

How to "Raab" the French of a Victory

Austrian Survival in TRIUMPH & GLORY

By Jeff Boschman

GMT's recent offering, *TRIUMPH & GLORY*, contains five battles. Four of them are classics in Napoleonic combat. One battle is relatively obscure. The obscure battle—Raab—is the focus of this article.

Prince Eugene, stepson of Napoleon, was given the task of supporting the Emperor's 1809 campaign by stopping Archduke John's army from joining the Austrian main force at Wagram. On June 14, Eugene's veterans attacked John's army of half-trained insurrectionists near the Raab River in Hungary. Historically the battle was a French victory, with John withdrawing in the late afternoon. As a game, this scenario is definitely the easiest one in the *TRIUMPH & GLORY* box. One half map, few special rules and low counter density make this the best starter scenario.

At first glance, this looks like a terrible situation for the Austrian. French victory can be achieved by gaining 75 victory points (VPs). VPs can be gained by routing Austrian units, gaining geographical objectives, and not taking reinforcements. For the French player to win, he must damage John's army, preserve his own, and attempt to cut off John's retreat to Wagram. The French are favored in this battle, as they were historically. However, all is not lost—the Austrians can win

here, or at the very least, put up a stiff fight to prevent a French walkover. Victory for the Austrian consists of preserving enough force to link with Archduke Charles and protecting the army's line of retreat. The scenario is one of those situations where you can be in pretty bad shape on the map, but actually be victorious in the game. As the situation is toughest for the Austrian side, I will approach the rest of the article from the Austrian point of view.

First, let's take a look at what the strengths and weaknesses of both sides in the scenario.

FRENCH STRENGTHS

1) Leadership: Eugene may not be Napoleon, but he is not bad.

His order rating of "2" allows him to put two-thirds of his army in command on the first turn. His orders change rating of "6" gives him a pretty good chance of changing those orders if necessary.



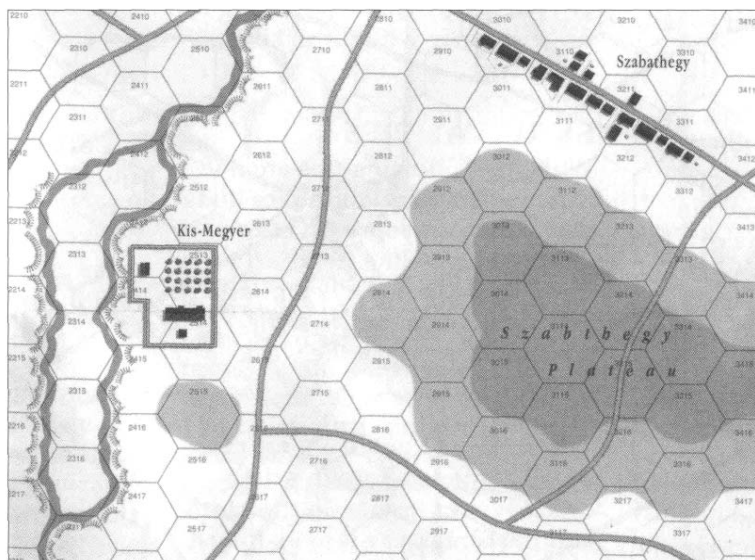
2) Troop Quality: While the French troops are not the highest quality, they do stack up quite well when compared to the Austrians. Grouchy's division of cavalry and much of Grenier's division could hold their own on any battlefield in the game.

3) Initiative: The French automatically hold the initiative on the first turn. Most French players will give one of their initial orders to Grouchy, sending his cavalry across the stream on the first phrase of the game to assault Mescery's pitiful horse soldiers.

4) Reinforcement VPs: This is a powerful advantage for the French player. If the French player does not use any reinforcements, he is guaranteed 35 VPs, placing him nearly halfway to victory without a single attack. I found that much of time, the reinforcements are not worth it for the French. They lock Eugene far away from the action. They use up an orders command. They take a turn or two to get to the

front. While the reinforcements available to the French player are quality troops, the 5 VP's per turn look much more attractive.

5) Command Size: As noted above, the French can put two-thirds of their army into command on the first turn. Their Orders Commands are large and every turn the French will be able to give orders to the majority of his army.



Raab: TRIUMPH & GLORY

FRENCH WEAKNESSES

There aren't many, but here they are:

1) Mediocre Troops: While the French may look like Imperial Guard units compared to the Austrians, the fact of the matter is that many of the French troops are decidedly mediocre. The burden of the attack is on the French. They must push forward, but those mediocre troops are going to fail a number of commitment rolls, leaving the French with no attack or perhaps even a painfully weak attack that he must carry out.

2) Time: The scenario is only eight turns long—only 16 activations per Orders Command. The pressure is on the French. They must move quickly and put the Austrians off balance or they will simply run out of time.

AUSTRIAN STRENGTHS

Believe it or not, there are a few.

1) Terrain: I can't say enough about this. The banked stream and the Kis-Megyar walled farm make for excellent defensive terrain. Use them intelligently. Give them up only as a last resort. Colleredo's division in the center should be able to hold for quite a while. Even Jellacic's useless troops in the north should be able to delay the French when defending along the stream bank.



2) Frimont's Division: This is your best division in the game. Most of the troops are of

average to good quality. When bolstered by the reserve artillery, this division becomes a formidable force. It sets up on the heights in the center, making it the ideal reserve to rush to the most threatened part of the front.

3) Time: As mentioned above, time is on your side. The French

must push. If your opponent sits back, let him.

4) Unit Size: While your troops suffer in quality, they are generally bigger than the French units. The French have an advantage in Cohesion, but the size of the Austrian units makes up some of the difference.

AUSTRIAN WEAKNESSES

Oh boy, where should I start?

1) Leadership: Eugene is not great, but compared to John ... let's just say, the Austrian player needs to make good choices in giving out his initial orders. Due to John's Order Change rating, you only have a 40 per cent chance of changing orders in a hurry.



2) Troop Quality: Here is the statement you have all been awaiting. The truth is out. Most of your guys stink as soldiers. While almost every division has a few average or very good units, a large number of your troops are untrained rabble. Live with it.

3) Command Size: The Austrian has five small Orders Commands compared to three rather large French ones. This means that on any given turn, only 40 per cent of your army will be operating at full efficiency without risking initiative.

SURVIVAL TIPS

While the following tips are not foolproof—the chit and dice gods may frown on your best efforts—I think they give the Austrian a fighting chance. They emphasize the Austrian strengths while trying to downplay the weaknesses.

1) Terrain: As noted above, most of your troops set up in prime defensive real estate. In the north and the center, use it to its fullest

advantage. Make the French come to you. Make them assault across that banked stream or into that walled farm. In one playtest game, the French player decided to assault Colleredo in the center with Grenier's troops. It was rather ugly for the French, let's just leave it at that.

2) Setup: As you will notice on the setup charts, most of your unit placement is set in stone. The only place where the Austrian has a lot of choice is in the setup of Mescery's cavalry division. This division faces Grouchy's lean, mean cavalry machine and is guaranteed to get ripped to shreds in the first turn or two if not handled correctly. Since the Austrian player is allowed to set up the bulk of Mescery's cavalry on or east of the road, I suggest you set them up far enough east that Grouchy will be unable to reach them in its first impulse. While Grouchy cannot charge your troops across the stream, even shock against your numerous 3-cohesion units will be painful if you allow it to happen. This may be gamey to some, so if you don't want to do this, then by all means don't. But don't come crying to me when Mescery's boys are routed off the field after a couple of turns.

3) Orders: Since Archduke John's strengths do not lie in the area of military leadership, the Austrian initial orders choices are all important. I tend to give Mescery and Frimont orders on the first turn. This allows Mescery to run from Grouchy if necessary and gives Frimont the ability to move rapidly to take care of any threat. Most of your army is on the defensive behind great terrain, so they are not in desperate need of orders at the beginning of the game anyway.

4) First-Turn Choices: The first turn of the scenario is vital. As the

French player reveals his plan, which will most likely involve racing Grouchy across the stream on the first impulse, you must have a plan to react. I have found that one of the best first-turn strategies is to move Frimont down from the heights and set up his best troops in a spaced-out defensive line linked with Colledero in the center and stretching southeast toward the map's edge. Retreat Mescery behind this line. Leave a cavalry/artillery stack at the stream as a speed bump to slow the French. (If the French activates Grouchy first, they will probably be routed or dead by the time of your turn. If you can rescue them, do so, but don't let their destruction break your heart.) Set up Frimont in such a way that Mescery's cavalry troops can pass between infantry units to counterattack disrupted French units if possible. Also, attach the powerful reserve artillery unit to Frimont's division.

5) Combined Arms: Of course this is a staple of Napoleonic combat. The problem for the

French is that in the south, where the Austrians are the weakest, the French cannot really practice it. They have to rely on Grouchy to break a reasonably strong Austrian infantry line backed with artillery and cavalry, or otherwise rush infantry to aid the horse troopers. The second choice will take some time, because they must either take some reinforcements (5 less VPs for them) or move some of Grenier's division to join Grouchy. Remember, time is on your side. If the French waste two or three activations to move troops up, more power to you. Also, don't be afraid to use the better units in Mescery's division to counterattack disrupted French units. A few routed or disrupted cavalry units can really throw a wrench into the French military machine. The same principle can be applied to the north where Besan has some great cavalry units to use in counterattacking disrupted French troops.

6) Defensive Stance: As noted above, you should take advantage of counterattack opportunities,

but on the whole, your stance should be a defensive one. The fact of the matter is that your 2- and 3-cohesion troops are going to fail more commitment rolls than they pass. The French must come after you. Time is on your side, and the French player has numerous "5" rated infantry units. They will fail a significant number of commitment rolls, and will not attack—or be forced to attack at a much weaker strength.

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The above observations and tips are neither foolproof nor exhaustive. As stated above, bad chit draws and rotten dice can frown on the best attack or best plan, especially in a chaotic system such as *TRIUMPH & GLORY*. I do suspect though, that these thoughts will give the Austrians more of a fighting chance than they appear to have at first glance. If you use them or throw them out, my hope is that you have as much fun playing this scenario as I had testing it.



Player's Notes

The name of the game clearly indicates which campaign and battle is being simulated—the fateful date is when Allied forces invaded German-occupied France at a place called Normandy. I have always been interested in this particular campaign, having picked up at least six different games on this battle. *JUNE 6* allows players to test out possible alternative outcomes of this decisive battle. GMT's effort results in an interesting game. The mechanics work smoothly. Both players have enough deci-

sions to make the game interesting.

I will cover the smaller Cherbourg scenario [Playbook section 4.0] to introduce new players to nuances of play, get them into the game sooner and conversant with some tactics and strategy. These can prove invaluable in later scenarios and the campaign game. The Cherbourg scenario is relatively small, involves no reinforcements, and has easily identifiable victory conditions.

Drive on Cherbourg Analysis of *JUNE 6: D-Day, 1944*

By Kevin Reid

The scenario victory conditions require the American player to remove all German units from the map and control all Cherbourg hexes by the end of the fifth of the six turns available. In the drive of VII Corp to take Cherbourg, it is easy to overlook that the Americans must also remove ALL German units to win. The German player scores a Minor victory by having a unit remaining on the map, at conclusion of the fifth turn, no matter its condition. Hold out another turn and that becomes a Major victory. So how