

Austerlitz Campaign - December 1805

Start with



Reserve Tokens

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The Battle of Austerlitz, also known as the Battle of the Three Emperors, was one of the most important and decisive engagements of the Napoleonic Wars. In what is widely regarded as the greatest victory achieved by Napoleon, the *Grande Armée* of France defeated a larger Russian and Austrian army led by Tsar Alexander I and Holy Roman Emperor Francis II. The battle occurred near the village of Austerlitz in the Austrian Empire (modern-day Slavkov u Brna in the Czech Republic). Austerlitz brought the War of the Third Coalition to a rapid end, with the Treaty of Pressburg signed by the Austrians later in the month.

After eliminating an Austrian army during the Ulm Campaign, French forces managed to capture Vienna in November 1805. The Austrians avoided further conflict until the arrival of the Russians bolstered Allied numbers. Napoleon sent his army north in pursuit of the Allies, but then ordered his forces to retreat so he could feign a grave weakness. Desperate to lure the Allies into battle, Napoleon gave every indication in the days preceding the engagement that the French army was in a pitiful state, even abandoning the dominant Pratzen Heights near Austerlitz. He deployed the French army below the Pratzen Heights and deliberately weakened his right flank, enticing the Allies to launch a major assault there in the hopes of rolling up the whole French line. A forced march from Vienna by Marshal Davout and his III Corps plugged the gap left by Napoleon just in time. Meanwhile, the heavy Allied deployment against the French right weakened their center on the Pratzen Heights, which was viciously attacked by the IV Corps of Marshal Soult. With the Allied center demolished, the French swept through both enemy flanks and sent the Allies fleeing chaotically, capturing thousands of prisoners in the process.

The Allied disaster significantly shook the faith of Emperor Francis in the British-led war effort. France and Austria agreed to an armistice immediately and the Treaty of Pressburg followed shortly after, on 26 December. Pressburg took Austria out of both the war and the Coalition while reinforcing the earlier treaties of Campo Formio and of Lunéville between the two powers. The treaty confirmed the Austrian loss of lands in Italy and Bavaria to France, and in Germany to Napoleon's German allies. It also imposed an indemnity of 40 million francs on the defeated Habsburgs and allowed the fleeing Russian troops free passage through hostile territories and back to their home soil. Critically, victory at Austerlitz permitted the creation of the Confederation of the Rhine, a collection of German states intended as a buffer zone between France and Central Europe. The Confederation rendered the Holy Roman Empire virtually useless, so the latter collapsed in 1806 after Francis abdicated the imperial throne, keeping Francis I of Austria as his only official title. These achievements, however, did not establish a lasting peace on the continent. Prussian worries about growing French influence in Central Europe sparked the War of the Fourth Coalition in 1806.



1) Austerlitz - Sokolnitz & Telnitz (2 December 1805)

Historical Background:

Napoleon's plan at Austerlitz depended on the Allies taking the bait and attacking the French right. Once the

Battle Notes

Allies Army

- Commander: Buxhöwden
- 5 Command Cards
- 3 Tactician Cards
- Move First

French Army

- Commander: Legrand
- 5 Command Cards
- 5 Tactician Cards

Allied attack was underway, Soult would attack the Allied center. The Allies, observing the weakness of the French right saw the opportunity to sweep round the French flank. Once on the French flank, the Allied plan was to take their four Allied columns to turn North and drive the main French army from the field.

The Allied

plan depended on quickly overrunning the French right, but the terrain was highly favorable to the defenders, and the French would defend tenaciously.

Around 8:00 AM on December 2, the first Allied columns began hitting the French right near the village of Telnitz. Taking the village, they threw the French back across Goldbach Stream.

Slightly to the north, the second Allied column hit Sokolnitz, but was repulsed. Bringing forward his artillery, General Count Louis de Langéron succeeded in taking the village, while a third Allied column assaulted the castle (walled farm). The French defenders were on the verge of giving way, but help was close at hand. The lead division of Davout's III Corps had arrived.

Campaign Special Rules - Sokolnitz & Telnitz:

Allies Reserve Roll:

= Allies may reroll the "Mother Russia" dices. 2nd result must accepted, also if it is worse than 1st one.

French Reserve Roll:

= The "Time Pressure Objective" Victory Rule is in effect for the French side.

2) Austerlitz - Davout's Counter Attack (2 December 1805)

Historical Background:

The die is cast for the Allied army. Nearly half of that army is concentrated on the southern part of the battlefield to force back Napoleon's right flank. Despite determined French resistance, the Allies take Telnitz, cross the Goldbach Stream and are

Battle Notes

Allies Army

- Commander: Buxhöwden
- 4 Command Cards
- 3 Tactician Cards

French Army

- Commander: Davout
- 5 Command Cards
- 5 Tactician Cards
- Move First

close to occupying the town of Sokolnitz.

Suddenly, a change of fortune.

Davout's lead division has come into line.

Campaign Special Rules - Davout's Counter Attack:

Allies Reserve Roll:

= "Mother Russia" roll is in effect. CAV result has no effect.

French Reserve Roll:

= The French forces get an additional Tactician Card at turn start.

These are soldiers who had destroyed Merveldt's Austrian division at Mariazell, and they fear nothing. They launch a blistering counterattack that throws the Allies out of Sokolnitz and back across the Goldbach Stream.

The ferocity of the attack confirms the need for yet more manpower.

The Allied columns keep streaming south, unaware of the looming French threat to the center.

Now, fresh Allied troops storm back in to Sokolnitz and the Castle. One of Davout's fine regiments is virtually destroyed trying to defend them. The remaining French soldiers go on to the defensive yet again, and hold off four times their numbers for the next several hours, guaranteeing that Napoleon will be able to split the Allied center.

3) Austerlitz - Soult's Center Attack (2 December 1805)

Historical Background:

Around 8:45 AM, believing that the Allied center had been sufficiently weakened, Napoleon summoned Soult to discuss an attack on the enemy lines atop Pratzen Heights. Stating, "One sharp blow and the war is over," he ordered the assault to move forward at 9:00. Advancing through the morning fog, General Louis de Saint-Hilaire's division attacked up the heights. That fog had kept them well

Battle Notes

Allies Army

- Commander: Miloradovich & Kolowrat
- 4 Command Cards
- 2 Tactician Cards

French Army

- Commander: Soult
- 5 Command Cards
- 5 Tactician Cards
- Move First

Campaign Special Rules - Soult's Center Attack:

Allies Reserve Roll:

= The "Time Pressure Objective" Victory Rule is in effect for the Allies side.

French Reserve Roll:

= The French forces get an additional Tactician Card at turn start.

hidden, and contributed to the Allied decision to send more troops from the center southward.

Two Austrian brigades countered the movement, and were joined by units from the tail end of Kamensky's Russian column that counter marched after seeing Hilaire's troops advancing on the heights. The French were thrown back after bitter fighting, but regrouped and charged again and managed to capture the heights. To their north, General Dominique Vandamme's division defeated the Allied forces around Staré Vinohrady. Napoleon, moving his command post forward to the heights, ordered Bernadotte's I Corps to join the assault on Vandamme's left. Victory beckoned.

4) Austerlitz - Lannes vs Bagration (2 December 1805)

Historical Background:

Quiet reigned on the northern section of the battlefield until 9:00 AM when Lannes advanced on Blasowitz in obedience to Napoleon's order to isolate the Allied right wing from the rest of the battle. Initially the advance went well, but soon trouble developed. Two Russian Guard battalions retook Blasowitz, and masses of Lichtenstein's Allied cavalry forced Kellermann's light cavalry to seek help from Lannes' infantry to force it back.

Battle Notes

Allies Army

- Commander: Bagration
- 5 Command Cards
- 3 Tactician Cards
- Move First

French Army

- Commander: Lannes
- 6 Command Cards
- 5 Tactician Cards

Campaign Special Rules - Lannes vs Bagration:

Allies Reserve Roll:

= The "Time Pressure Objective" Victory Rule is in effect for the Allies side.

French Reserve Roll:

= The French forces get 2VP for each objective town hex instead of 1.

Now it was the French turn. Blasowitz was retaken and three thousand of Murat's cavalry

advanced west to isolate Bagration, who reacted quickly. Every available Allied squadron was sent in, and the French cavalry stalled. Trailing behind Murat's cavalry were two divisions of French Cuirassiers. Disregarding casualties, the Cuirassiers smashed into the Allied cavalry with a sound heard over the din of battle. After a sharp fight, the Allied cavalry broke. There remained hard infantry fighting between Lannes and Bagration, but no Allied soldiers from the left were able to intervene in the center where the battle was being decided.

5) Austerlitz - Russian Guardsmen (2 December 1805)

Historical Background:

Disaster looms! Two veteran French divisions have swept away those units left to guard the center of the Allied line. There remains only the Russian Guard in reserve to plug the gap, but they are superb troops. Their commander, Grand Duke Constantine, throws them headlong against the exposed flank of Vandamme's division as it begins to pivot to the south. While Vandamme's infantry throw back the Guard infantry with difficulty, the Guard cavalry overrun two battalions Vandamme had rushed to cover his flank. The doomed battalions bought time and disorganized the Guard cavalry, allowing Bernadotte to send a division and Napoleon to commit his own elite Guard cavalry.

Though checked at first, soon the reinforcements and Grenadiers à Cheval overpower the Russian Guards and the survivors retreat, pursued by Bernadotte's troops. The Allied center is irretrievably gone. Lannes contains the Allied right. Now Napoleon orders the final maneuver to surround and destroy the Allied left.

Battle Notes

Allies Army

- Commander: Constantine
- 5 Command Cards
- 2 Tactician Cards
- Move First

French Army

- Commander: Bessieres
- 5 Command Cards
- 4 Tactician Cards

Campaign Special Rules – Russian Guardsmen:

Allies Reserve Roll:

= The may make a La Grande Manoeuvre with units/leaders on their edge line, before game start.

French Reserve Roll:

= The French forces get 1 temporary VP for Blasowitz town, as long it's unoccupied by any allies unit.

6) Austerlitz - Soult Attacks South (2 December 1805)

Historical Background:

The last grim act of the Austerlitz battle now plays out as Napoleon strives to create a Cannae-like encirclement of the Allied left wing. Over 30,000 Allied troops are jammed into the area near Sokolnitz and the Goldbach Stream, pinned to their front by Davout's troops, and now threatened from the rear by Soult's divisions, the Grenadiers and the Guard. For the majority there is no chance to escape and they surrender. Austrian cavalry valiantly charges Beaumont's French cavalry and keeps an escape route open for a short time, allowing some formations to flee. By 4:00 PM the battle is over. The Allied left is

not annihilated, but what remains is a mob of unorganized fugitives. Napoleon's victory marks the end of the Third Coalition, and the ascendancy of the Grande Armee as the premier military force in Europe.

Battle Notes

Allies Army

- Commander: Langeron
- 4 Command Cards
- 3 Tactician Cards
- Move First*

French Army

- Commander: Soult
- 5 Command Cards
- 5 Tactician Cards
- Move First*

Campaign Special Rules – Soult Attacks South:

Allies Reserve Roll:

= Unexpected reinforcements! Allies may make a "Mother Russia" roll.

French Reserve Roll:

= The French forces sees the "Sun of Austerlitz". They play with 6 command cards instead of 5 in this battle.