiring such a magnificent steed for his warhorse, and as such, he tended to pamper the stallion.

He quickly attached the steel plate barding onto the horse, which was blackened to match his armor and had brass trimming across it. Unlike normal cuirassiers, Berengar had elected to armor his horse appropriately; after all, he did not wish to lose such a majestic creature to the horrors of war. After attaching the armor to the horse, he climbed atop its saddle and waited for the men to muster. They would be marching soon enough into the enemy's territory and hopefully engage their army on the field of battle.

Before long, his forces had gathered and loaded their muskets, setting the firing mechanism at half-cock so that they were prepared for battle at a

moment's notice. As for the so-called professionals, they were appropriately equipped with primary pikes and swords as sidearms. The use of the pike was an innovation in which Berengar had equipped the standard infantry of his father's professional army after he rose to the position of regent. It did not take long for the infantry to become proficient in their use and formations, as it was far simpler to train a group of pikemen than it was to train musketeers, artillerymen, or cuirassiers.

The armies marched together in the dawn under the banner of House von Kufstein. By the time they countered the enemy forces, they were merely a few kilometers away from the main town within the region; they were sandwiched between two sets of mountains and were in the valley below. However, they were still far from the enemy forces, which allowed Berengar's army time to get into formation.

The artillery batteries rapidly set up the guns at an appropriate distance away from the battlefield where the armies were organized upon. The primary target of the Artillery would be the archers and crossbowmen used by the enemy forces; if they could wipe them out before the infantries clashed, the casualties on Berengar's side would be greatly reduced.

While his artillery got into position and loaded the 12 field guns, Berengar took charge of the Cavalry, a mix of heavily armored Knights and Cuirassiers. There was roughly 110 Cavalry in Berengar's army, which was far larger than the opposing forces. With 80 Cuirassiers, each armed with a pair of pistols, they had the ability to engage the enemy knights with 160 shots which was far more shots than necessary to eliminate the enemy knights. If fired at close range, it was more than enough to kill the riders or their horses. As such, his cavalry would be taking on the role of hunting down and destroying the enemy knights.

As for the infantry, they were led by Eckhard and the appropriate officers under his command. The militia musketeers were an effective force capable of reloading their muskets in a matter of seven seconds; they would approach the enemy forces while flanked by the pikeman, and open fire when they were within sufficient range to deal the most damage, then the pikemen would protect them while they reloaded and fired again. If necessary, they could fix their bayonets and aid the pikemen in melee battle.

This was the strategy with which Berengar had opted to go with; once his forces were ready for battle, he ordered the march on the enemy position.

"Forward march!"

While covered by the echo of the thundering guns and their explosive shells, Berengar personally led the cavalry in a slow trot towards the enemy cavalry; they would begin the full charge once they were in the range of the enemy knights. Luckily his cuirassiers were backed by the veteran knights; considering they were the newest branch of his army and had yet to be tested in battle, it was good to have the knights alongside them under the circumstances.

Before Berengar could even reach the enemy forces, the explosive shells of the artillery tore the lightly armored ranged forces of his enemy apart. Shrapnel filled the air, while the explosive blast shredded bodies, blood, and limbs flew across the field creating a chaotic scene of death. The whistle of the shells in the air was all that could be heard before the detonation claimed the lives of their enemies. Already the enemy forces began to panic; they had never witnessed such a terrifying sight before, they thought to themselves that the wrath of God had descended upon them. Luckily the Marshal was a veteran of many battles and quickly rallied his troops.

"Hold the line! Hold the Line!"

he called off to the men of his army who were being picked apart by artillery fire. Nevertheless, while saying prayers to themselves, they marched towards

the direction of Berengar's forces. A decision that would ultimately be their  
downfall.

When the enemy Knights spotted Berengar's cavalry rushing towards their position, they began a full-scale charge. With the heavily armored knights on their backs, the trodding of horses in steel barding was enough to install fear into any average soldier. Still, Berengar merely gazed upon them with a sinister smirk as he gave the order to his own cavalry forces.

"Charge!"

His Cavalry forces greatly outnumbered the enemy's, and right when the two forces were about to clash with their lances, the 80 cuirassiers pulled out their pistols in both hands and pulled back the hammers on their flintlock mechanisms. The sound of 160 pistols going off in unison as their lead balls shredded the armor of the enemy knights was a spectacle to behold. In a single second, all but a few of the enemy knights fell from their horses, their lifeless bodies crashing against the ground like steel coffins. The remaining knights sat in shock upon horseback; however, they were completely run through by the enemy knights and their lances, ending their miserable lives before they could even react. Just like that, the battle had begun, and the

most elite forces of the enemy were crushed beneath the heel of the Regent  
of Kufstein.