

The Battle Of Austerlitz

2 December, 1805

A Grande Armée scenario by Marc Rivet

(Historical introduction and variants by Sam Mustafa)

It is difficult to say whether Napoleon ever seriously entertained the notion of an amphibious invasion of England, though he kept his army in camps around Boulogne, if not prepared to cross the channel, then at least to keep the British sweating. Austria and Russia combined in coalition against France in 1805, with the idea of defeating the French in southern Germany, and thus setting aright the imbalances that had resulted from the Revolutionary and Consular wars.

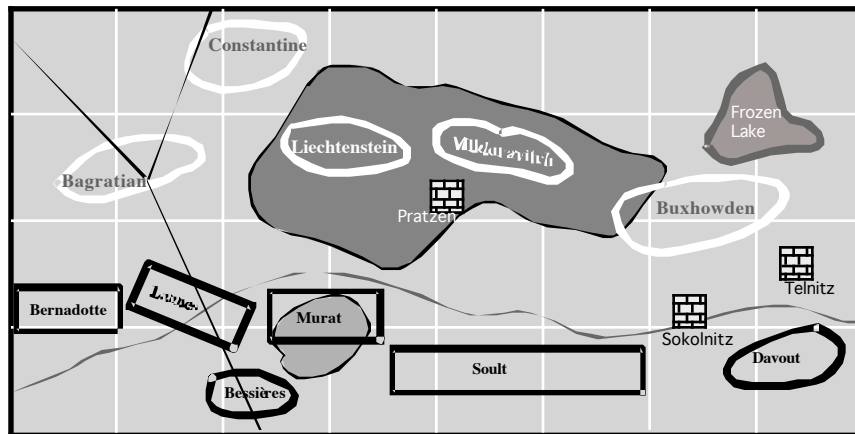
The allies had lost Austerlitz even before the battle began. The campaign was an endless tragedy of errors. The Austrians split their army in two mutually-unsupporting advances, without waiting for their Russian allies to come to their assistance. Napoleon bagged Mack's entire army at Ulm with barely a scratch, and the Austrians never recovered. The Russians were not thinking any more clearly, having divided their forces into three columns and sending them on a long march across Austria, which they immediately had to retrace, retreating in disorder before Napoleon's victorious host. Bagration's advanced guard had suffered the most, losing over 60% of its original strength since the beginning of the campaign, in a dreary retreat from western Austria, all the way back across the Habsburg empire to Austerlitz. It is a testimony to the endurance of the Russian soldiers and the leadership of Bagration that this weary force was able to offer battle at Austerlitz at all. Finally, even though the Prussian government was sending every signal of preparing for war against France and thus making Napoleon's position untenable, the Russians refused to wait, and offered battle with a badly disorganized and exhausted army.

Napoleon had chosen his ground carefully, although his army was still strung out along its line of march, and it was unclear whether Davout's corps would arrive in time. Feigning weakness, he invited an allied attack on the French right (where Davout was to arrive). When the allied attack had thinned their center, Soult led the assault on the heights. Although the Russian infantry put up a stubborn resistance for about an hour, the allies were so badly disorganized that they had no hope of adequately reacting to this changed situation. As the allied center broke, a French cavalry attack turned defeat into catastrophic rout.

And so Napoleon defeated two of his enemies and cowed the third into submission, all in a single masterful campaign. It is always tempting to chalk all of this up to the French Emperor's genius and the energy of his subordinates, but we must remember that the Austerlitz campaign could have ended very differently had the Allied high command ever showed any foresight at all. Napoleon was dangerously overextended by December 1805, with his army strung out along hundreds of miles of roads in the midst of winter, and his lines of communication stretching across all of Germany.

Austerlitz did more than anything to cement Napoleon's reputation of invincibility. It cast a profound depression over the allies, a psychological albatross that endured for eight years.

The Battlefield of Austerlitz:



The game's Basic Length is 7 turns.

The Allied army is Shaky. Its Break Point is 10.

The French army is Confident. Its Break Point is 13.

The Frozen Lake is clear terrain, but any unit moving across it must roll an additional die, after rolling for movement. If the die comes up as follows, then that unit is immediately eliminated:

Infantry = 6

Cavalry = 4-6

Artillery = 3-6

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

A Note on Play-Balance

Because Austerlitz resulted in such a stunning French victory, it can often be difficult to find players willing to take the Allied side. The French are grossly superior in command system, which is necessary for their offensive style. The Allies can rarely scrape together enough CPs to move even half their army at any given moment. The French also possess faster infantry with vastly better skirmish capability. (This is offset somewhat by the presence of the Russian Cossacks.) Finally, the French hold an advantage in infantry SPs of roughly 4:3. This is partially because Napoleon did indeed outnumber his enemies in infantry, and also because most of the French cannon are divisional and thus factored into the infantry SPs.

The Allies have a good defensive position, and thus don't require a brilliant command network to defend it. They have more than twice the artillery firepower of the French, including six times as many 12-pounder guns. They also outnumber the French cavalry in SPs by a ratio of 3:2. Still, there can be no doubt that the odds favor the French; three of our four playtests of this scenario resulted in historically decisive French victories. While this means that *Grande Armée* is doing its job as a simulation, it also means that this scenario might need some variables to give the Allies a fighting chance.

1. Weather

Begin the game with the weather Snowing, and variable. This will negate the French skirmish advantage, raise the possibility of Mud, and force both armies to claw toward each other in confusion. (In essence, it turns the battle into something like Eylau.)

2. Upgrading the Allied Command and Army Morale

Perhaps no army has ever been more disorganized going into a decisive contest than the Allies at Austerlitz. The frustration and confusion of the officers rapidly spread to the soldiers, whose spirits dropped when they saw the traffic jams, frantic and baffled officers, and the obvious signs that their commanders had no idea what they were doing. While there was no way to change the bickering system of ad-hoc commands within the Allied ranks, at least two things might have been improved:

- A. The Emperors Alexander and Francis go off hunting somewhere, taking their platoons of toadies with them, and leave the actual command of the army to professionals.
- B. Given another day or two, the Allies could at least have sorted out who commanded what, and where it was deployed in the line of march.
- C. As a result, upgrade Kutusov to "Average" skill, and the Allied army to "Fair" morale, with a break point of 13.

3. Davout is Late

Davout's corps was strung out along thirty miles of road, force-marching to the battlefield. He arrived with his lead elements in the nick of time, but had he not, Napoleon's plan might have been stymied by the allied assault on his right.

- A. Do not set up with Davout's Force on the board. At the end of Turn 1 roll one die. On a 4+, Davout enters on the first pulse of the next turn. Add 1 to the die roll at the end of each turn until he arrives.
- B. Under this variant, if Davout's Force does not enter until Turn 3, then Legrand's division enters with it. If Davout arrives before Turn 3, then Legrand's division arrives normally, in the first pulse of Turn 3.

4. Play Against History

With the benefit of hindsight, we now know that an allied victory at Austerlitz was very unlikely. Napoleon had broken the allied army by 3:00 PM. Therefore, if you prefer to keep the historical OBs and skill levels intact, the French victory can be made dependent upon doing as well or better as Napoleon historically did.

- A. If the allied army breaks *before* the completion of *eight pulses* (however many turns that may be), then the French player has done even better than Napoleon, and has won a decisive French victory.
- B. If the allied army breaks before the completion of twelve pulses, then the French player has done as well as Napoleon did historically, and has won a minor French victory.
- C. If the French army breaks (whether or not the allies do, too), and/or if the allied army is still in the field at the completion of fourteen pulses, then the game is an Allied Victory.

The Allied Army

Commander: Kutuzov (Poor)

This is a Traditional Army of 5 Forces, representing remnants of the Austrian and Russian armies after a long campaign. Although the emperors Francis and Alexander were present, Kutuzov was the nominal Commander in Chief. (Although Buxhowden was a wing commander, with authority over several columns, these columns make rather small Forces at our scale, and so I have treated Buxhowden's wing as a single Force.)

Buxhowden's Grand Column: 5 / 13" Aggressive

Advanced Guard: Kienmayer

B/AG/1 Carneville (Aus. Grenzers) Trained 5SP _____
 B/AG/2 Austrian Light Cavalry Trained 8SP _____

I Column: Dokhturov

B/I/1 Russian Musketeers Trained 7SP _____
 B/I/2 Russian Musketeers Veteran 9SP _____

II Column: Langeron

B/II/1 Olsuvev 1 (Musketeers) Trained 6SP _____
 B/II/2 Olsufiev 2 (Musk. & Jägers) Trained 6SP _____
 B/II/3 Kamensky I (Musketeers) Trained 8SP _____

III Column: Przibitzhevsky

B/III/1 Musketeer Trained 7SP _____
 B/III/2 Musketeer Trained 6SP _____

Artillery:

B: 12-pdr Russian Foot A ____
 B: 12-pdr Russian Foot B ____
 B: 6-pdr Austrian Horse ____

IV Column: Mildoravich (V) 2 / 11" Aggressive

IV/1 Musketeers & Grenadiers Veteran 7SP _____
 IV/2 Rottermund (Austrian Line) Trained 8SP _____
 IV/3 Jurczik 1 (Austrian Line) Conscript 6SP _____
 IV/4 Jurczik 2 (Austrian Line) Conscript 6SP _____

Artillery:

IV: 12-pdr Russian Foot ____
 IV: 12-pdr Austrian Foot A ____
 IV: 12-pdr Austrian Foot B ____

V Column: Liechtenstein (V) 4 / 6" Aggressive

V/1 Hohenloe (Aus. Cuirassiers) Elite 8SP _____
 V/2 Essen II (Russian Uhlans) Veteran 6SP _____
 V/3 Skepelov (Rus. Hussars & Dragoons) Veteran 8SP _____
 V/4 Cossacks Raw 5SP _____

Artillery:

V: 6-pdr Russian Horse ____
 V: 6-pdr Austrian Horse ____

Adv. Guard: Bagratian (V) 2 / 14"

AG/1 Dolgoruky (Jaeger)	Trained 5SP _____
AG/2 Kamensky III (Musketeer)	Trained 4SP _____
AG/3 Engelhardt (Musketeer)	Trained 8SP _____
AG/4 Wittgenstein (Hussar)	Elite 7SP _____
AG/5 Voropaitzki (Dragoons)	Trained 6SP _____
AG/6 Cossacks	Raw 4SP _____

Artillery:

AG: 6-pdr Russian Horse ____
 AG: 6-pdr Austrian Horse A ____
 AG: 6-pdr Austrian Horse B ____

Imperial Guard: Constantine 4 / 6"

IG/1 Guard Fusiliers	Elite 10SP _____
IG/2 Guard Grenadiers & Jägers	Elite 8SP _____
IG/3 Jankovich (Hussars)	Elite 7SP _____
IG/5 Depreradovich II (Horse Guards)	Elite 8SP _____

IG: 12-pdr Russian Foot ____
 IG: 6-pdr Russian Horse ____

The French Army

Commander: Napoleon (Great)

This is a Napoleonic Army of 6 Forces.

Napoleon has three Imperial ADCs available, plus 3 Generals.

Imperial Guard: Bessières (V) 2 / 8"

G/1 Hulin (Grenadiers à Pied) Guards 9SP _____

G/2 Soules (Chasseurs à Pied & Italian Gd.) Guards 10SP _____

G/3 Guard Cavalry Guard 8SP _____

Grenadiers of the Reserve: Duroc

G/G1 Grenadiers Elite 9SP _____

G/G2 Grenadiers Elite 9SP _____

Corps Artillery:

G: 6-pdr (Guard) Horse A ____

G: 6-pdr (Guard) Horse B ____

G: 6-pdr (Guard) Horse C ____

I Corps: Bernadotte 4 / 6" Cautious

1st Division: Rivaud

I/1/1 Dumoulin (Ligne) Veteran 6SP _____

I/1/2 Pauthod (Ligne) Veteran 8SP _____

2nd Division: Drouet

I/2/1 Frere (Légère) Veteran 6SP _____

I/2/2 Werlé (Ligne) Veteran 8SP _____

IV Corps: Soult 2 / 18"

1st Division: St. Hilaire

IV/1/1 (Légère) Veteran 5SP _____

IV/1/2 Thiebault (Ligne) Veteran 7SP _____

IV/1/3 Waré (Ligne) Veteran 7SP _____

2nd Division: Vandamme

IV/2/1 Shiner (Légère) Elite 5SP _____

IV/2/2 Ferrey (Ligne) Veteran 8SP _____

IV/2/3 Candras (Ligne) Veteran 7SP _____

3rd Division: Legrand

IV/3/1 Merle (Légère) Veteran 7SP _____

IV/3/2 Féry (Ligne) Veteran 5SP _____

IV/3/3 Lavasseur (Ligne) Veteran 8SP _____

IV/C1 Margaron (Chasseurs à Cheval) Veteran 4SP _____

IV/C2 Beaumont (Dragoons) Trained 5SP _____

Corps Artillery:

IV: 12-pdr Foot ____

III Corps: Davout 1 / 8"**(Friant's Division plus 4th Dragoon regt.)**

III/2/1 Ligne Veteran 8SP _____

III/2/2 Ligne Veteran 5SP _____

Bourcier's Dragoon Division

III/C/1 Laplanche (Dragoons) Trained 5SP _____

III/C/2 Sahuc (Dragoons) Trained 4SP _____

III: 8-pdr Foot BTY ____

V Corps: Lannes (V) 1 / 11"**3rd Division: Suchet**

V/3/1 Claparède (Légère) Elite 6SP _____

V/3/2 Beker (Ligne) Veteran 7SP _____

V/3/3 Valhubert (Ligne) Veteran 7SP _____

1st Division (III Corps): Caffarelli

V/1/1 (Ligne) Veteran 7SP _____

V/1/2 (Légère) Veteran 8SP _____

V/C Walther (Dragoons) Trained 4SP _____

Reserve Cavalry: Murat (V) 4 / 6" Aggressive

RC/1 Nansouty (Cuirassiers & Carabiniers) Veteran 7SP _____

RC/2 d'Hautpol (Cuirassiers) Veteran 6SP _____

RC/3 LC (Hussars) Veteran 6SP _____

RC/4 LC (Chasseurs à cheval) Trained 5SP _____

RC: 6-pdr Horse ____

Labels for the Austerlitz Scenario;

Kutuzov (Poor)

Buxhowden 5 / 13" Agg.

B/AG/1 Carneville (Aus. Grenzers) SK2
 B/AG/2 Austrian Light Cavalry
 B/I/1 Russian Musketeers
 B/I/2 Russian Musketeers
 B/II/1 Olsuvev 1 (Musketeers)
 B/II/2 Olsufiev 2 (Musketeers & Jägers) SK1
 B/II/3 Kamensky I (Musketeers) MX
 B/III/1 Musketeer
 B/III/2 Musketeer
 B: 12-pdr Russian Foot A
 B: 12-pdr Russian Foot B
 B: 6-pdr Austrian Horse

IV: Mildoravich (V) 2 / 11" Agg

IV/1 Musketeers & Grenadiers MX
 IV/2 Rottermund (Austrian Line)
 IV/3 Jurczik 1 (Austrian Line)
 IV/4 Jurczik 2 (Austrian Line) SK1
 IV: 12-pdr Russian Foot
 IV: 12-pdr Austrian Foot A
 IV: 12-pdr Austrian Foot B

V: Liechtenstein(V) 4 / 6" Agg

V/1 Hohenloe (Aus. Cuirassiers)
 V/2 Essen II (Russian Uhlans)
 V/3 Skepelov (Russian Hussars & Dragoons)
 V/4 Cossacks SK2
 V: 6-pdr Russian Horse
 V: 6-pdr Austrian Horse

AG: Bagratian (V) 2 / 14"

AG/1 Dolgoruky (Jaeger) SK1
 AG/2 Kamensky III (Musketeer)
 AG/3 Engelhardt (Musketeer)
 AG/4 Wittgenstein (Hussar)
 AG/5 Voropaitzki (Dragoons)
 AG/6 Cossacks SK2
 AG: 6-pdr Russian Horse
 AG: 6-pdr Austrian Horse A
 AG: 6-pdr Austrian Horse B

IG: Constantine 4 / 6"

IG/1 Guard Fusiliers SK1
 IG/2 Guard Grenadiers & Jägers SK1
 IG/3 Jankovich (Hussars)
 IG/5 Depreradovich II (Horse Guards)
 IG: 12-pdr Russian Foot
 IG: 6-pdr Russian Horse

Napoleon (Great)

Gd: Bessières (V) 2 / 8"

G/1 Hulin (Grenadiers à Pied) SK2
 G/2 Soules (Chas.à Pied & lt. Gd) SK2
 G/3 Guard Cavalry
 G/G1 Grenadiers SK1
 G/G2 Grenadiers SK1
 G: 6-pdr Gd. Horse A
 G: 6-pdr Gd. Horse B
 G: 6-pdr Gd. Horse C

I: Bernadotte 4 / 6" Cautious

I/1/1 Dumoulin (Ligne) SK2
 I/1/2 Pachtod (Ligne) SK2
 I/2/1 Frere (Légère) SK2
 I/2/2 Werlé (Ligne) SK2

III: Davout 1 / 8"

III/2/1 Ligne SK2 MX
 III/2/2 Ligne SK2
 III/C/1 Laplanche (Dragoons)
 III/C/2 Sahuc (Dragoons)
 III: 8-pdr Foot

IV: Soult 2 / 18"

IV/1/1 (Légère) SK2
 IV/1/2 Thiebault (Ligne) SK2
 IV/1/3 Waré (Ligne) SK2
 IV/2/1 Shiner (Légère) SK2
 IV/2/2 Ferrey (Ligne) SK2
 IV/2/3 Candras (Ligne) SK2
 IV/3/1 Merle (Légère) SK2
 IV/3/2 Féry (Ligne) SK2
 IV/3/3 Lavasseur (Ligne) SK2
 IV/C1 Margaron (Chasseurs à Cheval)
 IV/C2 Beaumont (Dragoons)
 IV: 12-pdr Foot

V: Lannes (V) 1 / 11"

V/3/1 Claparède (Légère) SK2
 V/3/2 Beker (Ligne) SK2
 V/3/3 Valhubert (Ligne) SK2
 V/1/1 (Ligne) SK2
 V/1/2 (Légère) SK2
 V/C Walther (Dragoons)

RC: Murat (V) 4 / 6" Agg

RC/1 Nansouty (Cuirassiers & Carabiniers)
 RC/2 d'Hautpol (Cuirassiers)
 RC/3 LC (Hussars)
 RC/4 LC (Chasseurs à cheval)
 RC: 6-pdr Horse