



# The Sealed Knot Society

## DISPLAY DESCRIPTION

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### Main Battle

# WELCOME TO THE BATTLE OF NASEBY AT LAMPORT HALL FROM THE SOCIETY OF THE SEALED KNOT

*This guide is intended to help you understand what you are looking at as the events of the battle unfold. Enjoy the event – and if you have any further questions or would like to see the weaponry used in the battle up close then visit the Living History encampment who will be more than happy to show you 17<sup>th</sup> Century life in many forms.*

*Please note that English Civil War re-enactment is not always a safe area and there are rope barriers to prevent you crossing onto the battlefield. Please respect these barriers; they are for your safety.*

*The battles are also noisy. So, if you have any dogs with you, please keep them on their leads and warn any small children or vulnerable adults of the likely volume. Cannon and muskets are not quiet!*

### **The story so far....**

This is the decisive battle at the end of what is referred to as the First Civil War and comes at the end of three years of conflict between the Royalist forces for King Charles I and the forces of Parliament, in this case led by Sir Thomas Fairfax.

A number of factors lead to the battle. The devastating loss of the Royalist Army in the North at Marston Moor 1644 has been balanced by the King's own successes with the Oxford Army at Cropredy and in Cornwall and good news from Scotland with victory for Montrose in Scotland. But all this is overshadowed by division in the leadership. Rupert of the Rhine, the King's nephew wants to reclaim the North and Colonels Digby and Goring wanting to capitalize on successes in the South. Charles 1 is advised to remove men from garrisons in support but dithers

For Parliament, Sir Thomas Fairfax is now in charge of the New Model Army but under orders to from Parliament to lay siege to Oxford and nothing else. The NMA have numerical superiority and are well equipped but inexperienced

In the week before the battle neither side could be sure exactly where their enemy was! Both forces were only a short distance apart but covered a lot of ground marching back and forth.

King Charles sent his army to the Southwest, while he moved north. Parliament's troops converged on his headquarters at Oxford. The King's army slowly turned and marched south to relieve the city. The New Model Army moved to cut it off.

## The events of the battle

Both sides have found each other. Here is the moment –the royalists want to teach the nicknamed 'New Noddle' Army a lesson... The NMA are ordered to seek out, engage and destroy the royalists... but how can they bring them to battle?

Having received poor intelligence from Sir Frances Ruse, Prince Rupert takes his cavalry onto the battlefield. Prince Rupert rides forward on his own along the crowd line, and spies the red-coated troops apparently 'marching away'... He returns to the cavalry squadron, and sends a rider back to the king, plants his standard and sends for the Royalist Army to march to him.

You may see the leaders of the Army of Parliament representing Fairfax, Cromwell and staff officers on the opposite of the battlefield. They see the Royalist Army in array off the battlefield, and they see that their own position is too strong, so they propose to move their army towards Broadmoor.

THE ARMIES ARRAY AND DRAW UP THEIR BATTLE LINES.DRAGOONES ARE DEPLOYED BY CROMWELL.

Three shots each from The Forlorn Hope towards the arraying Royalist Army, before Cromwell rides out with Henry Ireton's cavalry, and orders Col. John Okey's Dragoons to line Sulby Hedge. Dragoons are essentially mounted musketeers, who would dismount to fight.

The Royal army arrives on the battlefield deploys in two lines. Look out for the drums and colours being deployed to make a handsome show and then you may see the King, who looked very good on horseback, riding in front of his troops to encourage them. If he's not mounted, you'll need to look for the Royal Standard.

Prince Rupert and his brother Prince Maurice, the Kings young nephews, with their cavalry deploy on the right flank of the army in the position of dignity. This was the honoured place for the best troops in such a battle

In response to the King's army arriving on the battlefield. Fairfax deploys the New Model Armie in two lines echoing what the Royalists have done.

Now the foot soldiers are deployed the artillery (cannon) will begin firing. Parliament will begin with a "rolling volley", meaning each cannon will fire one after the other so there is constant cannon fire.

When the Parliament guns fire, Sir Jacob Astley responds for the Royalists, and you will see a massed musket volley. All the Royalist muskets will fire at once, but you will be able to see how unreliable these weapons could be!

The volley will be the signal for the Royalist cavalry to attack the Parliament foot. You will see the various regiments forming "hedgehogs" the best defence against cavalry, with the musket and civilians on the inside of a circle and the pikes' length being used to keep the horses at bay. Watch to see how successful this attack is.

This will almost certainly be the moment when the two forces on foot will engage with each other. You will have plenty of opportunity to see the pike fighting both at point of pike and pike pushes and also the musketeers firing either in volleys or trying to make or hold ground using the strategy of introduction and extraduction. (If you want more information about these please look at our guides on these arms)

In the middle of all this fighting the Parliament forces suffer a blow to their morale when one of their best-known leaders, Sir Phillip Skippon is shot in the stomach. The wound if is not fatal but it effects the troops deeply. You may see him being carried off the field.

Around this point, the Royalist cavalry appears to have the upper hand and chase Sir Henry Ireton's men from the field. Unfortunately, we're not going to see them for some time as they don't stop until they have ridden another 2 miles!

This means that the fighting for the foot soldiers will continue, and this is where things change. You should see the King with his reserve Lifeguard on one side of the field at the moment that the New Model Army make their superior numbers count. Oliver Cromwell leads them and pushes the right flank of the Royalist Army, and they break, and you should see them running away.

Seeing his army surrounded, the king is persuaded to leave the field and is accompanied by his Lifeguard. You will see him leave. Watch for the Royal Standard.

At this point the Royalist Cavalry will return but the horses will be too tired to do much to help, and the Royalists accept defeat and surrender. You may see signs of this surrender as they may sit down and wait for the next moves and when they leave the field. You may see them marching off with their standards (flags) lowered and trailing their weapons, which means dragging them along the floor as a sign they don't intend to use them again.

You should see, however, a number of casualties left behind by both sides.

As the Society of the Sealed Knot is not an organization that glorifies war, we will have a respectful minute's silence in commemoration of all those people who have affected by warfare. Then we will ask for your help in raising the dead with a loud round of applause for the ladies and gentlemen of the Sealed Knot.

*Thank you for watching – and do tell your friends!*