

The Battle Of The Katzbach

26 August, 1813

The Katzbach is a river of modest size — a tributary of the Oder — flowing through modern-day Poland and the Czech Republic. It runs about 100 miles east of Dresden, and in 1813 was the site of the first major battle of the Autumn campaign.

After Napoleon's stunning comeback in Spring 1813, both sides agreed to an armistice, in which they rested and refitted their exhausted armies. The French occupied a central position in Saxony based on the city of Dresden, which served as Napoleon's major supply and communications center. Spread around the French position were four allied armies in various stages of preparation. The most battle-ready was Blücher's "Army of Silesia," but Blücher had agreed to the Trachenberg plan, in which no allied army would seek battle with Napoleon, but would rather nip at the French flanks, wearing down Napoleon's position by defeating his subordinates. This was difficult medicine for the aggressive Blücher to swallow, but he promised to stick to the plan.

When the armistice ended in August, Napoleon and Blücher moved straight toward each other. (Indeed, Blücher had even begun moving *before* the armistice was over!) Napoleon's plan was to defeat Blücher and throw him back into Poland, cutting the Army of Silesia off from the much stronger "Army of Bohemia" still assembling in Austrian territory to the south of Dresden. The armies met in a series of skirmishes and sharp engagements from August 21-22. But Blücher, in accordance with the Trachenberg plan, fell back before the French advance, while the Army of Bohemia advanced North. Napoleon thus had to turn around and force-march back to Dresden, where he would deliver a heavy defeat to the allies on August 26-27.

Napoleon left Marshal MacDonald in charge of the new "Army of the Bober," a force of about 80,000 men, with the mission of pursuing Blücher and covering Napoleon's rear during the Dresden operation. Napoleon had instructed MacDonald not to pursue beyond the River Bober, but the allied retreat was so swift that MacDonald was sure a total victory lay within his grasp. He thus chased the Army of Silesia all the way to the Katzbach. Blücher and Gneisenau, meanwhile, had rallied the army, had realized that Napoleon and the *Grande Armée* were no longer in front of them, and were planning a counterstroke.

The French became spread out as they advanced across the Katzbach and Neisse rivers in worsening weather. It was Colonel Müffling, Gneisenau's chief Quartermaster, who first realized what an opportunity was being presented. (He had ridden along the skirmish lines and watched the French struggling across the rising river.) In the pre-dawn hours of 26 August, Blücher gave the word for a major assault, and he sketched out the general plan with Gneisenau and Müffling. At daybreak the Army of Silesia would fight a gradual withdrawal, particularly drawing the French onto the high plateau north of the river. Once the French had crossed, with their backs to the Katzbach and their right constrained by the Neisse, Yorck's I Corps, supported by Sacken's Russians, would counterattack. If the plan succeeded, the French would be thrown back into a river rising to flood stage.

The Battle of the Katzbach was a mess. The rain persisted most of the day, turning the ground to mud. At one point, when Yorck received instructions to wait until he could see a certain number of French regiments, the testy Prussian commander fired back that he couldn't see his own fingers, much less the French!

But Blücher's plan worked. The French army was spread too thinly, especially in the crucial northern sector. Despite some early successes against allied infantry, by mid-afternoon the French had been flanked by Sacken's Russians and were in retreat. The retreat turned to panic when the men realized that the rivers were no longer fordable. Three French infantry divisions and one cavalry division soon dissolved, as men slipped and slid down the muddy banks, chased by Yorck's cavalry. Heavy caissons tumbled down the slopes, crushing men and dragging horses into the river. MacDonald's army had met disaster, with 10,000 casualties and another 10,000 or more missing or deserted. A third of the French cannon were abandoned on the muddy field.

A jubilant King Frederick William III of Prussia awarded Blücher the title of Prince.

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The Scenario:

The weather is Raining, and variable. The ground is Soft. The game's Basic Length is 5 turns. All towns are hard cover. The Katzbach river can be forded from the north edge of the map, to the town of Schlaupe. From Schlaupe west, it is crossable only at the two bridges. All towns are 1 base.

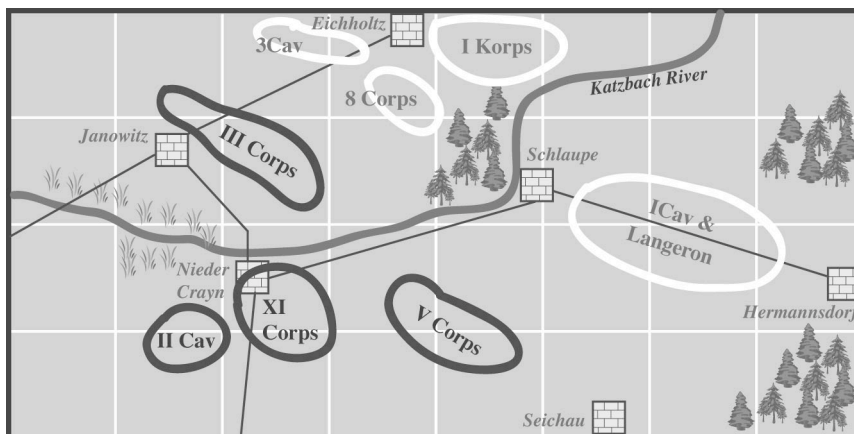
The French set up first, then the allies.

The morale of the French army is Fair. Its Break Point is 14.

The morale of the Allied army is Fair. It begins with a Break Point of 14. When Sacken's corps arrives, its Break Point will increase by two.

The game begins around Noon, before MacDonald made his fatal mistakes of splitting the XI Corps on both sides of the Neisse, and of forming detachments of the cavalry corps, splitting that formation as well.

At the end of Turn Two, the allied player should roll one die. On a roll of "1", Sacken's 11th corps will enter during the first allied pulse of the next turn. If Sacken doesn't arrive, then at the end of Turn Three, the allied player must roll a 1-2, and the turn after that a 1-3, and so on, at the end of each turn until Sacken's corps arrives. Sacken's 11th Corps will enter on the northern edge of the board, anywhere to the east of Eichholtz, but not at a point of the board-edge within 12" of any French units.



*Roster for the Army of Silesia*Commander: Blücher (*Good*)

Weather: Raining, Variable (12") _____

Army's Break Point: 14 _____

This is a Napoleonic Army of 6 Forces

(Historically, Langeron was a Wing Commander, with authority over the 6th, 9th, 10th, and 1st Cavalry Corps. But because the Russian corps were so understrength at this time, I have treated them as large divisions of Langeron's "corps." The Russian 1st Cavalry Corps remains an independent Force.)

11th Corps: Sacken 3 / 6"**10th Division: Lieven**

11/10/1 Sass & Agatin

Veteran 7SP _____

11/10/2 Achlestichev (Jägers)

Veteran 6SP _____

27th Division: Neverovsky

11/27/1 Levandskoi

Veteran 6SP _____

11/27/2 Kollogribov (Jägers)

Veteran 4SP _____

Corps Artillery:**11:** 12-pdr Foot A _____**11:** 12-pdr Foot B _____**3rd Cavalry Corps: Tschaplitz 2 / 11" Aggressive****3rd Cavalry Division: Pantschulid**

3C/3/1 Vassiltchikov (Hussars)

Elite 7SP _____

3C/3/2 Koslovski (Hussars)

Elite 7SP _____

Cossack Division: Karpov

3C/C/1 Cossacks

Raw 5SP _____

3C/C/2 Cossacks

Raw 5SP _____

Corps Artillery:**3C:** 6-pdr Horse _____**I Prussian Korps: Yorck (V) 4 / 20"****1st Brigade: Steinmetz**

I/1/1 Grenadiers

Elite 7SP _____

I/1/2 Grenadiers & Jägers

Elite 7SP _____

I/1/3 Losthin (Landwehr)

Conscript 6SP _____

I/1/4 von Cronegh (Landwehr)

Conscript 6SP _____

2nd Brigade: Mecklenburg-Strelitz

I/2/1 Lobenthal (Line inf.)

Trained 6SP _____

I/2/2 Fischer (Landwehr)

Conscript 6SP _____

7th Brigade: von Horn

I/7/1 Zepelin (Fusiliers & Jägers)

Veteran 6SP _____

I/7/2 Silesian Landwehr

Conscript 7SP _____

8th Brigade: Hünnerbein

I/8/1 Bork (Line inf.)

Trained 6SP _____

I/8/2 Silesian Landwehr

Conscript 4SP _____

Cavalry Reserve: Jürgass

I/C/1 Donnersmarch (Dragoons)

Trained 5SP _____

I/C/2 Katzeler (Uhlans)

Veteran 7SP _____

Corps Artillery:**I:** 12-pdr Foot A _____**I:** 12-pdr Foot B _____**I:** 6-pdr Horse A _____**I:** 6-pdr Horse B _____**I:** 6-pdr Horse C _____**8th Corps: St. Priest 3 / 10"****11th Division: Gurhalov**

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 8/11/1 Turgenev | Trained 5SP _____ |
| 8/11/2 Bistrom (Jägers) | Veteran 6SP _____ |
| 17th Division: Pillar | |
| 8/17/1 Kern | Veteran 6SP _____ |
| 8/17/2 Schertov | Veteran 6SP _____ |
| Dragoon Division: Borosdin | |
| 8/D/1 Dragoons | Trained 6SP _____ |
| 8/D/2 Cossacks | Raw 4SP _____ |
| Corps Artillery: | |
| 8: 12-pdr Foot _____ | |
| 8: 6-pdr Horse _____ | |

Left Wing: Langeron (V) 4 / 13"

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 6th Corps: Scherbatov | |
| 6/7/1 Kirschnitzky | Trained 7SP _____ |
| 6/7/2 Augustov | Trained 6SP _____ |
| 6/18/1 Blagovenzenko | Veteran 5SP _____ |
| 6/18/2 Mescherinov (Jägers) | Veteran 5SP _____ |
| 9th Corps: Olsufiev | |
| 9/9/1 Poltaratzky | Veteran 7SP _____ |
| 9/15/1 Anensur (Jägers) | Veteran 8SP _____ |
| 10th Corps: Kapzevich | |
| 10/8/1 Shindshin | Trained 5SP _____ |
| 10/8/2 Rerin (Jägers) | Veteran 7SP _____ |
| 10/22/1 Shapiskoi | Veteran 6SP _____ |
| Corps Artillery: | |
| L: 12-pdr Foot A _____ | |
| L: 12-pdr Foot B _____ | |
| L: 12-pdr Foot C _____ | |

1st Cavalry Corps: Korff 3 / 6"

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1C/1 Chasseurs | Veteran 8SP _____ |
| 1C/2 Chasseurs | Veteran 6SP _____ |
| 1C/3 Cossacks | Raw 5SP _____ |
| 1C/4 Cossacks | Raw 6SP _____ |
| Corps Artillery: | |
| 1C: 6-pdr Horse _____ | |

Army of Silesia Totals: 55 units

163 infantry SPs
71 cavalry SPs
8 heavy guns
6 medium guns

*Roster for the Army of the Bober*Commander: MacDonald (*Poor*)

Weather: Raining, Variable (12") _____

Army's Break Point: 14 _____

This is a Napoleonic Army of 4 Forces

Many of the infantry units in the French army were "provisional" regiments, composed of new battalions from different parent regiments. These provisional formations could be quite large, but were not as effective as those regiments which were properly organized. French brigade commanders are not listed, since these "brigades" are often large regiments, instead. (The III/8/3, for instance, is three big battalions of the 22nd Ligne, but the other units of Brayer's division are groupings of provisional regiments.)

III Corps: Souham 3 / 20"**8th Division: Brayer**

| | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| III/8/1 (Légère) | Trained 6SP _____ |
| III/8/2 | Conscript 5SP _____ |
| III/8/3 | Trained 5SP _____ |
| III/8/4 | Conscript 4SP _____ |

9th Division: Delmas

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| III/9/1 (Légère) | Trained 6SP _____ |
| III/9/2 | Trained 6SP _____ |
| III/9/3 | Trained 8SP _____ |

10th Division: Albert

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| III/10/1 (Légère) | Trained 7SP _____ |
| III/10/2 | Trained 8SP _____ |

11th Division: Ricard

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| III/11/1 (Légère) | Trained 6SP _____ |
| III/11/2 | Trained 8SP _____ |

39th Division: Marchand

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| III/39/1 (Baden infantry) | Veteran 8SP _____ |
| III/39/2 (Hessian Guards & Lights) | Elite 11SP _____ |

Corps Cavalry:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| III/C (Fr. Hussars & Baden Dragoons) | Elite 8SP _____ |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|

Corps Artillery:

III: 12-pdr Foot _____
 III: 6-pdr Foot _____
 III: 6-pdr Horse A _____
 III: 6-pdr Horse B _____

V Corps: Lauriston 2 / 15" Aggressive**16th Division: Maison**

| | |
|--------|-------------------|
| V/16/1 | Trained 9SP _____ |
| V/16/2 | Trained 9SP _____ |

19th Division: Rochambeau

| | |
|--------|-------------------|
| V/19/1 | Trained 6SP _____ |
| V/19/2 | Trained 5SP _____ |
| V/19/3 | Trained 6SP _____ |
| V/19/4 | Trained 5SP _____ |

Corps Cavalry:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| V/C (Chasseurs) | Trained 4SP _____ |
|-----------------|-------------------|

Corps Artillery:

V: 12-pdr Foot A _____
 V: 12-pdr Foot B _____
 V: 6-pdr Horse _____

XI Corps: Gérard (V) 2 / 15"

35th Division: Henin

XI/35/1 Trained 9SP _____
 XI/35/2 (Italian Line) Trained 8SP _____

36th Division: Charpentier

XI/36/1 (Légère) Veteran 9SP _____
 XI/36/2 (Légère) Veteran 9SP _____

Corps Cavalry:

XI/C (Italian & Neapolitan Chasseurs) Trained 4SP _____

Corps Artillery:

XI: 12-pdr Foot A ____

XI: 12-pdr Foot B ____

XI: 12-pdr Foot C ____

XI: French 6-pdr Horse ____

XI: Neapolitan 6-pdr Horse ____

II Cavalry Corps: Sébastiani 3 / 8" Aggressive

2nd Light Cavalry Division: d'Hurbal

IIC/2/1 (Hussars & Lancers) Elite 8SP _____
 IIC/2/2 (Chasseurs & Lancers) Veteran 7SP _____

4th Light Cavalry Division: Exelmans

IIC/4/1 (Lancers) Veteran 7SP _____
 IIC/4/2 (Chasseurs) * Elite 9SP _____

2nd Heavy Cavalry Division: St. Germain

IIC/2H/1 (Carabiniers & Cuirassiers) Elite 6SP _____
 IIC/2H/2 (Cuirassiers) Elite 7SP _____

Corps Artillery:

IIC: 6-pdr Horse A ____

IIC: 6-pdr Horse B ____

* Possibly the best light cavalry in the French army, outside the Guard. This brigade included Marbot's 23rd Chasseurs and its sister regiment, plus the 11th Hussars.

Army of the Bober Summary:

46 units

163 infantry SPs

60 cavalry SPs

6 Heavy guns

8 Medium guns

Alternative Katzbachs, Play-Balancing, and What-Ifs:

1. Better Weather

The bad weather makes life difficult for both sides, but more so the French. A low radius, when the French are so spread out, makes MacDonald's situation extremely hard to handle. Improved weather (and thus mobility) will also benefit the French, whose cavalry is superior, and whose infantry is faster than the Russians. Finally, better weather means that the armies will be able to skirmish, which is generally to the advantage of the French.

- A. The game starts "Overcast" and variable.

2. Upgrading the French Command

Jacques E.J.A. MacDonald was not a bad general. He was no genius, certainly, but better than his performance at the Katzbach would indicate. He had trouble getting along with his peers and subordinates, and let himself get confused in the nasty weather, when visibility was nil. Furthermore, Napoleon could have chosen a different commander for the Army of the Bober. The obvious choice was Ney, original commander of the III Corps, whom Napoleon called to Dresden at the last minute, wanting a hard-fighting marshal at his side. The French situation in this scenario can be significantly improved by choosing one of the following options:

- A. MacDonald has a better day: upgrade him to "Average."
 B. Ney gets the army command. He is "Average." MacDonald returns as commander of XI Corps, rated: 3 / 15"

3. Totally Blind Set-Up

The allies had an advantage in deployment because Müffling had scouted the front thoroughly for Gneisenau. The French, by contrast, were literally stumbling onto the battlefield. In this variant, however, assume that the bad weather has prevented the Prussian staff officers from getting a good look at the French.

- A. Place some kind of curtain or divider down the middle of the table. Both sides set up simultaneously, blind to each other's deployments.

4. Puthod Comes Along

MacDonald had detached two infantry divisions (the 17th, under Puthod, and the 31st, under Ledru) under Puthod's overall command, to guard the Army of the Bober's extreme right flank. This left them out of the battle at the Katzbach. Worse, during the French retreat, MacDonald seems to have left these men to their fate, and Puthod realized too late that his small force was cut off and about to be surrounded by Blücher's entire army. Puthod bravely tried to fight his way out, but his force was almost completely destroyed.

- A. In this variant, MacDonald does not detach this flanking force, but instead deploys them at the Katzbach. The 17th division is part of V Corps, and the 31st is part of XI Corps. Raise Lauriston's Radius to 19" and raise Gérard's Radius to 20". Raise the French army's Break Point to 17.

17th Division: Puthod

| | |
|--------|--------------------|
| V/17/1 | Trained 7SP, SK1 |
| V/17/2 | Conscript 5SP, SK1 |
| V/17/3 | Conscript 6SP, SK1 |
| V/17/4 | Conscript 6SP, SK1 |

31st Division: Ledru

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| XI/31/1 (Légère) | Trained 5SP, SK2 |
| XI/31/2 | Conscript 7SP, SK1 |
| XI/31/3 (Westphalian Line and Guards) | Trained 7SP, SK2 |
| XI/31/4 (Neapolitan Lights) | Conscript 5SP, SK2 |

5. Upgrading the Allied Command I: Blücher

The Katzbach was one of old Blücher's finest hours. True, there were glitches here and there; one Prussian brigade collided with another and the commanders spent two precious hours arguing about it. But aside from minor goofs (mostly due to bad weather), Blücher's plan came off exactly as he wished.

- A. Raise Blücher's Skill rating to "Great."

6. Upgrading the Allied Command II: Sacken

Theoretically, the army's right wing was under the command of Sacken, but he wasn't able to get his whole force in action until late in the day, so his corps tended to act on their own. This variant assumes that Sacken is closer at hand, and can better coordinate the right wing.

- A. Lieven takes command of the 11th Corps. His ratings are: 3 / 7". Sacken is a Wing Commander, with authority over the 11th Corps, 8th Corps, and 3rd Cavalry Corps.
 B. Place Sacken on the board, but not Lieven's 11th Corps — it will arrive randomly, as explained in the scenario rules. When it does arrive, it becomes part of Sacken's wing.

Ready-Made Labels for the Katzbach Scenario

MacDonald (Poor)

III Souham 3 / 20"

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| III/8/1 (Légère) | SK2 |
| III/8/2 | SK1 |
| III/8/3 | SK2 |
| III/8/4 | SK1 |
| III/9/1 (Légère) | SK2 |
| III/9/2 | SK2 |
| III/9/3 | SK2 |
| III/10/1 (Légère) | SK2 |
| III/10/2 | SK2 |
| III/11/1 (Légère) | SK2 |
| III/11/2 | SK2 |
| III/39/1 (Baden) | SK2 |
| III/39/2 (Hessian) | SK2 |
| III/C Hussars | |
| III: 12-pdr Foot | |
| III: 6-pdr Foot | |
| III: 6-pdr Horse A | |
| III: 6-pdr Horse B | |

V Lauriston 2 / 15" Agg.

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| V/16/1 | SK2 |
| V/16/2 | SK2 |
| V/19/1 | SK2 |
| V/19/2 | SK2 |
| V/19/3 | SK2 |
| V/19/4 | SK2 |
| V/C Chasseurs | |
| V: 12-pdr Foot A | |
| V: 12-pdr Foot B | |
| V: 6-pdr Horse | |

XI Gérard (V) 2 / 15"

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| XI/35/1 | SK2 |
| XI/35/2 (Italian Line) | SK2 |
| XI/36/1 (Légère) | SK2 |
| XI/36/2 (Légère) | SK2 |
| XI/C Chasseurs | |
| XI: 12-pdr Foot A | |
| XI: 12-pdr Foot B | |
| XI: 12-pdr Foot C | |
| XI: 6-pdr Horse | |

XI: 6-pdr Horse (Naples)

II Cav Sébastiani 3 / 8" Agg.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| IIC/2/1 Hussars & Lancers | |
| IIC/2/2 Chas. & Lancers | |
| IIC/4/1 Lancers | |
| IIC/4/2 Chasseurs | |
| IIC/2H/1 Carab & Cuir | |
| IIC/2H/2 Cuirassiers | |
| IIC: 6-pdr Horse A | |
| IIC: 6-pdr Horse B | |

Puthod's Force:

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| V/17/1 | SK1 |
| V/17/2 | SK1 |
| V/17/3 | SK1 |
| V/17/4 | SK1 |
| XI/31/1 (Légère) | SK2 |
| XI/31/2 | SK1 |
| XI/31/3 (Westphalian) | SK2 |
| XI/31/4 (Neapolitan) | SK2 |

Blücher (Good)**11: Sacken 3 / 6"**

11/10/1 Sass & Agatin SK1
 11/10/2 Achl. (Jägers) SK2
 11/27/1 Levandskoi SK1
 11/27/2 Kol. (Jägers) SK2

11: 12-pdr Foot A**11:** 12-pdr Foot B**3C: Tschaplitz 2 / 11" Agg.**

3C/3/1 Vassilt.(Hu) SK
 3C/3/2 Koslovski (Hussars) SK
 3C/C/1 Cossacks SK2
 3C/C/2 Cossacks SK2

3C: 6-pdr Horse**I: Yorck (V) 4 / 20"**

I/1/1 Grenadiers SK1
 I/1/2 Gren & Jägers SK2
 I/1/3 Losthin (Ldwr) SK1, MX
 I/1/4 von Cron. (Ldwr)
 I/2/1 Lobenthal SK1
 I/2/2 Fischer (Ldwr)
 I/7/1 Zepelin (Light) SK2, MX
 I/7/2 Sil. Landwehr SK1, MX
 I/8/1 Bork SK1, MX
 I/8/2 Sil. Landwehr
 I/C/1 Donnersmarch (Dragoon)
 I/C/2 Katzeler (Uhlans)
 I/C/3 Bieberstein (Ldwr Cav.)

IK: 12-pdr Foot A**IK:** 12-pdr Foot B**IK:** 6-pdr Horse A**IK:** 6-pdr Horse B**IK:** 6-pdr Horse C**IK:** 6-pdr Horse D**8: St. Priest 3 / 10"**

8/11/1 Turgenev SK1
 8/11/2 Bistrom (Jägers) SK2
 8/17/1 Kern SK1
 8/17/2 Schertov SK1
 8/D/1 Dragoons
 8/D/2 Cossacks SK2

8: 12-pdr Foot**8:** 6-pdr Horse**L: Langeron (V) 4 / 13"**

6/7/1 Kirschnitzky SK1
 6/7/2 Augustov SK1
 6/18/1 Blagovenzenko SK1
 6/18/2 Mescherinov (Jg) SK2
 9/9/1 Poltaratzky SK1
 9/15/1 Anensur (Jg) SK2
 10/8/1 Shindshin SK1
 10/8/2 Rerim (Jägers) SK2
 10/22/1 Shapiskoi SK1

L: 12-pdr Foot A**L:** 12-pdr Foot B**L:** 12-pdr Foot C**L:** 12-pdr Foot D**1C: Korff 3 / 6"**

1C/1 Chasseurs
 1C/2 Chasseurs
 1C/3 Cossacks SK2
 1C/4 Cossacks SK2

1C: 6-pdr Horse