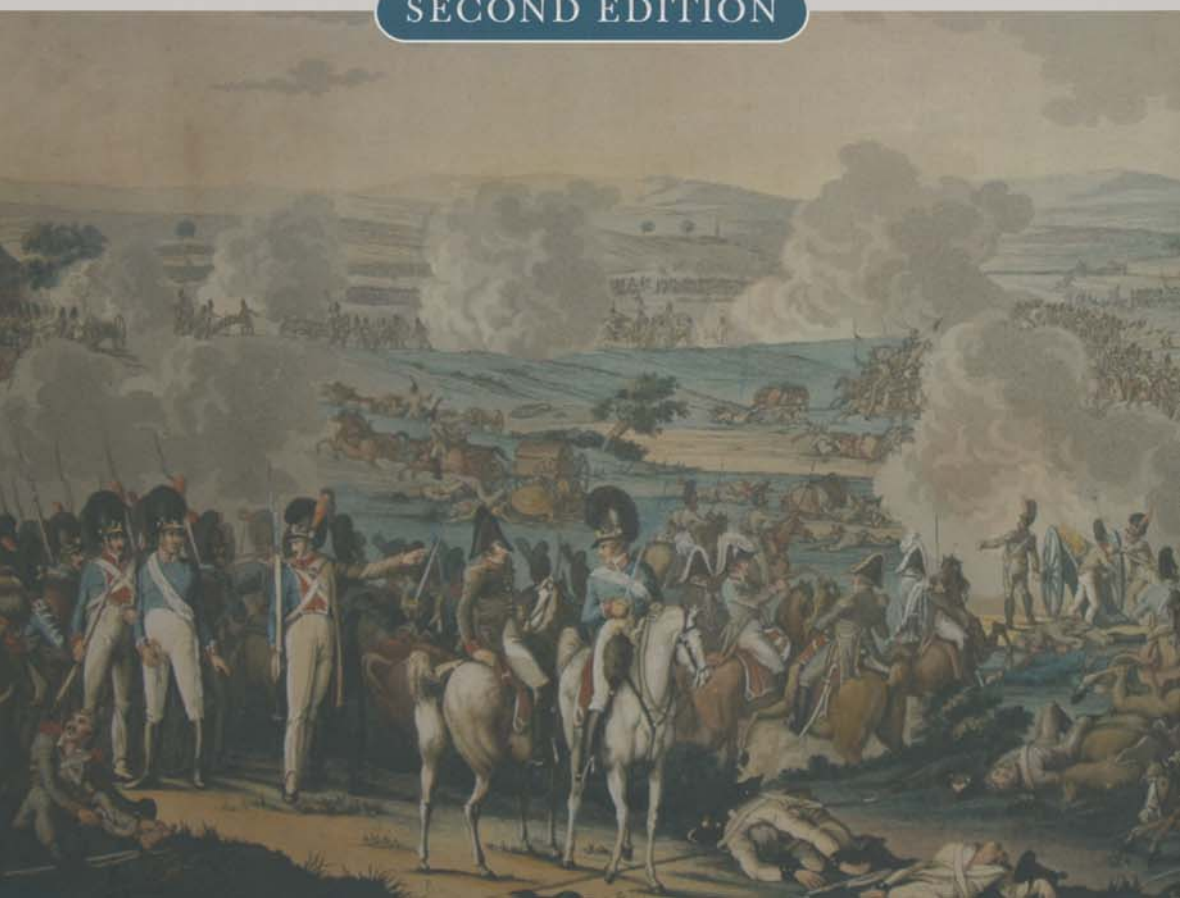
JOHN H. GILL

WITH EAGLES TO GLORY

Nnapoleon and his German Allies in the 1809 Campaign

SECOND EDITION



With Eagles to Glory

The storming of Eggmühl (22 April). Württemberg Jägers break into the Eggmühl manor to clear the way for Napoleon's advance from Landshut. (Author)

With Eagles to Glory

Napoleon and his German Allies in the 1809 Campaign

Second Edition

JOHN H. GILL

FRONTLINE BOOKS

A Greenhill Book

This book is dedicated to
Anne,
steady in the Cannon's roar,
and
Grant,
a source of Joy and more.

And now we have our own Chasseur
as Hunter Gill has joined the Corps.

With Eagles to Glory: Napoleon and his German Allies in the 1809 Campaign
Second Edition

A Greenhill Book

This edition published in 2011 by Frontline Books,
an imprint of Pen & Sword Books Limited,
47 Church Street, Barnsley, S. Yorkshire, S70 2AS
www.frontline-books.com

ISBN 978-1-84832-582-1

PUBLISHING HISTORY
With Eagles to Glory: Napoleon and his German Allies in the 1809 Campaign was first published by Greenhill Books in 1992, and reprinted in 1993. This edition includes a new preface by John Gill, revised material and errata to the original edition.

A CIP data record for this title is available from the British Library

For more information on our books, please visit
www.frontline-books.com, email info@frontline-books.com
or write to us at the above address.

Printed in Great Britain by CPI Antony Rowe

Contents

List of Maps

List of Tables

Foreword to the First Edition

One of the most common misconceptions concerning the Napoleonic wars is the fact that Napoleon's armies are sometimes regarded as having been generally, or even exclusively, French in composition. Up to and including the campaign of Austerlitz in 1805, and even the Jena-Auerstädt campaign of 1806, there is reasonable justification for describing his forces as 'French'; but thereafter, until the final collapse of French influence in Germany, Napoleon's armies were truly multi-national, and unquestionably his most ambitious operations would not have been feasible without the support of his allied troops. The level of this contribution may be gauged from the participation of 'foreign' troops in the Grande Armee for the 1812 campaign: although due to different strengths of units the comparison can be deceptive, to 327 French battalions or cavalry regiments, the allied forces contributed some 330, with a further 53 foreign units serving as part of the French army.

Chief among these allies were the contingents of the Rheinbund, the 'Confederation of the Rhine' established in 1806, an organization of principally German satellite states. Their forces, although mostly maintaining independent establishments, collaborated with and formed an integral part of Napoleon's armies: while the territory of the states served as a buffer between the French empire itself and those nations ultimately intent upon its overthrow.

Valuable as was the military contribution of the Rheinbund, in other than German-language sources it has often failed to receive its due credit for its part in Napoleon's campaigns. To some extent this is due to unjustified prejudice against the foreign troops of the Grande Armee, which was common throughout the French parts of the army and certainly extended as high as the Emperor himself. Napoleon's own attitude is demonstrated by a remark reportedly made during the Battle of Borodino, when by a brilliant cavalry charge the Russian Raevsky Redoubt was captured, due in no small measure to Saxon, Westphalian and Polish cuirassiers. Observing the astonishing effect of the charge, Marshal Berthier exclaimed excitedly that the Saxon cuirassiers were inside the redoubt. Napoleon, in a reply taken to demonstrate his lack of willingness to recognize the German contribution, remarked that as he could see blue jackets, 'they must be my cuirassiers'.

Redressing the prejudiced view of the Rheinbund forces is long overdue, and *With Eagles to Glory* achieves the object splendidly, at the same time proving the most detailed account yet to appear in English of their operations in the crucial campaign of 1809. As a result, the importance of the troops of the Confederation of the Rhine will be recognized for the valuable contribution it was. Referring to the Hessian contingent, one force which did receive some praise from the Emperor,

Official Bulletin

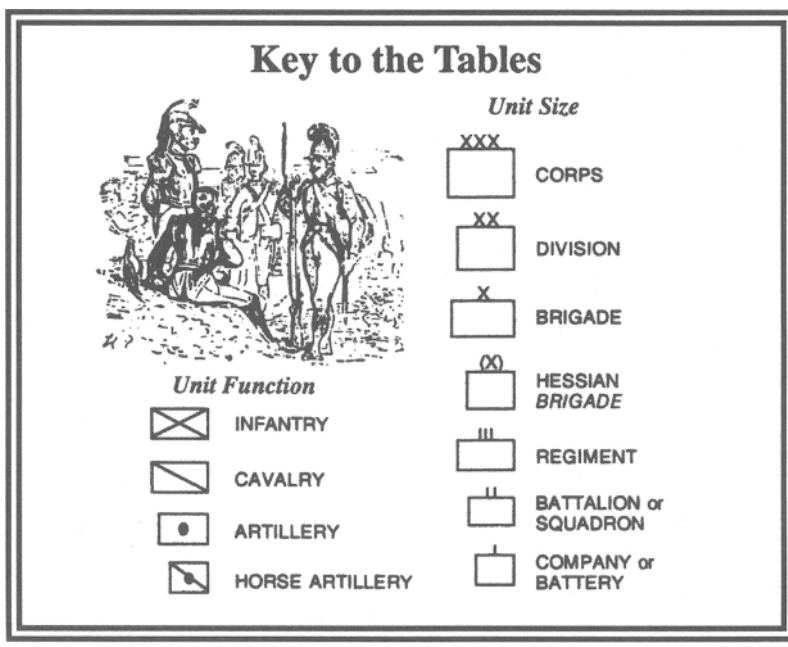
The fire of Heaven, which punishes the ungrateful, the unjust, the disloyal, has struck the Austrian Army.

It has been ground into dust, all its corps crushed. More than 20 generals have been killed or wounded; an Archduke is dead, two are wounded. More than 30,000 prisoners have been taken, a wealth of flags, cannon, munitions captured. From this army, which had dared to challenge the French, only a small remainder will return over the Inn. It is clear that here, as at Jena, the dread burden of war has fallen principally on those who began it. The Prince of Liechtenstein, one of the most outrageous, is mortally wounded.

The Emperor commanded personally yesterday, surrounded by 40,000 troops of the Confederation.

His Majesty addressed these troops and they demonstrated the greatest enthusiasm.

Rohr, between Landshut and Regensburg, 21 April 1809



Marshal Davout remarked that Napoleon could not have been better served than by these troops: given that they loyally supported a cause not their own, and followed a leader often less than generous in his treatment, a similar comment is justified in regard to the entire force.

Philip Haythornthwaite

Preface to the First Edition

I have undertaken to write this book to fill a perceived gap in the military history of the Napoleonic era: the lack of a comprehensive history of Napoleon's German troops in the English language. The troops provided by the Confederation of the Rhine (Rheinbund) played a major role in Napoleon's campaigns, fighting and dying under the Imperial Eagle from Spain's arid hills to the ice-crowned walls of the Kremlin. Loyal or treacherous, valiant or cowardly, they contributed to the great victories and were often blamed for the great defeats. Yet, despite the innumerable volumes published about the great Emperor and his time, the historian who seeks to know something of the German contingents of the Grande Armee will find endless frustration. Works by German authors are often full of fascinating detail, but tend to focus on the deeds of their specific countrymen (Kraft's *Die Württemberger in den Napoleonischen Kriegen* for example), leaving the reader wishing for a broader perspective. As might be expected, archival material and regimental histories are equally narrow in scope. The Austrian General Staff officers who compiled the 'official' Habsburg history of the 1809 campaign mention this problem while describing the engagement at Riedau on 1 May. In that combat, Baden and Württemberg cavalry regiments overwhelmed an Austrian rear guard; naturally, both units filed post-action reports, but 'the very detailed reports are remarkable in one regard, that neither has a single word to say about the participation of the other contingent'.[1]

If German chroniclers are too narrow, French military historians often pay little attention to the contributions of their German allies. The loquacious Marbot formed an extraordinarily negative impression of the Bavarian and Baden troops: the former, though 'brave enough before the enemy', were 'slack when it was necessary to work' (1812), while the latter were 'miscreants' and 'notorious for cowardice' (1813).[2] Pelet is accused of neglecting the contributions of the Badeners because of a dispute over booty during the early stages of the 1809 campaign.[3] Sauzey, though sympathetic, commits some egregious mistakes. Even careful observers, such as Buat, often err when describing the German contingents. Differences in doctrine provide further barriers to understanding. The peculiarities of Hessian organization, for example, where a *'Brigade'* was the functional equivalent of a regiment, seem to have caused endless confusion for both Napoleon's staff officers and subsequent historians. Attempts to render German unit titles into French compound the problem. Two Württemberg cavalry regiments, the *Jäger Regiment zu Pferd König* and the *Leib-Chevauxlegers-Regiment*, are often confused, since both are 'light horse' and both have titles that can be related to the 'Roi'.

English language books dealing with the soldiers of the Rheinbund are rather a rare species. Those that do exist tend to emphasize the arcana of 'uniformology' rather than the quality of the soldiery or their battle record: the knowledge that a contingent took part in the 1809 campaign does little to elucidate their actual performance. As a result, it is often easier to discover the colour of Hessian infantry sabre knots than it is to determine which units of the Grand Duchy's contingent fought and bled at Aspern.

Why 1809? Napoleon's German allies participated in many campaigns that were grander, longer, more decisive (and more bloody). The campaign against Austria in 1809, however, formed a watershed in the career of Napoleon and Imperial France. Not only did the 'Emperor of Battles' suffer his first serious reverse (Aspern), but the victory that was finally achieved on the blood-soaked Marchfeld (Wagram) did not encompass the utter eradication of the enemy's army; it was not a stunning, crushing blow to compare with the glories that crowned the campaigns of 1805, 1806 and 1807. Moreover, the Emperor himself was beginning to show signs of the pernicious weaknesses that would grow more prominent in 1812 and 1813: over-estimation of his own abilities; dangerous contempt for the foe; unwillingness to tolerate contrary opinions; and even simple physical fatigue. Nor was the French army of 1809 equal to its glorious predecessors; sapped by the brutal struggle in Spain, the power of the French military had declined while that of its enemies had increased.

The grinding war in Spain also meant that Napoleon had to rely heavily on his German allies as hostilities with Austria threatened in 1808–9; nearly 100,000 Rheinbund troops would take part in the campaign. When combat eventually opened, the contingents from these states, relegated to siege and security duties in previous campaigns, found themselves in the thick of the action. Incorporated into French divisions (e.g., the Baden and Hessian contingents) or organized into their own Corps (e.g., the Bavarian and Württemberg forces), they played crucial roles in the great battles of the campaign: Abensberg, Eggmühl, Ebelsberg, Aspern, Wagram and Znaim. At Linz, the Württembergers and Saxons fought a key battle on their own, with no French troops in the vicinity, and the Bavarians bore the brunt of the cruel war against the Tyrolian insurgency. If the performance of certain contingents was somewhat less than glorious, others fully earned their battle honours, demonstrating courage, loyalty, endurance and tactical skill under trying circumstances. The Austrian campaign of 1809 is thus the first time the soldiers of the Rheinbund performed a major combat role. Initiating a trend that would grow through 1812 and 1813, Napoleon's German allies ceased to be mere auxiliaries and found steady employment in the centre of the battle line. Finally, 1809 was a year of glory for the German soldiers under Napoleon. Whereas the Russian and Saxon campaigns were months of gruelling struggle culminating in disaster, even ignominy, the war with Austria shines brightly in the annals of the Rheinbund contingents: 'all breathed vitality, ardour and activity, all were filled with the will to victory, the will of the Emperor'.[4] It was indeed 'the most glorious campaign'.[5]

This book, then, aims to provide a battle history of the Rheinbund troops in 1809. It is not a guide to the dress, equipment or armaments of the day. Some information on uniforms is included to depict the basic colours of each contingent

(blue and white predominated), but those seeking details of buttons, buckles and busbies are referred to the efforts of uniform specialists such as the Knötels. Nor is this a history of the 1809 campaign. The first chapter provides an overview of operations to paint the broad picture and assist the reader in placing the actions of the German contingents in proper context, but details of French and Austrian operations, Marmont's march up from Dalmatia, Napoleon's decision-making process, Archduke Charles's relationship with his brother the Emperor and a host of other fascinating issues are excluded from this study. Rather, in the pages that follow, it is hoped that the reader will find a comprehensive account of the organization and combat operations of each of the German contingents that fought under Napoleon's eagles in 1809.

The reader will note that most chapters briefly address the social and political structures of the Rheinbund states. While researching this book, it became evident that an understanding of the spirit of the German soldiers in 1809 and their actions on the campaign's battlefields could only arise from a grounding in the sociopolitical environments pervading the kingdoms, duchies and principalities of early 19th-century Germany. The book thus attempts to outline the factors that shaped the soldiers and commanders: their societies, their sovereign rulers and their previous experiences with the Napoleonic military phenomenon. Furthermore, it is important to place the German contingents in the context of European military development. The very nature of war was changing as the calendar turned from the era of Frederick to that of Napoleon and the reflection of that change can be seen in the armies of France's German allies as they evolved from dynastic into national forces. This was particularly true in 1809, before French desires for political hegemony and military uniformity had erased many of the peculiarities of these small armies. From progressive Bavaria and Württemberg to stodgy Saxony (at best a reluctant participant in the nineteenth century), the Rheinbund presents a spectrum of modernizing armies, tough and professional, but altering as the norms of conflict assume new shapes.

To facilitate study (and pleasure!), the book is organized into chapters, with each chapter describing the operations of one contingent. This permits the reader to concentrate on one German ally at a time, from its background and preparations for war to the conclusion of the armistice. However, each chapter is further subdivided chronologically into sections that correspond with the principal phases of the campaign. The reader may thus proceed from chapter to chapter, phase to phase, to gain an appreciation of the operations of all the Rheinbund forces at any particular stage of the campaign. Additionally, a matrix at the end of the book provides a quick overview of the operations and battle participation of each contingent. You may chose the reading method that best suits your needs or inclinations.

A word about conventions. To deliver an account with the maximum accuracy and clarity, the following conventions have been adopted:

- titles of German regiments are presented in German, or in their most common contemporary German form (light horse regiments are thus referred to as 'Chevauxlegers' as that is the spelling most often used by German historians);

- to minimize confusion between individuals and units, those units which were known by the names of their *Inhaber* ('patrons') or commanders are presented in italics (for example, Oberst von Neuffer commanded Jäger-Bataillon *von Neuffer)*, and, to preserve the flavour of the age, units are often described in the text by both their number and their name (the Bavarian 4th Chevauxlegers are also the *Bubenhofen* Chevauxlegers);
- battalions or squadrons of a regiment are designated by Roman numerals (thus II/10 indicates the 2nd Battalion of the 10th Regiment);
- German and French rank titles are preserved insofar as this is feasible and convenient; a table at the end of the volume relates these to current US and British ranks and lists my abbreviations (e.g., Oberst von Neuffer equates to Colonel von Neuffer);
- in addition, the term 'Rheinbund' is used throughout to refer to the Confederation of the Rhine (e.g., 5th Rheinbund Regiment);
- the terms 'Allied' and 'Allies', when capitalized, refer to the French and their German confederates;
- in most cases, modern German/Austrian spellings have been used for geographical names so the reader can locate these on a present-day map or road sign (e.g., Eggmühl for Eckmühl), however, conventional Austrian names have been retained for terrain features and towns in Czechoslovakia and Hungary to minimize confusion (e.g., Raab rather than Györ, Pressburg rather than Bratislava);
- finally, in those situations where the details of an action are not clear, I will generally present the results of my own analysis in the main text and provide principal divergent views in endnotes.

This work has been a labour of love, completed with the kind assistance of many others, and I hope that you will enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Notes

1. *Krieg 1809*, prepared by the staff of the K. und K. Kriegsarchiv as part of the series *Kriege unter der Regierung des Kaisers Franz*, Wien: Seidel & Sohn, 1907–1910, vol. III, p. 268.
2. Jean-Baptiste-Antoine-Marcelin Marbot, *The Memoirs of Baron de Marbot*, Arthur J. Butler, trans., London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905, vol. II, pp. 560 and 652.
3. This rather petty dispute revolved around the rights to an Austrian supply convoy (particularly the horses) captured on 23 April; everyone's pride was injured and the affair even came to the notice of the Corps commander, Marshal Massena. It is described in great detail in Karl von Zech and Friedrich von Porbeck, *Geschichte der Badischen Truppen 1809 im Feldzug der Französischen Hauptarmee gegen Osterreich*, Rudolf von Freydorf, ed., Heidelberg: Winter, 1909, pp. VII, 48–51.
4. Rudolf von Xylander, 'Zum Gedächtnis des Feldzugs 1809 in Bayern', *Darstellungen aus der Bayerischen Kriegs- und Heeresgeschichte*, Heft 18, München: Lindauer, 1909, p. 23.
5. Marcus Junkelmann, *Napoleon und Bayern*, Regensburg: Pustet, 1985, p. 235.

Preface to the Second Edition

It is a rare treat for an author to revisit a work first published two decades ago. Other projects, most notably *Thunder on the Danube* (published by Frontline Books in three volumes, 2008–10), have given me many occasions to reread parts of *Eagles* during these twenty years. In so doing, I have found no reason to alter the basic narrative or the major conclusions. Indeed, two of these conclusions are worth restating. First, further consideration has only strengthened my conviction that 1809 was a watershed year for the Confederation of the Rhine, a war in which the Rheinbund contingents truly came into their own on the battlefield, moving from second-rate status as rear-area security troops to valued front-line combatants. Second, that we miss important distinctions if we treat Napoleon's German allies as an undifferentiated group of 'non–French' and thereby assume that their presence in an order of battle chart represents a diminution of the combat potential of the formations to which they were attached. Some contingents or individual units were clearly inferior to the French in skill and motivation, but others 'rivalled their allies in courage' as Davout said of the Hessians at Pressburg in 1809.

Though these fundamental elements remain intact, my rather battered copy of the first edition has acquired a growing body of pencilled marginal notes as I have discovered mistakes or located new material. This second edition thus provides a welcome opportunity to correct small errors in the original and to add some new information. I can now erase much of the tangled marginalia cluttering the copy on my desk! Most of the new data comes from research conducted during visits to archives in France, Germany, and Austria over the past fifteen years to support *Thunder*. Furthermore, new publications, recent reprints, and the burgeoning accessibility of books online have opened the door to numerous first-hand accounts that were unavailable during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Technical considerations and limitations of space, however, have precluded major rewrites in this second edition, so some of the engaging insights and entertaining colour I have encountered will have to await some future excursion. Instead, I have concentrated on revising and enhancing the order of battle data with new material. This allows me to present the reader with very detailed figures for the grand battles (such as the strength and composition of the Baden and Hessian contingents at Wagram) as well as the small but interesting clashes on the fringes of the principal theatre of operations (such as the French and Bavarians at Gefrees).

The format for this new edition is straightforward: small changes have simply been incorporated into the revised text; larger changes or commentary have been included in an 'Addendum' at the end of the book with alterations keyed to the relevant pages. Please note that, as in the first edition, this volume is focused on

the German troops of the Confederation of the Rhine during the war of 1809. Readers are asked to consult *Thunder on the Danube* for a more comprehensive account of the war as a whole.

This brief preface would be incomplete without an expression of my sincere thanks to Lionel Leventhal for setting me on this rewarding road in the first place, and to Michael Leventhal for suggesting this revised edition. I am most grateful for both of these opportunities. It is our hope that this new edition will provide some unique new material for old friends while introducing a new generation of readers to the intricacies of the Rheinbund armies in this pivotal year of their ephemeral existence.

Finally, my most heartfelt thanks go, as always, to Anne Rieman (still steady in the cannon's roar), to Grant Rieman Gill (still a source of joy and more), and to Hunter John Gill (who has been good enough to join us since the publication of the original edition). These little forays into the Napoleonic past would not be possible without their tolerance, encouragement, and smiles.

Part I
The Campaign in the Danube Valley

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Clash of Empires

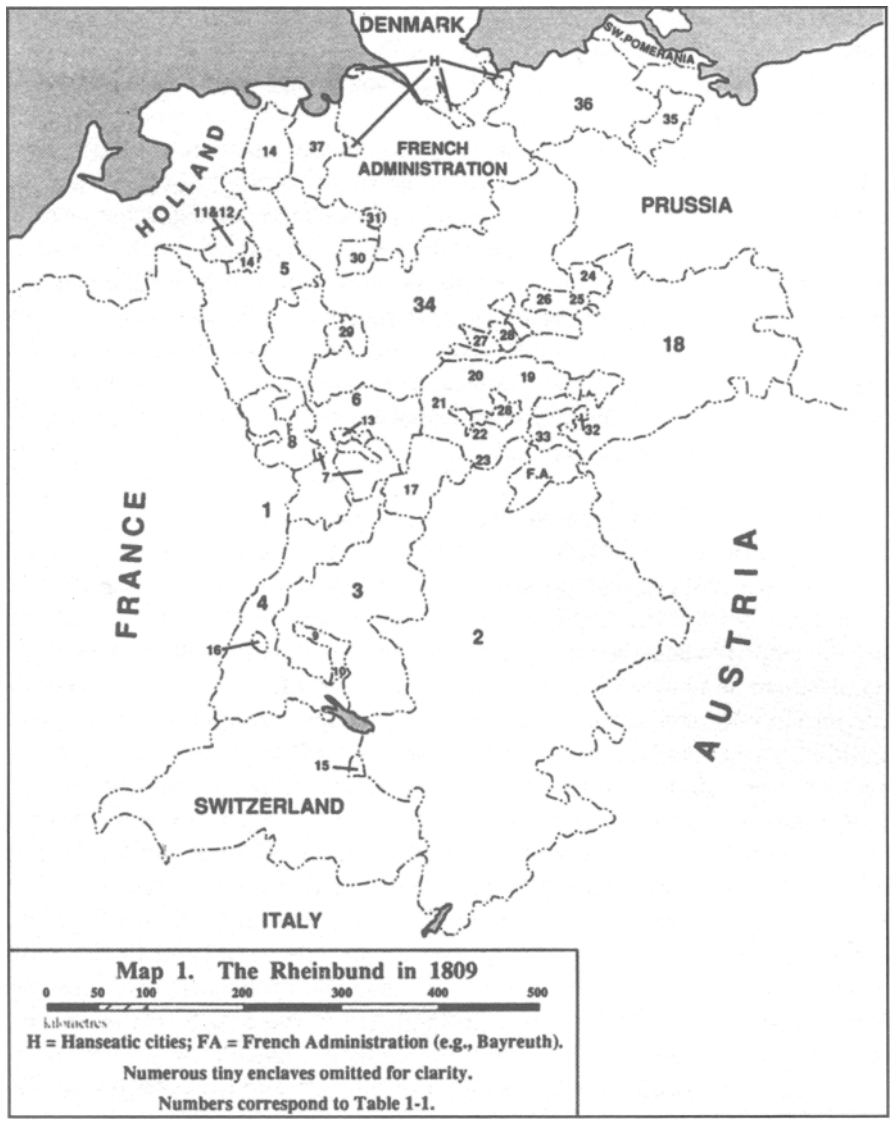
Early on the morning of 10 April 1809, shivering Bavarian cavalry pickets peered across the murky River Inn to see Austrian horsemen looming out of the fog on the far bank. They were the outriders of a huge host, 120,000 warriors of the Habsburg Empire whose twisting columns stretched along muddy roads twenty-five kilometres to the east. The Bavarian troopers did not wait to be accosted but spurred their mounts and sped west with news of the invasion. The War of 1809 had begun.

It was to be a clash of empires: ancient, reactionary Austrian and brash, revolutionary French, in no little part occasioned by the desire in both Vienna and Paris to control the destiny and resources of the multitude of states that made up central Germany. In 1809, however, those states, bound together in a political entity called the Confederation of the Rhine, were allies of Napoleon and their armies fought alongside French Imperial eagles. Optimistic Habsburg courtiers might hope to rouse the Germans against their French Emperor, but they were to be bitterly disappointed: as Austrian pioneers struggled to bridge the broad Inn, 100,000 soldiers of the Confederation, Napoleon's German allies, were burnishing their bayonets and preparing for war.

The Confederation of the Rhine

One of the principal political aims of Imperial France was the expansion of French influence in central Germany at the expense of the Austrian and Prussian monarchies. As French relations with Germany evolved, a number of schemes were developed to achieve this goal, but in their basic outlines all envisioned the establishment of a union of German states under French protection to replace the decrepit Holy Roman Empire and formalize Napoleon's influence in Germany. In addition to extending French power across the Rhine, this plan was also intended to provide for the security of France itself. Given the violent nature of the age and the sustained opposition to Napoleon's imperial pretensions, the safety of Napoleonic France was a key consideration in Paris and the German policy included an important military component that would serve to enhance French security in several ways. First, it would increase the French Empire's military strength *vis-à-vis* its chief enemies. Not only would anti-French coalitions be deprived of key military resources, particularly the manpower provided under the aegis of the Holy Roman Empire, but it was hoped that these same resources would produce allied armies to augment France's own forces in the field. Second, although the wars of the Revolutionary and Consular periods had pushed France's borders to the Rhine, its numerous opponents to the east still

stirred great concern in the French leadership. A belt of friendly German states east of the Rhine (a *marche militaire*), armed and trained by the victorious Grande Armée and integrated into its command structure, would create a comfortable buffer between the borders of *la Patrie* and its foes. Moreover, the creation of French dependencies in Germany would establish a firm foundation upon which France might build for the future, a framework through which French cultural, political, social, and above all, military norms might be infused into central Germany. The multitude of princes across the Rhine would thus identify their interests with those of Paris and abjure the threats and blandishments of Vienna, Berlin and St. Petersburg. Finally, the establishment of a series of loyal allied monarchies whose ruling families had deep roots in Europe's aristocratic past



Map 1. The Rheinbund in 1809

would serve to legitimize the upstart Napoleonic dynasty in France and lay the groundwork for its continued existence.[1]

The first major step toward the implementation of Napoleon's German policy came in 1805 when Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden signed bilateral agreements with France to supply auxiliary troops for the Grande Armée. The thunderous victory in that campaign gave the Emperor the power and prestige he needed to reshape Germany according to his own designs and established the preconditions for the further expansion of French hegemony over the 'Third Germany,' a rubric embracing the small states caught between Austria and Prussia. Work on the German union began in earnest that winter and culminated in July 1806 with the signature of the 'constitutional act' of the Confederation of the Rhine (Rheinbund) by Napoleon and fifteen German sovereigns. Although broad in scope, this act in practice was basically a military alliance and most of its subsidiary provisions were never exercised or developed (e.g., legislative and judicial features). Each member state was thus required to supply a contingent of troops in case of war, the contingents varying in size according to the population of the state; Bavaria, for example, as the largest German member, agreed to put an army of 30,000 into the field, whereas the Prince von der Leyen was called upon to commit only 29 of his subjects. Napoleon, as the 'Protector' of the Confederation, obligated France to provide 200,000 men for the common defence.

The campaign of 1806–7 against Prussia and Russia saw the first test of the new alliance and most of the member nations eventually contributed troops to the Grande Armée. Some of the original signatories were able to mobilize their forces

Table 1-1: Rheinbund States and Contingents

Original Member States (July 1806)	Populations	Contingents required by treaty	Actually participated in 1809 campaign (approx.)**
1. Empire of France	1. 36,559,000	1. 200,000	1. over 210,000 * [plus Italian formations]
2. Kingdom of Bavaria	2. 3,231,000	2. 30,000	2. 47,000
3. Kingdom of Württemberg	3. 1,211,000	3. 12,000	3. 19,700
4. Grand Duchy of Baden	4. 924,000	4. 8,000	4. 7,600 *
5. Grand Duchy of Berg	5. 931,000	5. 7,000	5. 2,500 *
6. Grand Duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt	6. 541,000	6. 4,000	6. 4,800 *
7. State of the Prince Primate	7. 170,000	7. 1,680	7. 600 *
8. Duchy of Nassau	8. 272,000	8. 1,680	8. 1,550 *
9. Principality of Hohenzollern-Hechingen	9. 14,000	9. 97	9. 181 *
10. Principality of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen	10. 36,000	10. 193	10. [included with Hechingen]
11. Principality of Salm-Salm	11. 30,000	11. 323	11. [troops provided by Nassau]
12. Principality of Salm-Kyrburg	12. 19,000	12. [included with Salm-Salm]	12. [troops provided by Nassau]
13. Principality of Isenburg-Birstein	13. 43,000	13. 350	13. 200 *
14. Duchy of Aremberg	14. 58,600	14. 379	14. [troops provided by Nassau]
15. Principality of Liechtenstein	15. 5,000	15. 40	15. [troops provided by Nassau]
16. Principality of Hohengeroldseck (von der Leyen)	16. 4,500	16. 29	16. [troops provided by Nassau]
Joined September 1806			
17. Grand Duchy of Würzburg	17. 285,000	17. 2,000	17. 220 *
Joined December 1806			
18. Kingdom of Saxony [Grand Duchy of Warsaw added in 1807]	18. 1,987,000	18. 20,000	18. 23,380 [plus Polish formations]
19. Duchy of Sachsen-Weimar	19. 109,000	19. 800	19. 2,506
20. Duchy of Sachsen-Gotha-Altenburg	20. 180,000	20. 1,100	20. [included with Weimar]
21. Duchy of Sachsen-Meiningen	21. 48,000	21. 300	21. [included with Weimar]
22. Duchy of Sachsen-Hildburghausen	22. 33,000	22. 200	22. [included with Weimar]
23. Duchy of Sachsen-Koburg-Saalfeld	23. 59,000	23. 400	23. [included with Weimar]
Joined in April 1807			
24. Duchy of Anhalt-Bernburg	24. 35,000	24. 240	24. 840
25. Duchy of Anhalt-Dessau	25. 53,000	25. 350	25. [included with Bernburg]
26. Duchy of Anhalt-Köthen	26. 28,800	26. 210	26. [included with Bernburg]
27. Principality of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen	27. 45,000	27. 325	27. 480 *
28. Principality of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt	28. 52,000	28. 325	28. [included with Sondershausen] *
29. Principality of Waldeck	29. 47,800	29. 400	29. 250 *
30. Principality of Lippe-Detmold	30. 70,500	30. 500	30. 520 *
31. Principality of Schaumburg-Lippe	31. 20,000	31. 150	31. [included with Detmold] *
32. Possessions of the senior Princes of Reuß	32. 26,000	32. 450	32. 254 *
33. Possessions of the junior Princes of Reuß	33. 56,000	33. [included with senior Princes]	33. [included with senior Princes] *
34. Kingdom of Westphalia	34. 1,942,000	34. 25,000 [part provided by France]	34. 8,000 *
Joined February 1808			
35. Duchy of Mecklenburg-Strelitz	35. 70,000	35. 400	35. 320
36. Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin	36. 328,600	36. 1,900	36. 1,400
Joined October 1808			
37. Duchy of Oldenburg	37. 159,500	37. 800	37. 600

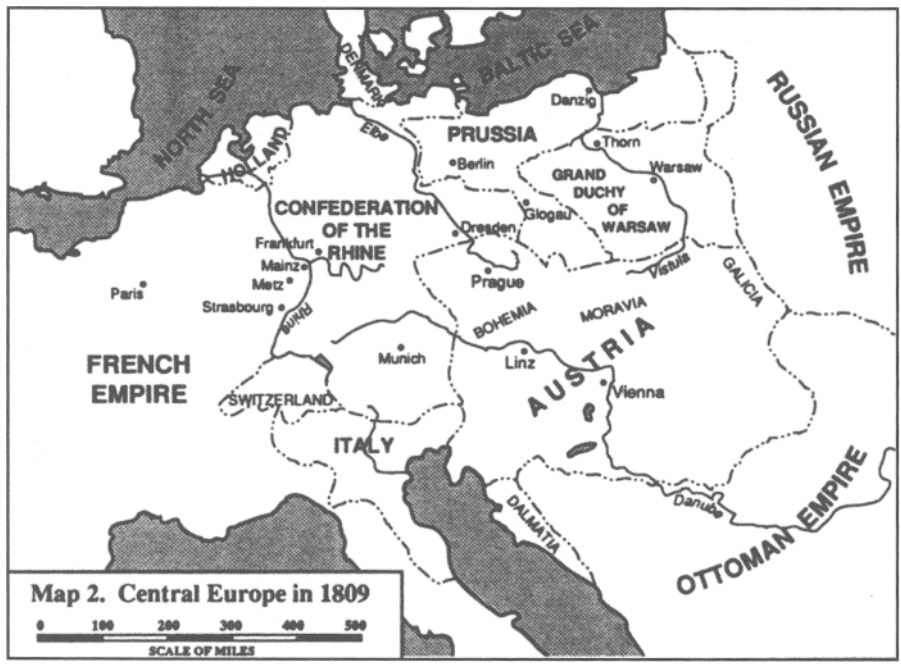
* Indicates this state also had elements of its contingent in Spain.
** All figures approximate to indicate magnitude of each monarchy's contribution. Where second line troops played a role in the campaign, their numbers are counted in the total (e.g., Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, Saxony).

in time for the autumn fighting of 1806, but most found themselves unprepared for the pace of Napoleonic warfare and were unable to field effective contingents before the onset of winter. Winter and spring, however, saw a host of Rheinbund contingents in Prussia and Poland, principally involved in securing Napoleon's long lines of communication or prosecuting the multitude of sieges against Prussian and Swedish fortresses holding out behind the main French army. Even the newest members of the Confederation, states like Saxony and the tiny Saxon Duchies that had been Prussian allies up to the Jena–Auerstädt débâcle, sent men to the front under French command, the Saxon cavalry being one of the few Allied contingents to participate in the grand battles of 1807. The campaign demonstrated the viability of the alliance and the value of the German troops (at least for rear area duties), but also highlighted some significant problems. Chief among these was the outdated structure of most of the German contingents and the resultant difficulty of integrating them into the modern French military machine. Over the next several years, therefore, most of Napoleon's German allies, either independently or under French pressure, embarked upon programmes of rapid military reform and, over time, most of the Allied armies took on an increasingly French complexion.[2]

Napoleon's juggernaut will dragged thousands of these German troops into the war with Spain starting in 1808 and only the largest Rheinbund states, such as Bavaria, Württemberg and Saxony, were able to evade the onerous responsibility of hurling their young men into the Iberian cauldron.[3] When war with the Habsburg Empire came in the spring of 1809, many of the German contingents would thus be incomplete, large portions of their armies having been swallowed by the insatiable Spanish conflict. The requirements of that dreadful struggle, however, also occupied the majority of France's veteran troops and Napoleon's Rheinbund Allies would therefore assume an unprecedented first line role in the grand battles of the 1809 campaign against Austria.

Thunder on the Danube – The 1809 War with Austria

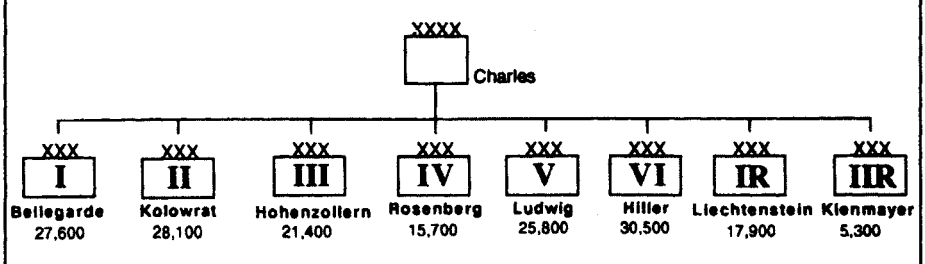
For many in Austria, the spring of 1809 seemed to offer a clear opportunity to reassert Habsburg influence in Germany and avenge the humiliations Napoleon had inflicted on the ancient dynasty in 1797, 1800 and 1805. With most of the French Army and the dreaded Emperor of Battles himself off in the wilds of Spain, bogged down in a guerrilla quagmire, the military situation seemed propitious.[4] The political landscape appeared equally promising. In Germany, a host of patriots more zealous than realistic were anxious to persuade Vienna that the entire Teutonic population was ready to rise up and throw off the Napoleonic 'yoke'. The Tyrol, too, chafing under Bavarian rule, was restive and leaders of its fiercely independent inhabitants were already in contact with Austrian agents. To the east, quiet assurances from St. Petersburg indicated that the huge Russian Army would intervene slowly, if at all, should war come (despite the promises given to Napoleon by the Tsar at Erfurt the previous autumn). In Vienna, then, the war party slowly gained dominance and by February 1809 the lumbering Habsburg military machine, over the objections of its generalissimo, the Archduke Charles, was irrevocably committed to war.

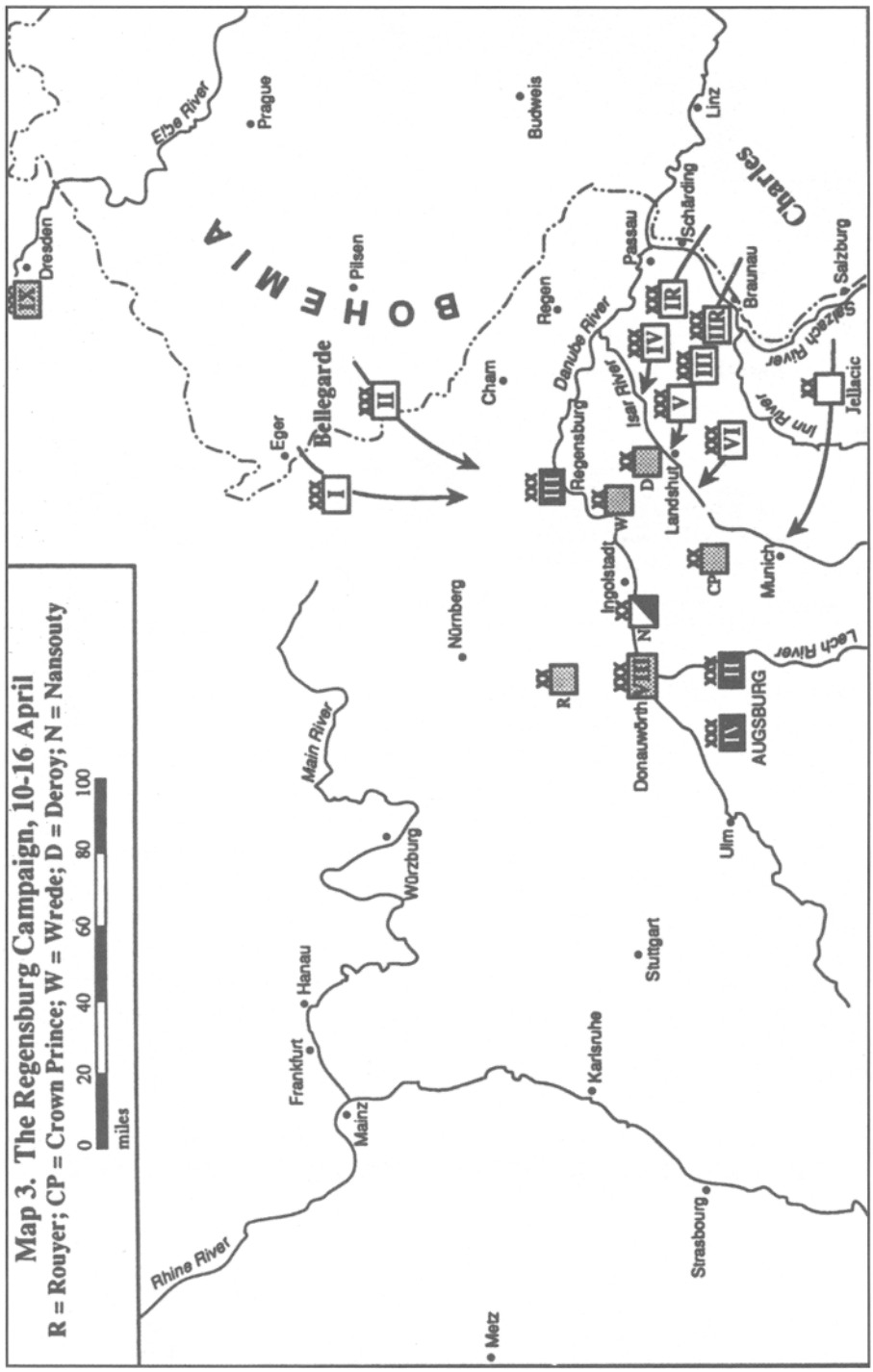


APRIL: The War Opens and the Tide Turns

Austrian strategy in 1809 was offensive and an army of invasion was committed to each area where the Habsburg Empire bordered on the territory of France and its vassal states. The main effort would be made in the Danube valley, where Archduke Charles would invade Napoleon's largest German ally, Bavaria, at the head of eight army corps (I to VI, plus I and II Reserve). Several strategic options for the employment of this large host were considered, but the Habsburg military pundits eventually settled on a plan which sent six of the Main Army's (*Hauptarmee*) corps across the River Inn in the general direction of Landshut in the hopes of catching the French by surprise and destroying their scattered units one by one. In the meantime, the remaining two corps (I and II under the overall command of General der Kavallerie Graf Bellegarde) would debouch from Bohemia and approach the Danube from the north to pin French forces in that

Table 1-2: Austrian Forces in the Danube Valley (April)




Map 3. The Regensburg Campaign, 10-16 April
R = Rouyer; CP = Crown Prince; W = Wrede; D = Deroy; N = Nansouty
0 20 40 60 80 100
miles
BOHEMIA
Elbe River
Prague
Budweis
Linz
Dresden
Pilsen
Eger
Bellegarde
Cham
Regen
Danube River
Passau
Schärding
Braunau
Salzburg
Salzach River
Inn River
Jellacic
Charles
Regensburg
Isar River
Landshut
Ingolstadt
Munich
Nürnberg
Main River
Würzburg
Hanau
Frankfurt
Mainz
Karlsruhe
Stuttgart
Donauwörth
Ulm
AUGSBURG
Lech River
Strasbourg
Rhine River
Metz

direction. Secondary efforts were to be mounted in Poland (VII Corps) and Italy (VIII and IX Corps), while a small detachment pushed into the vales of the Tyrol to support that province's insurrection. Meanwhile, it was hoped that the Austrian declaration of war would rouse the peoples of Germany to a nationalistic struggle against the French and thereby force Napoleon to cope with a major uprising in his rear area. The war would thus span Europe from the Baltic to the Adriatic and from the Rhine to the Vistula with five principal theatres of operations: the Danube valley; the Tyrol and the Vorarlberg; the southern front (Italy, Dalmatia, Hungary); north-central Germany; and Poland.

On the French side, the situation was somewhat tense but not dire. Napoleon had long recognized Austria's belligerent intentions and even while campaigning in Spain, he had taken steps to concentrate the French troops dispersed in garrisons all across the face of Germany. With a large proportion of his men still tied down south of the Pyrenees, however, the Emperor realized that he would have to lean heavily on his German allies in any conflict with the Habsburgs. On 15 January, he had therefore sent a series of letters to the Rheinbund monarchs, directing them to put their contingents on a war footing and await further orders. Two days later, he left Spain for Paris. As a result of these orders, a large army was assembling in southern Germany by early April: Davout's huge III Corps was moving on Regensburg (Ratisbonne), Massena was slowly collecting a two-corps force along the River Lech (his own IV Corps and II Corps temporarily under Général de Division Oudinot), and the Guard was making the uncomfortable journey from Spain in hurriedly requisitioned wagons.[5] In addition, more than 58,000 Rheinbund troops were already along the Danube or en route: the three Bavarian divisions (Lefebvre's VII Corps) stretched in a thin screen from Munich to Straubing; the Württembergers (VIII Corps, Vandamme) around Heidenheim;

Table 1-3: French/Allied Forces in the Danube Valley (April)

XXXX Napoleon

II Oudinot 21,300	III Davout 60,500	IV Massena 37,500	VII Lefebvre 27,600	VIII Vandamme 12,700
1st Inf Div GD Tharreau	1st Inf Div GD Morand	1st Inf Div GD Legrand	1st Div Crown Prince Ludwig	Inf Div GL Neubronn
2nd Inf Div GD Claparède	2nd Inf Div GD Friant	2nd Inf Div GD Carra Saint-Cyr	2nd Div GL Wrede	Cav Div GL Wöllwarth
Lt Cav Bde GB Colbert	3rd Inf Div GD Gudin	3rd Inf Div GD Molitor	3rd Div GL Deroy	
3rd Hvy Cav Div GD d'Espagne	4th Inf Div GD St. Hilaire	4th Inf Div GD Boudet		
	Res Inf Div GD Demont	Lt Cav Div GB Marulaz		
	Lt Cav Div GD Montbrun			
	2nd Hvy Cav Div GD St. Sulpice			

Unattached Divisions

XX 1st Hvy Nansouty 5,300

XX Rouyer 6,100

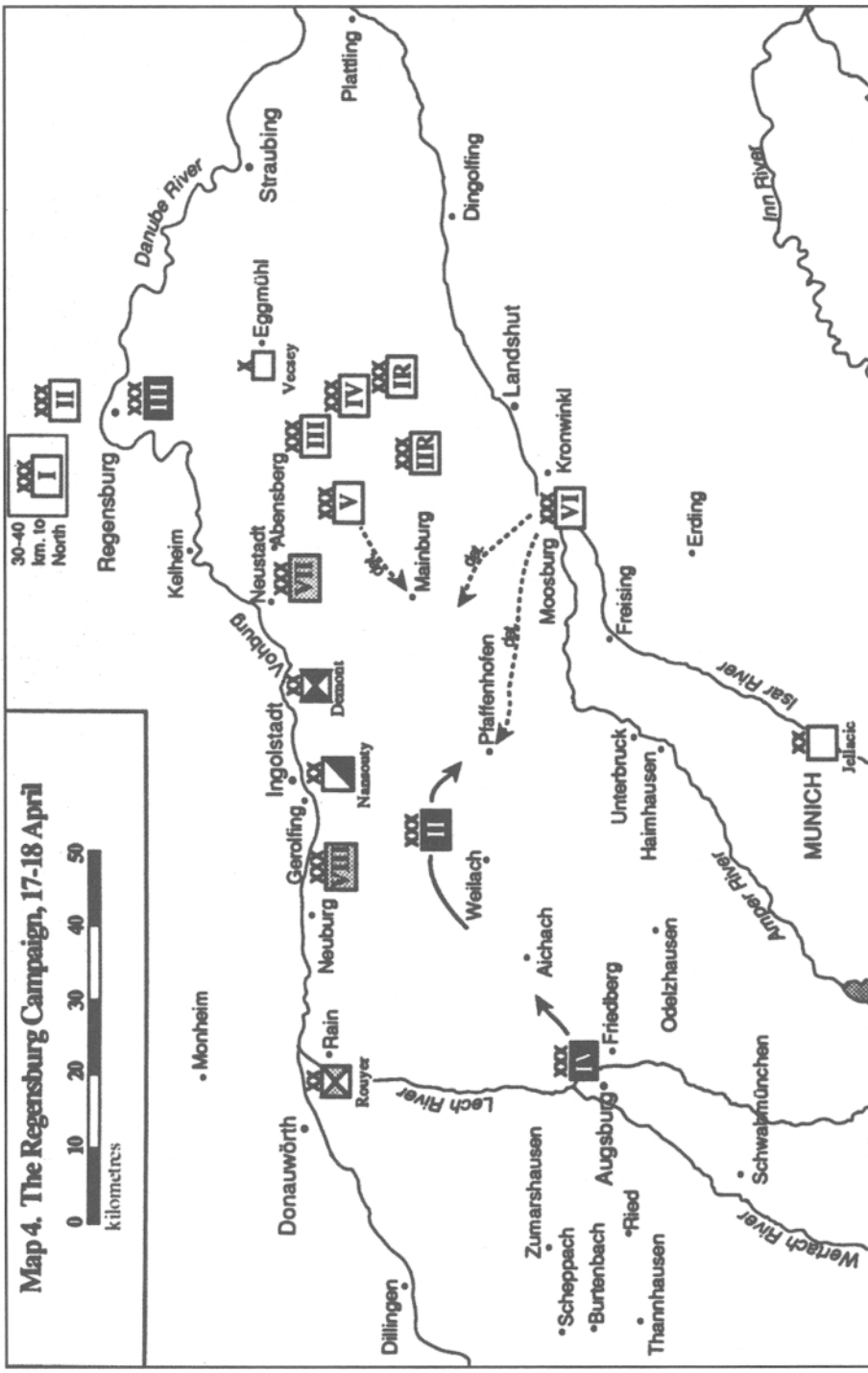
En Route:
Imperial Guard
IX Corps (Bernadotte)
Dupas' Division of one infantry and one cavalry brigade
various march formations

the Baden and Hessian Brigades with Massena's Corps; and Rouyer's German Division gathering at Würzburg. Another 16,300 (Saxon IX Corps under Bernadotte) were soon to follow and 25,000 more Confederation soldiers (many under King Jerome's X Corps) were being organized to secure French and Rheinbund interests within the bounds of Germany itself. Napoleon, confident that the Austrians would not attack prior to 15 April, remained in Paris, leaving the immediate direction of affairs in the hands of his Chief of Staff, Marshal Alexander Berthier.

The Danube Valley: Invasion and Repulse

10–17 April (Austrian): To the French Emperor's surprise, Charles launched his offensive on 10 April, crossing the Inn with IV Corps and I Reserve Corps on the right at Schärding, III Corps in the centre, and the remaining three corps at Braunau on the left; yet further to the left, a detached division under Feldmarschall-Leutnant (FML) Jellacic advanced on Munich from Salzburg (total strength of the Main Army, including Jellacic, about 128,000). With the Allied Army still concentrating, the invaders faced no real resistance, but their advance was painfully slow and the leading corps did not reach the Isar until the morning of the 16th. At Landshut, the main Austrian column attempted to cross but was delayed for several hours by the skilful defence of General-Leutnant (GL) Deroy's outnumbered 3rd Bavarian Division. Deroy, however, isolated and exposed, was forced to withdraw when he learned that Austrian forces had pushed over the river on both his northern (IV Corps near Dingolfing) and southern (VI Corps at Moosburg) flanks. Charles spent the following day bringing his army across the Isar and the evening of the 17th found him disposed with three of the regular corps (III, IV, V) and both reserve corps concentrated along the roads leading north and north-west from Landshut. All seemed to be going well for the Austrians, but the army's command structure was proving clumsy, movements were torpid and Charles was already beginning to weaken himself by detachments. On the extreme right of the main body, for example, General-Major (GM) Vécsey probed toward Regensburg with his brigade, while another detached command (albeit mostly second-rate Landwehr) remained behind to blockade the Bavarian fortress at Passau. On the left, FML Hiller's VI Corps was held at Moosburg to shield the army's southern flank and Jellacic's command capped its progress with an unopposed entrance into the Bavarian capital. The seizure of Munich seemed to typify Austrian operations: it discomfited Bavaria's King Max but did nothing to support Charles's larger plans and only served to deprive the main army of 9,300 men in the coming battles. Finally, Bellegarde's two corps (49,400) north of the Danube, slow, cautious and dispersed about the countryside, were equally useless, doing almost nothing to pin Davout's forces or divert French attention.

10–17 April (French): Despite these weaknesses on the Austrian side, Berthier's actions in the first week of the invasion had thrown the French army into even greater confusion and Charles stood on the threshold of a rare opportunity to defeat the isolated Allied forces in detail. Napoleon's invaluable Chief of Staff was over his head as the *de facto* army commander. The French and their Allies


Map 4. The Regensburg Campaign, 17-18 April
0 10 20 30 40 50
kilometres
30-40 km. to North
Danube River
Regensburg
Straubing
Plattling
Eggmühl
Vecsey
Dingolfing
Landshut
Kelheim
Neustadt
Abensberg
Mainburg
Kronwinkl
Moosburg
Erding
Freising
Inn River
Isar River
Vohburg
Ingolstadt
Pfaffenhofen
Unterbruck
Haimhausen
MUNICH
Jellacic
Gerolfing
Neuburg
Weilach
Aichach
Upper Pfaffenhofen
Monheim
Rain
Rouyer
Lech River
Friedberg
Odelzhausen
Donauwörth
Zumarshausen
Augsburg
Schwabmünchen
Scheppach
Burtenbach
Ried
Thannhausen
Dillingen
Werlach River

thus spent the early days of the campaign marching and countermarching with no clear picture of the enemy situation or their own leader's intentions.[6] As a result, the army that had been scattered from Munich to Nuremberg when the enemy crossed the Inn was still divided seven days into the campaign. Specifically, Berthier's oft-changed directions had brought the army to the following positions by 17 April: Massena, on the far right, was slowly assembling his two corps (II and IV) on the Lech around Augsburg; Lefebvre's Bavarians (VII Corps) were just south of the Danube, moving on Ingolstadt; the Württembergers and Rouyer's men were collecting in the vicinity of Donauwörth; and Davout (III Corps) was in and around Regensburg.[7] Davout's situation was thus critical. Dangerously exposed at Regensburg with a good day's march separating him from the nearest support (the VII Corps' elements approaching Vohburg), he might be cut off and hurled into the Danube if the Austrians moved swiftly. This was the situation when Napoleon reached Donauwörth on 17 April.

17–18 April: The appearance of the Emperor brought an abrupt shift in French operations and a flood of messages immediately began to issue from Imperial headquarters. As harried couriers splashed through the wretched April weather with decisive orders to concentrate and march, word of Napoleon's arrival spread and a palpable thrill seemed to course through the entire army, French and German alike. Infused with an offensive spirit, these men were now set on the road according to the plan Napoleon was rapidly developing. Although this plan would change in the ensuing days as new information came into headquarters, in its general outlines, it remained the same. It consisted of two basic components. First, Davout was to slip to the west from Regensburg, join Lefebvre and Vandamme near Abensberg and then strike south towards Landshut. Second, Massena and Oudinot were directed to march on the same town with all speed in an effort to cut the Austrian lines of communication and trap Charles' Army against the Danube.

During the night and throughout the 18th, French forces hastened to comply with the master's will: Davout brought his entire Corps south of the Danube at Regensburg and prepared to move west; Lefebvre's men turned about at Vohburg and headed for Abensberg, Vandamme close behind; and Massena belatedly got his two corps moving on the afternoon of the 18th.

19 April (Engagements at Teugn and Arnhofen): Davout's Corps began moving toward Abensberg early on the 19th and collided with elements of the Austrian III and IV Corps probing cautiously north toward the Danube. The ensuing struggle, focused principally around the ridges between Teugn and Hausen, was sanguinary, but by the end of the day, the French clearly held the advantage. Davout, the Iron Marshal, had once again demonstrated his tactical mastery and the initiative was already beginning to slip from Charles's hands.

While III (Hohenzollern) and IV (Rosenberg) Corps were trading musket balls with Davout, the Austrian flanks were also in motion. On the right, Liechtenstein led an *ad hoc* force toward Regensburg's walls. On the left, Hiller's VI Corps was now generally around Mainburg, still some distance from the main body, and Archduke Ludwig with V and II Reserve Corps moved up to the east bank of the

River Abens. Two small commands connected Ludwig on the Abens with Hohenzollern at Hausen: one at Bachl under GM Pfanzelter, the other, commanded by GM Thierry, had detachments at Kirchdorf and Gaden. The latter now came into contact with Lefebvre's troops as the Bavarian VII Corps moved up through Abensberg to link with Davout. Thierry thus clashed with the Bavarian 1st Division between Abensberg and Arnhofen (the Austrians taking the worst of the encounter), while Ludwig's gunners engaged in an inconsequential cannonade with Wrede's 2nd Division at Biburg.

Farther south and west, Oudinot overpowered a detachment of Hiller's Corps at Pfaffenhofen as Massena drove his men east by forced marches towards Landshut.

By 19 April, therefore, the preconditions for Napoleon's subsequent operations had been established: Davout had been linked to Lefebvre, the centre of the army had been fairly well concentrated west of the Abens, Massena was en route for the Isar, and the initiative was rapidly swinging to the French.

20 April (Battle of Abensberg): Operations over the next four days can be viewed as taking place along the arms of a great 'V: starting at Abensberg, the top of the left leg, Napoleon's offensive would initially take him to the base of the 'V at Landshut, where he achieved a clearer understanding of Austrian dispositions and turned north up the right leg toward Regensburg. The 20th opened with an attack by the Bavarian 1st Division, supported on their right by a pair of Württemberg light battalions. Directed from Abensberg due east toward Thierry's position at Offenstetten, the attack was intended to connect with a French provisional corps under Marshal Lannes (newly arrived from Spain) driving through Bachl to Rohr.[8] The well-conducted Bavarian attack was very successful and Thierry's little brigade, attempting to retreat to Bachl was trapped between the two Allied columns and destroyed. The Bavarian infantry remained at Bachl for the night while the French continued through Rohr to the Laaber at Rottenburg, where they were halted by Hiller's men, moving up the stream from Mainburg. On the Allied right, Bavarians and Württembergers under Wrede and Vandamme gradually pushed Ludwig back some 15 kilometres to Pfeffenhausen, which Wrede entered in a dramatic midnight charge. By the first dark hours of the 21st, therefore, the Austrian left wing (V, VI, and II Reserve Corps) had been severely battered and Napoleon had closed on the Laaber with major elements of three corps ready to resume the pursuit with the dawn.

Action on Davout's front had been limited. Charles had swung the Austrian III Corps back toward the Laaber so that his main line now ran almost north to south from Regensburg to Leierndorf, but the French marshal's men had only followed this movement and no serious fighting occurred. Unfortunately for the French, the 20th also saw the fall of Regensburg, the city's garrison (65th Ligne) having been forced to surrender when threatened by Liechtenstein from the south and Kolowrat (part of II Corps) from the north. Most of Bellegarde's two corps (more than 40,000 men), however, spent the day far north of the Danube, tying down about 1,500 French troops (an infantry battalion and a chasseur regiment).

21 April (Landshut and Schierling): The locus of action stayed with Napoleon's

right on the 21st as he pursued the bewildered Austrian left to Landshut. While he led Lannes' Corps and a host of French and Bavarian cavalry south on the road from Rottenburg, Vandamme and Wrede pushed towards the Isar along the Pfeffenhausen route. Desperate fighting by the Austrian rear guard delayed the Allies briefly on the plains north of the city, but the Habsburg troops were soon scattered and French grenadiers stormed a burning bridge into Landshut itself, followed by cheering Bavarians and Württembergers. Hiller beat a hasty retreat to Neumarkt, making better time than he had during his advance a week earlier, but delays on the part of Massena's command had limited the scope of the French victory. The veteran marshal had indeed arrived on Hiller's left south of the Isar in the early afternoon, but his subordinates had initially refrained from launching a determined attack into the Austrian flank and the opportunity for a crushing blow quickly slipped away. None the less, it was a significant triumph and Napoleon could be justly proud of the performance of his French, Bavarian and Württemberg soldiers.

To the north, the day had seen Davout push his left wing south to the Laaber, link with Deroy's 3rd Bavarian Division, and drive north-east along the stream toward Schierling. That village duly fell to the Allies, but the rest of the day was spent pinning the Austrians in place, Davout hesitating to continue his attack against the numerically superior Habsburg forces. Bellegarde's command remained north of the Danube.

22 April (Battle of Eggmühl): Napoleon had been convinced that the force fleeing before him at Landshut was the main Austrian army, but at about 2 a.m. on the 22nd, fresh messages from Davout opened his eyes to the real Habsburg dispositions. He consequently issued orders for the bulk of the army to head north immediately. By dawn, a long column of muddy figures was surging up the Regensburg highway from Landshut, while Marshal Bessières (like Lannes, recently arrived from Spain) led Wrede's and Marulaz's Divisions in the pursuit of Hiller. The crack Württemberg Light Brigade led Napoleon's main body, reaching and storming the tiny village of Eggmühl in mid-afternoon as the rest of the army deployed on the heights south of the Laaber. Arriving on this dominant high ground, the Emperor surveyed Rosenberg's IV Corps on the hills to north and gave the signal for a general advance. Davout instantly sent his men against the Austrian right, while Lannes threw his two divisions across the stream at Rosenberg's left; in the centre, a mass of several thousand Allied horsemen pressed towards the key to Rosenberg's position, a battery of sixteen guns above Eggmühl. The white-coated battalions resisted bravely, but their situation was hopeless and, as the Bavarian, French and Württemberg cavalry overran his central battery, Rosenberg ordered a rapid retreat. The jubilant Allies quickly took up the pursuit, French cuirassiers and Württemberg light horse crushing a Habsburg mounted brigade at Alteglofsheim as the moon rose. The chase was finally brought to a halt by night, French exhaustion, and Austrian reserves (II Corps had finally been brought south of the Danube that morning), but the Habsburg Main Army had clearly suffered a major reverse and Charles had little choice but to continue the withdrawal the next morning.

23 April (Storming of Regensburg): The final battle of the Regensburg Campaign

was fought on the 23rd as Charles attempted to extricate his army from the trap south of the Danube. An enormous cavalry struggle surged back and forth across the fields south of the old Imperial capital that morning as the Austrian horsemen sacrificed themselves to gain time for the rest of the army to escape. In the end, despite the extraordinary heroics of Lannes' and Davout's men, Charles managed to get most of his troops across the river safely, destroying the bridges behind him and retreating toward the Bohemian mountains.

The attack at Regensburg had occupied only a portion of Napoleon's army however: IV Corps marched to Straubing where it might be in a position to outflank the Austrians north of the river; the Bavarian 1st Division headed for Landshut; and Bessières continued his pursuit of Hiller, reaching Neumarkt on the River Rott by nightfall.

24–30 April (Pursuit): The final week of April was generally characterized by Austrian retreat and French pursuit. Davout thus followed Charles north of the Danube as the Habsburg Main Army withdrew into Bohemia, but Napoleon had decided to march directly on Vienna and the bulk of the Allied host marched east for the crossings over the Inn and the Salzach. Hiller, ignorant of the Main Army's defeat, checked Bessières' progress briefly when he turned and struck the 2nd Bavarian Division at Neumarkt on the 24th, but quickly headed east again when the true situation became clear. Napoleon moved his army in three principal columns: on the left, Massena's IV Corps marched along the southern bank of the Danube from Straubing toward Passau; Lefebvre took the bulk of VII Corps (1st and 3rd Divisions) through Landshut and Munich on the right to expel Jellacic from Bavaria; and the Emperor himself led the central column through Landshut to Burghausen on the Inn (II Corps, Württembergers and most of the cavalry).[9] Wrede was an exception to this general pattern; Napoleon sent him south from Neumarkt toward Salzburg in an effort to trap Jellacic. That Austrian general, however, had finally departed Munich on the 26th and was able to stay just ahead of the pursuing Bavarians. None the less, Lefebvre united his Corps in Salzburg on the last day of the month and Jellacic, exhausted and badly outnumbered, was compelled to retire into the mountains south of the city. The other two Allied columns were also along the Inn–Salzach line as the month closed: Napoleon at Burghausen and Braunau, Massena at Schärding and Passau. Davout, once it was obvious that Charles no longer posed a serious threat, was brought back south of the Danube and, by the 30th, he had reached Plattling on the Isar with his lead elements.

This initial phase of the 1809 campaign was a signal success for Napoleon: at a cost to his army of 16,300 killed, wounded and missing, he had speedily evicted the Austrians from Bavaria, gained the strategic initiative, inflicted some 44,700 casualties on his foes, and captured 73 of their guns. Still, the Habsburg Main Army had not been destroyed and Kaiser Franz remained as determined as ever to prosecute the war.

The Tyrol: Initial Insurgent Success

Napoleon's triumph around Regensburg was an ominous sign for the Tyrolian rebels, enjoying a degree of self-government after evicting the hated Bavarians

from their mountainous land. On 10 April, as Charles crossed the Inn, the Tyrolians rose against their Bavarian overlords and, by the 13th, some 4,000 Bavarians and 2,000 Frenchmen together with all their guns and equipment were in the hands of the jubilant insurgents. The only bright spot on the gloomy landscape was the stout resistance offered by the little fortress of Kufstein. Though shocked and embarrassed by the sudden disaster, the Bavarians could do almost nothing in response; the outcome of the war would not be decided in the Tyrol but in the Danube valley and every available soldier was committed against the Austrian Main Army. Meanwhile in Innsbruck, the chief Tyrolian leader, a determined innkeeper named Andreas Hofer, now supported by a small detachment of Austrian regulars and Landwehr, vowed to keep his country free. With the Austrian Main Army in full retreat, however, Marshal Lefebvre was free to gather his VII Corps at Salzburg in preparation for the reconquest of the Tyrol.

The French Reserve Corps

The threat posed to his lines of communications by the Tyrolian, and later the Vorarlberg, rebels, as well as the possibility of Austrian probes from Bohemia, led Napoleon to create a Reserve Corps in Germany under old Marshal Kellermann. Centred around Hanau, this corps was located in a position to respond to threats from the south and east, to assist in the repression of insurrection in central Germany (e.g., Westphalia), and to oppose the anticipated English landing on the North Sea coast. Its organization changed many times during the campaign, but it generally consisted of the following:

1. A division of five provisional dragoon regiments and some stray infantry detachments (French and Bavarian) under Général de Division (GD) Beaumont; this division was headquartered at Augsburg and had its principal combat elements around Kempten under Général de Brigade (GB) Picard; Beaumont also had nominal authority over Württemberg and Baden forces north of Lake Constance.
2. Two reserve infantry divisions (GD Rivaud and GD Despeaux) around Hanau with a sixth provisional dragoon regiment and twelve guns; only Rivaud's was ever sufficiently organized to participate in combat operations.
3. The small Berg contingent (a battery plus one regiment each of infantry and cavalry).

Almost all these units were composed of inexperienced conscripts and depot troops, but they took part in actions throughout the main army's rear area: around Lake Constance, across southern Bavaria, around Bayreuth, in the brief Saxon campaign and in Westphalia.[10]

The Southern Front: Austria Invades Italy and Dalmatia

Archduke Johann, one of Charles's younger brothers, commanded in this theatre, leading VIII and IX Corps through difficult mountain passes into northern Italy as his sibling invaded Bavaria. The opposing French and Italian forces under Napoleon's step-son, Eugène de Beauharnais, the Viceroy of Italy, were initially forced to withdraw, Eugène suffering a fairly severe reverse at Sacile on the 15th and 16th. Rallying on the Adige, Eugène turned on his pursuer and the two

armies fought a series of inconclusive battles from the 28th to the 30th. By that time, however, word of Charles's defeat in Bavaria had arrived together with orders for Johann to effect a complete evacuation of Italy as soon as possible.

Along with the invasion of Italy, a small Austrian detachment advanced into Dalmatia to free that former Habsburg province from the French army of occupation under GD Marmont (soon to be redesignated XI Corps). Marmont fell back before the invaders, but the Austrians were slow to follow and no fighting of consequence occurred in this distant theatre of war until mid-May.

Poland: The Fall of Warsaw

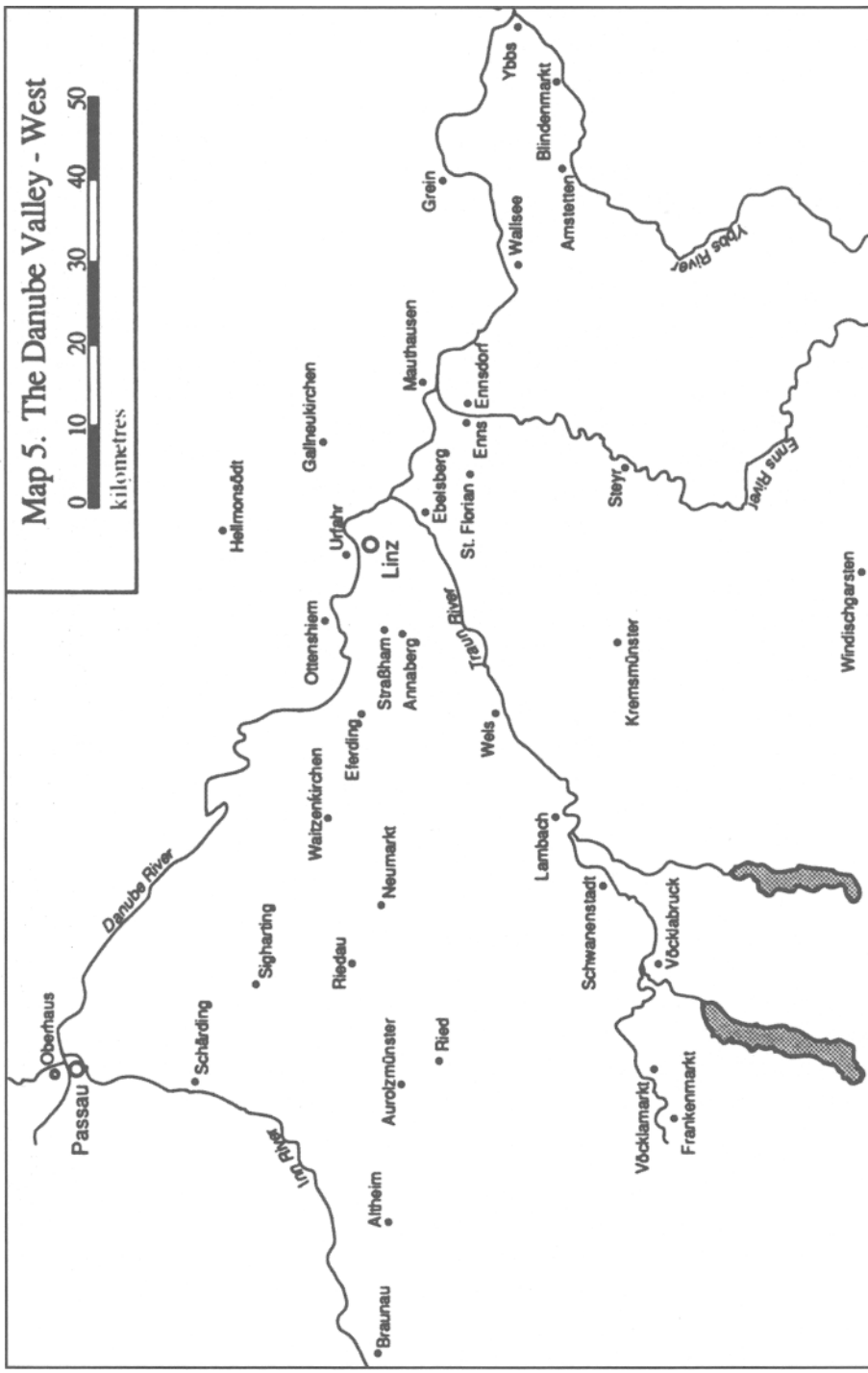
Austria's other diversionary attack was launched into Poland by VII Corps under Archduke Ferdinand d'Este (about 30,000 men). His rather grandiose mission was to knock Poland (existing at that time as the 'Grand Duchy of Warsaw' under the sceptre of the King of Saxony) out of the war and then turn west to strike across the Elbe into the French rear, perhaps in combination with Prussian forces. Delayed by inclement weather, Ferdinand did not cross the border until 15 April to begin a cautious advance on the Polish capital. Prince Poniatowski, the future French marshal, commanded the defenders, a small army of newly raised Polish troops reinforced by a detachment of Saxons under GM von Dyherrn. Poniatowski, unwilling to give up Warsaw without a fight, set his green troops in a solid position at Raszyn south of the capital and awaited the Austrians. A short, sharp battle duly occurred on the 19th, the Poles performing gallantly despite their inexperience. The result was an Austrian victory, however, and Poniatowski was compelled to evacuate Warsaw the following day, retiring over the Vistula to the east as the Saxons headed north to return to their kingdom. Poles and Austrians clashed several times east of the river during the second half of April, but the Poles were principally concerned with getting their new army on its feet and nothing of importance resulted from these skirmishes.

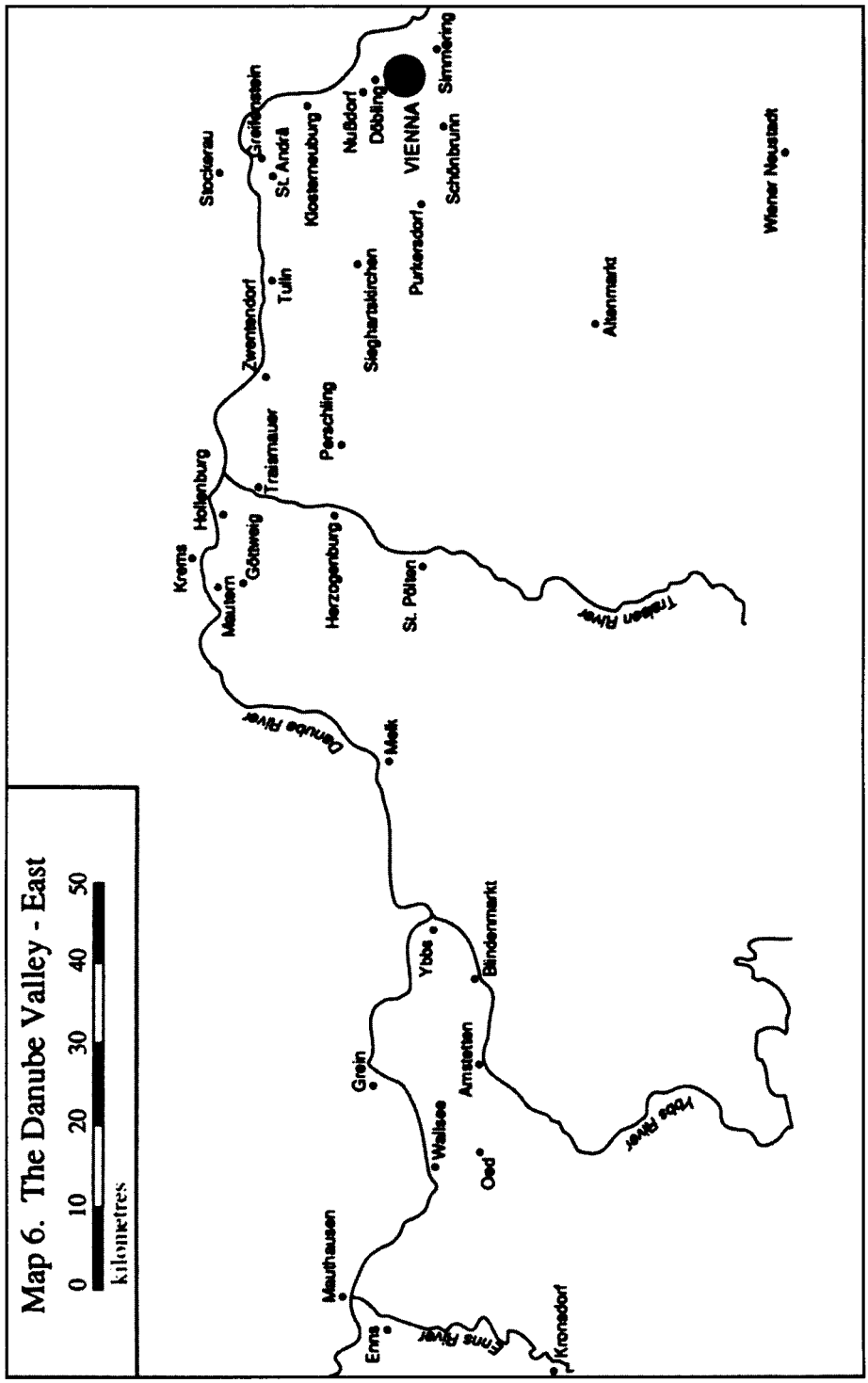
Germany: Insurrection in Westphalia

Behind the lines, two abortive insurrections broke out in Westphalia: one near Magdeburg and Stendal (2–3 April) before hostilities had opened and the other around Kassel (23–24 April) before news of Napoleon's victories in Bavaria had been circulated. Both fizzled out quickly, their leadership fleeing to Bohemia to join other disgruntled German expatriates.

MAY: Advance and Repulse

May witnessed dramatic French advances on all fronts. In the Danube valley, the Emperor and the main army pressed rapidly toward Vienna (which fell on the 13th) but suffered a severe repulse at Aspern-Essling in the first attempt to cross the Danube. Despite this check, French and Allied forces in Italy, Dalmatia and Poland gained the initiative and made significant progress against their Habsburg opponents. The month thus concluded with an operational stalemate in the centre (around Vienna) and continuing Allied drives on both strategic flanks.


Map 5. The Danube Valley - West
0 10 20 30 40 50
kilometres
Danube River
Inn River
Traun River
Enns River
Ybbs River
Passau
Oberhaus
Schärding
Sigharting
Riedau
Ried
Aurolzmünster
Altheim
Braunau
Neumarkt
Waitzenkirchen
Eferding
Ottensheim
Urfahr
Linz
Helmonsödt
Gallneukirchen
Straßham
Annaberg
Mauthausen
Ebelsberg
St. Florian
Enns
Ennsdorf
Wels
Lambach
Schwanenstadt
Vöcklabruck
Vöcklamarkt
Frankenmarkt
Kremsmünster
Steyr
Grein
Waldsee
Amstetten
Blindenmarkt
Ybbs
Windischgarsten


Map 6. The Danube Valley - East
0 10 20 30 40 50
kilometres
Stockerau
Greifenstein
St. Andrä
Klosterneuburg
Nußdorf
Döbling
VIENNA
Simmering
Schönbrunn
Purkersdorf
Zwentendorf
Tulln
Siegharstskirchen
Altenmarkt
Wiener Neustadt
Perschling
Traismauer
Hollenburg
Krems
Göttweig
Mautern
Herzogenburg
St. Pölten
Traisen River
Danube River
Melk
Ybbs
Blindenmarkt
Grein
Amstetten
Wallsee
Ybbs River
Oed
Mauthausen
Enns
Enns River
Kronadorf

The Danube Valley: Drive to Vienna, Check at Aspern

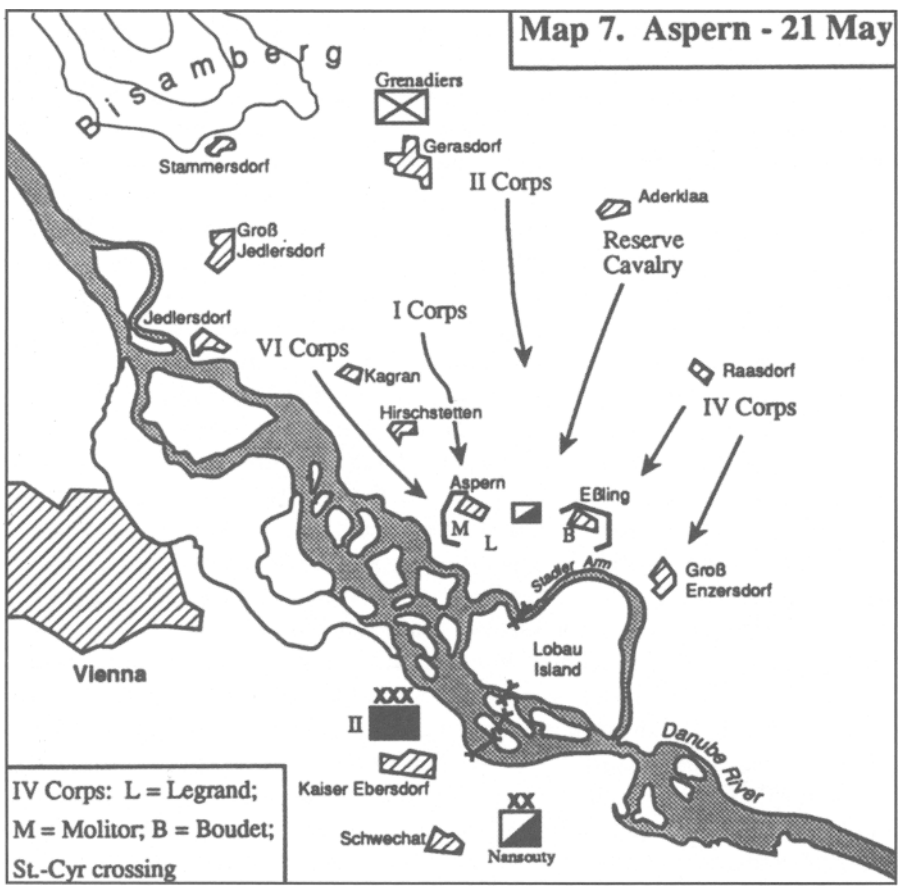
1–20 May (Drive to Vienna): Napoleon, anticipating a major battle south of the Danube, now drove his men toward Vienna at a relentless pace. Massena, however, waiting at Schärding for the main army to catch up with his Corps on the Inn–Salzach line, may have missed an opportunity to trap several of Hiller's isolated brigades between the Inn and the Traun in the final days of April. None the less, the pursuit was resumed on 1 May and after a number of sharp rear guard actions, one of these brigades, Schustekh's, was almost cut off on the 3rd as it attempted to escape across the Traun at Ebelsberg. Hiller, pressed by Massena's column from Schärding and Napoleon's from Burghausen/Braunau, hoped to delay the French at the Traun, but the rapidity and impetuosity of the French advance shattered his vague plans. Massena's subordinates, possibly stung by their failure at Landshut, sent their men storming across the long wooden bridge at Ebelsberg to enter the town intermingled with the fleeing Austrian rear guard. In a cruel and costly battle, IV Corps gained control of Ebelsberg while Lannes forced a crossing farther south at Wels, outflanking the strong Austrian position. Hiller now had no choice but to continue his retreat and he headed downstream, finally slipping north over the Danube near Krems on the 7th and 8th. This retreat left the road to Vienna open and Napoleon was able to enter the Austrian capital on the 13th after a brief bombardment.

Although Vienna had fallen, Charles and his Main Army were still at large. Napoleon therefore made hurried preparations to cross the Danube, intending to bring the Habsburg army to battle and to destroy it. On the 13th, the Austrians repelled the first French attempt north of Vienna, but elements of IV Corps succeeded in establishing a lodgement on Lobau Island five days later and French engineers were soon at work constructing a series of bridges to connect the island with the right bank. Hastily erected, however, and contending with the turbulent river, these bridges were never sturdy and, bombarded by floating debris, they repeatedly collapsed during the crucial days of the coming battle.

Meanwhile, Napoleon took steps to concentrate his army and secure the new crossing site at Kaiser Ebersdorf. A cavalry screen fanned out south of the Austrian capital and GD Lauriston was sent toward Wiener Neustadt with GB Colbert's Light Cavalry Brigade and most of the Baden infantry to establish contact with Viceroy Eugène at the Semmering Pass. The army's line of communications was to be protected by Vandamme's Württembergers at Linz and Rouyer's Rheinbund regiments at Passau, allowing Davout, his Corps stretched along the southern bank of the Danube, to hasten to Vienna. More distant still, Bernadotte's Saxons and Dupas's small French division (IX Corps) had finally entered the Danube valley, reaching Linz in time to assist Vandamme in repelling an attack on the bridgehead by Kolowrat's III Corps on 17 May. Despite these measures, Napoleon's army was still not fully concentrated when Massena's voltigeurs splashed on to Lobau. None the less, with little knowledge of Charles's recent movements, the Emperor believed that speed was essential and he urged his pioneers to finish the spans across the rapidly rising river.

21–22 May (Battle of Aspern–Essling): On the left bank of the Danube lies a broad, flat plain known as the Marchfeld. Covered with fields of grain and dotted

with tiny villages, the Marchfeld spreads east from the great river some twelve kilometres to a small stream called the Russbach. The Russbach, flowing between steep banks and lined with heavy vegetation, is narrow and fordable by infantry, but impassable to cavalry and artillery except at bridges. Above the brook, the Russbach Heights, though low, dominate the plains toward the Danube and afford the defender a formidable position. North and south, the Marchfeld is bounded by the Bisamberg and River March respectively, while the Danube and its tangled network of twistings, turnings and subsidiary channels form the western marge of the plain. It was here, along this western edge of the Marchfeld, that the two armies would clash on 21 and 22 May.



Late on the 20th, the leading elements of Napoleon's army debouched from Lobau Island on to the Marchfeld to establish a bridgehead across the Stadtler Arm of the Danube. Austrian resistance was light and, by early evening, Massena's men (GD Molitor's 3rd Division) had a firm lodgement in the Mühlau. Napoleon, with little information on the Austrian Main Army, now pushed Lasalle's Division of light horse across to reconnoitre. In a brief cavalry fight at sunset, however, the French troopers were repulsed by the numerically superior Habsburg horse and the Emperor gained almost no new intelligence; his army

had only encountered small infantry and cavalry formations thus far and he feared these were merely rear guards designed to cover the retreat of Charles's army into Moravia. Observations that night did little to clarify the situation: enemy camp fires were indeed to be descried to the north, but these were insufficient for an army and Napoleon chose to hasten his cavalry over the river lest Charles escape his grasp.

Charles had arrived at the Marchfeld by a roundabout route. Retreating into Bohemia after the disaster in Bavaria, he had rested and reorganized his battered army as Napoleon pushed through the fertile valley to the south. He formulated several concepts to oppose the French along the Danube, but the speed of Napoleon's advance ground all his plans to dust and he was left with no choice but to turn south-east towards the Marchfeld and unite with Hiller's column north of the river. Leaving Feldzeugmeister (FZM) Kolowrat behind with III Corps to threaten French communications, Charles gathered his forces in the north-eastern corner of the plain in the days immediately preceding Napoleon's assault crossing: four line corps (I, II, IV and VI) and Liechtenstein's I Reserve Corps of cavalry and grenadiers.[11] Now, on the night of 20/21 May, most of this host began to move, leaving no camp fires for the anxious French to see as the white-coated columns stumbled forward through the darkness to their designated attack positions.

The French were also on the move during the night and three of Massena's divisions were deployed on the edge of the Marchfeld as dawn broke on 21 May: Molitor at Aspern, Legrand (with one Baden infantry regiment) behind Essling, and Boudet facing Gross-Enzersdorf. Lasalle's Division provided a wide arc of outposts around the bridgehead and part of the Guard served as reserve. As more French and German cavalry (Marulaz's Division with the Baden and Hessian mounted regiments) became available on the north bank (at about noon), Napoleon sent patrols toward Hirschstetten and Breitenlee in search of the presumedly retiring Austrians. The Allied troopers soon discovered, however, that Austrian intentions were offensive and that several massive columns of all arms were bearing down on the weakly held French bridgehead.

The First Day (21 May): The German cavalry patrols had bumped into the right-most element of Charles's army, Hiller's VI Corps, pushing along the river toward Aspern. To Hiller's left, the rest of the Habsburg host advanced in a great semi-circle: Bellegarde (I Corps) and Hohenzollern (II Corps) approaching Aspern from the north; Liechtenstein with the cavalry reserve opposite the gap between the latter village and Essling; Rosenberg (IV Corps) swinging wide to move on Essling from the north and east.[12] Farther to the rear, the grenadiers were held in reserve just north of Gerasdorf. Although his initial understanding of Napoleon's dispositions was faulty, Charles quickly recognized the critical importance of the two villages, Aspern and Essling, the twin supports of Napoleon's position. If the Austrians could seize them, the French forces north of the Danube would be doomed.

Napoleon also understood that his army's fate depended upon firm possession of the twin villages, and he hastily redeployed his few available forces as Charles's attack plan became clear. Massena was thus entrusted with the defence of Aspern

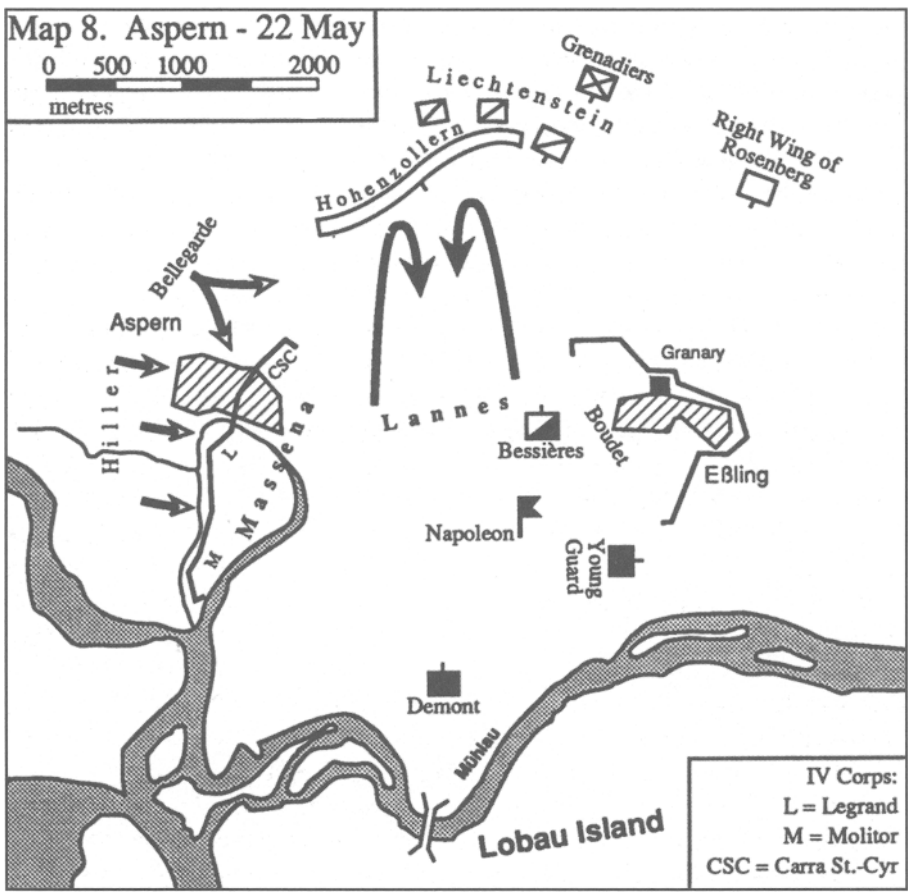
and the Gemeinde-Au on the left with Molitor's Division (Legrand slightly to the rear), while Lannes on the right was given Boudet's regiments to hold Essling; in the absence of additional infantry (the earlier decision to hasten the arrival of mounted units now became regrettable), the cavalry would have to cover the dangerous interval between these two strongpoints.

At about 2 p.m., Hiller launched a concerted attack on Aspern and the battle began in earnest. Combat on the first day thus opened on the French left and spread to the centre and right as afternoon turned to evening and evening to night. Aspern was the scene of bitter fighting between Hiller, later (about 5 p.m.) reinforced by Bellegarde, and Massena. Repeatedly taken by the Austrians and retaken by the French, the village was a flaming ruin by dusk but the struggle continued with unabated ferocity until deep into the night. Although greatly outnumbered by the two Austrian corps, Massena committed most of Molitor's and Legrand's Divisions to the fray and these men still clung to the south-western edges of the town when the fighting finally concluded. The duel on the French right had been equally hot but much less successful from the Austrian perspective. Rosenberg's repeated attacks on Essling were conducted with great determination, but they were poorly co-ordinated and Lannes, his men ensconced in the town granary (a veritable fortress), was able to repel assault after assault. Lannes, however, did not content himself with defensive success and attempted to exploit the confusion in Rosenberg's ranks with a cavalry charge in the gathering evening. Despite tremendous heroism, however, GD d'Espagne's cuirassiers and Lasalle's light troopers (including a Württemberg regiment) were repulsed with considerable loss at about 6 p.m.. The charge at Essling was the last of many French cavalry attacks on 21 May. The French horsemen and their German Allies (Baden and Hessian) had been in action in the centre throughout the hot afternoon. Battling first with Liechtenstein's cavalry reserve and later with Hohenzollern's II Corps, the Allied troopers had suffered painful losses but had been unable to break the stolid Austrian infantry. More charges were launched in the late afternoon as Bellegarde's Corps deployed north of Aspern, but the results were the same: temporary success followed by eventual retreat in the face of steady enemy fire. None the less, they had kept the Austrians at bay and thereby succeeded in their principal mission of protecting Napoleon's vulnerable centre.

Both commanders were confident at day's end. Charles mistakenly believed that he had held the entire French army in check and hoped for further victory on the 22nd. Napoleon was satisfied to have held his position against greatly superior numbers despite the repeated collapse of the crucial Danube bridges. Above all, he had won sufficient room to deploy for a true attack into the Marchfeld and he spent a busy, if frustrating, night bringing more forces across the river. The last of Massena's divisions, Carra Saint-Cyr's (including the Hessian Brigade), had already arrived on the evening of the 21st and, by the next morning, the whole of Lannes' II Corps plus Demont's Division and more elements of the Guard were safely on the north bank. With these reinforcements, supplemented by Davout's veterans (to be brought across the Danube), the Emperor planned to

crack the Austrian centre and roll up both of Charles' flanks. The only worry was the tenuous connection to Ebersdorf.

The Second Day (22 May): To implement his plan, Napoleon had to have undisputed control of Aspern and he accordingly issued orders to Massena to attack in the pre-dawn hours of 22 May. The marshal's first attack was thrown back, but he immediately led his men forward a second time and the town was soon in French hands. Meanwhile, on the right flank, Lannes had pushed back Rosenberg and news arrived that the critical bridges had again been restored to operation, so that by 7 a.m., the preconditions for Napoleon's decisive central attack had been attained. Drums rolling, Lannes' Corps advanced to the attack at about 7:30, supported by the French light and heavy cavalry. The assault made considerable initial progress, but Charles steadied his men through personal example and eventually Lannes could go no farther without reinforcement. The arrival of his courier at Napoleon's headquarters, however, coincided with the appearance of a rider from Lobau Island bearing the news that the bridges had suffered yet another devastating break. Napoleon held Lannes' men in place for several hours, hoping for better news from his engineers, but with Austrian pressure increasing on Massena and only grim reports from the river, at about 11 a.m., he gave II Corps the order to withdraw.



The withdrawal initially proceeded in good order, but Napoleon's situation soon worsened. On his left, the fight for Aspern had intensified and, despite the commitment of three Young Guard battalions, Hiller was soon pressing Massena out of the village yet again. In the centre, the young conscripts of II Corps were wavering under a brutal artillery barrage and the Old Guard had to be ordered forward to steady the line. The crisis was reached when Liechtenstein, cobbling together a co-ordinated attack on the Austrian left, finally succeeded in evicting the French from Essling. Only Boudet's men in the granary still held out and Napoleon issued orders to initiate a retreat on to Lobau Island. Part of his plan was for Generals Rapp and Mouton to attack toward Essling with several Guard battalions so as to relieve pressure from that quarter and facilitate the French withdrawal. These two stalwarts, however, exceeded their orders and, to the surprise of French and Austrians alike, charged into the village and expelled its Habsburg defenders. Rosenberg retired to Enzersdorf to regroup and Charles, stung by the sudden reversal of fortunes, decided to pull back in the centre as well. Fighting continued around Aspern for a time, but by 4 p.m. the battle was over and Napoleon could order his withdrawal in relative safety. The Emperor of Battles had suffered his first serious repulse.

Despite this major setback and heavy losses (about 20,000 including the irreplaceable Lannes), Napoleon immediately began preparations for further offensive action. While the weary survivors of Aspern licked their wounds, the Emperor developed comprehensive plans for the next crossing of the Danube: Lobau was to be fortified; newer, stronger bridges were to be constructed with pilings to shield them from Austrian fire barges; the flank threat of Archduke Johann's Army in Hungary was to be eliminated; and all possible forces were to be collected at Vienna in time for the titanic struggle. Despite several miserable days of deprivation, work began on the fortifications and bridges even while most of the army was withdrawing from the island (by the end of the month, only IV Corps was left as garrison on Lobau). Meanwhile, Eugène was directed to turn south into Johann's flank and the corps along the army's line of communications in the Danube valley were slowly shifted eastward. This latter measure necessitated a complex series of related movements. First to move were those elements of Davout's command still guarding the south bank of the Danube around Melk; as they marched off to the Austrian capital, they were replaced by Vandamme's Württembergers, VIII Corps itself having been relieved at Linz by the Saxons of Bernadotte's IX Corps. The Saxons were the next to head east, marching for St. Pölten on the last day of the month; their duties at the Linz bridgehead were assumed by the Bavarians of Lefebvre's VII Corps (1st and 2nd Divisions only) brought north from the Tyrol.

Despite its success, the Austrian army passed the remainder of May in relative peace. The army's heavy losses (roughly equal to those of the French) were partially replaced, weapons were cleaned and equipment repaired, but nothing was done to capitalize on the advantage gained at Aspern. Although numerous plans for crossing the Danube were mooted, debated and scrutinized, Charles remained in place on the Marchfeld, indecisively considering his options as the days slipped away.

The Tyrol and the Vorarlberg: The First Allied Offensive, Insurgents Resurgent

On 10 May the First Offensive into the Tyrol opened with GL Wrede leading his 2nd Division toward the Inn valley from Salzburg while GL Deroy's 3rd Division approached from the fortress of Kufstein; Crown Prince Ludwig's 1st Division remained in the vicinity of Salzburg. Battles were characterized by great determination and cruelty on both sides, but the Bavarians overcame all resistance and occupied Innsbruck, the capital of the Tyrol, on the 19th. Other Bavarian forces had been organized under Oberst Arco in late April to defend the homeland against frequent Austro–Tyrolian incursions; these now also entered the dangerous mountains, coming down from the north to link with the troops in Innsbruck.

The Bavarians were only in Innsbruck for ten days before Hofer and the Austrians renewed the struggle. A major battle was fought at Bergisel on the 29th and Deroy (in command since Wrede's departure for the Danube on the 23rd) knew that he could not maintain his force in its exposed position any longer. On the 30th he began a retreat down the Inn, reaching the protective walls of Kufstein on the last day of the month. The Tyrol had freed itself for a second time.

Rebellion had also broken out in the Vorarlberg in the final days of April and local dissatisfaction with Bavarian rule soon manifested itself in raids into Bavarian, Württemberg and Baden territory around Lake Constance. Events in the Vorarlberg tended to ebb and flow in sympathy with those in the Tyrol and the rebels were generally quiet in mid-May as VII Corps marched into Innsbruck. The recrudescence of Tyrolian fervour, however, also inspired their neighbours and the Vorarlbergers surged north again, throwing the mixed Allied forces out of their land by the end of the month.

The Southern Front: The Austrians Recoil

Archduke Johann began his retreat from Italy on 1 May, but Eugène followed closely and won a neat victory over the Austrians at the River Piave on the 8th. Continuing the pursuit, the Viceroy forced the alpine passes and pressed into southern Austria. He then divided his command, sending half to follow Johann through Graz while taking the remainder himself through St. Michael toward the Semmering Pass and Vienna. At St. Michael on the 25th, he caught Jellacic's exhausted division trying to retreat from the Tyrol and utterly destroyed the hapless Austrian force. The next day brought him into contact with the outposts of the main French Army and by the end of the month his other column had entered the important communications centre of Graz. Archduke Johann, meanwhile, retired toward Körmend in Hungary, his army in a state of considerable disarray.

The Austrians had also withdrawn from Dalmatia by the end of May. After a series of unsuccessful fights and in view of the generally unfavourable strategic situation, the small Austrian detachment slipped away to the north. Taking a different route, Marmont marched to effect a union with Eugène.

Poland: Thorn and Galicia

The Poles became more active in May, capturing an Austrian bridgehead on the east bank of the Vistula near Warsaw in a brilliant night assault before driving south into Galicia to unsettle the Austrian high command. Ferdinand, on the other hand, launched a foray to the north, attempting unsuccessfully to seize the fortress of Thorn from its Polish defenders. The threat in Galicia could not be ignored, however, and the end of the month saw Ferdinand sending significant forces south to counter the energetic Poles.

Germany: Schill's Raid

In May, Westphalia, already shaken by the April insurrections, had to undergo a new trial. A renegade Prussian major named Schill illicitly marched his regiment of hussars out of Berlin on 28 April, told them he intended to free Germany from French occupation and proceeded to invade Saxony and Westphalia. Rebuffed by the Saxons at Wittenberg on 1 May, he turned north for Magdeburg and won a little victory against a Franco–Westphalian force south of that fortress on the 5th. The garrison was clearly too strong for his tiny band, however, and he was not receiving the popular response he had expected, so he continued north toward the coast with vague hopes of obtaining support from the Royal Navy. Reaching the Duchy of Mecklenburg–Schwerin, he seized the miniature fortress of Dömitz on the 15th and handily smashed a Schwerin battalion at Damgarten on the 24th. The following day, after a bitter fight with the tiny French garrison, he captured Stralsund and prepared to put the city in a state of defence. Unfortunately for Schill and his men, GD Gratien was rapidly approaching with a combined corps of Dutch and Danish troops. Gratien's men successfully stormed Stralsund on the 31st, capturing or dispersing the raiders and killing Schill himself. Order was soon restored and Gratien returned to Westphalia to rejoin King Jerome's X Corps with his Dutch Division while the Danes retired on Hamburg.

JUNE: Calm Before the Storm

June was a month of French preparation in the face of Austrian indecision. While Charles and his advisers pondered how to take advantage of the success they had won at Aspern, Napoleon acted, completing his thorough plans for a second crossing of the Danube while Eugène removed the threat of Johann's army in Hungary.

The Danube Valley: A Time of Waiting

It was a hectic month for the planners and engineers of the French army. Napoleon was determined not to repeat the mistakes that had resulted in the Aspern repulse and he sought to cover every possible contingency before his next contest with Charles. Stout bridges were constructed, Lobau Island fortified with tens of guns drawn from the great arsenals of Vienna, and precisely detailed plans were composed to co-ordinate the coming operation.

As he reviewed his own preparations, Napoleon also considered Charles' options and devised a strategy to foil any Austrian attempt to interfere with his own plans.

A key concern was the possibility that Charles would be able to effect a juncture with his brother Johann and that the two combined might then attempt to break out from the Austrian bridgehead opposite Pressburg. To preclude this eventuality, Napoleon ordered Davout to invest and eradicate the bridgehead at Engerau while supporting Eugène's operations against Johann in Hungary. With Gudin's Division, Lasalle's light cavalry and the two Hessian fusilier battalions, the Iron Marshal attacked the bridgehead on 1 and 3 June, but failed to eliminate it completely despite the heroic efforts of the French and Hessian troops. He thus settled in for a miniature siege while Lasalle roved far to the south with his light horse and the 'indefatigable Hessians'. Clearing the Kleine Schütt island in the Danube, Lasalle's command linked with Eugène's left to seal the ring around the little fortress of Raab and remained in place until the garrison capitulated on the 22nd. By this time, preparations for the great battle were almost complete and the entire army was being recalled to Kaiser Ebersdorf. Lasalle and his Hessians accordingly returned to the north to meet their respective fates on the field of Wagram.

Troops were also being called in from the northern segment of the Danube valley. Bernadotte and his IX Corps thus inched toward Vienna as June drew to a close and Wrede at Linz headed east by forced marches on the last day of the month, having received an 'invitation' to join the army on Lobau Island.

The Austrian Main Army remained quiescent, its only significant activity being the erection of a series of small redoubts stretching from Enzersdorf through Aspern around the northern aspect of Lobau Island.

The Tyrol and the Vorarlberg: Free Tyrol

June saw the Allies on the defensive in southern Bavaria, Baden and Württemberg as the insurgents, encouraged by their successes, launched numerous raids into the lowlands. In broad terms, the Allied defence was organized into several sectors: in the east, an odd collection of Bavarian regular, reserve and irregular troops under GL Deroy and Oberst Arco protected the direct routes to Munich; further west, GD Beaumont commanded *ad hoc* French and Allied units around Kempten through GB Picard and exercised at least nominal control over the forces north of Lake Constance (Württemberg, Baden and French troops). The entire Allied command structure was creaky and inefficient, but it was sufficiently well assembled to hold the equally disorganized rebels at bay; even when Deroy's Division was called away to the Danube valley at the end of the month to join the 1st and 2nd Bavarian Divisions at Linz, the insurgents were slow to take advantage of the decrease in Allied strength.

The Southern Front: Victory in Hungary

Napoleon in Vienna, relieved to have established communications with Eugène's Army of Italy, now determined to eliminate the threat posed to his strategic right by Archduke Johann's forces in Hungary. He accordingly sent Eugène south toward the River Raab in an effort to cut off and destroy Johann's corps at Körmend. This complex operation sent Eugène, reinforced by GD Lauriston and most of the Baden Brigade, south-east from Wiener Neustadt through

Oedenburg while GD MacDonald pushed due east from Graz; simultaneously, strong cavalry forces under Lasalle, Montbrun and Marulaz (including Hessians and Badeners) struck toward the lower Raab from the area between the Neusiedler See and the Danube. Eugène crossed the Raab at Sarvar on 9 and 10 June, linked with Montbrun and turned north to engage successfully Johann's rear guard at Papa on the 12th. The Habsburg Archduke, the size of his force increased by the addition of several thousand untrained Hungarian militia (these hastily raised troops were known by their antique title: the Hungarian 'Insurrection'), took a stand outside the little fortress of Raab at the confluence of the Raab and Danube. Some preliminary skirmishing occurred on the 13th, and the following day the Viceroy inflicted a serious defeat on Johann, forcing him to retreat on Komorn. The small fortress of Raab was thus uncovered and Eugène quickly besieged it with Lauriston's Badeners and Lasalle's mixed French and Hessian force. Raab capitulated on 22 June and Eugène's units began to shift north toward Vienna in preparation for the second crossing of the Danube.

Marmont was brought north to Graz in the latter part of June to combine with GD Broussier's Division, left near the city by Eugène. Austrian attempts to relieve the garrison of the Graz citadel led to several sharp engagements around the city from the 25th to the 26th, but the French retained the upper hand. The close of the month thus found Marmont and Broussier still in control of Graz with the exception of the citadel, where a stubborn Austrian force continued to hold out.

Poland: Warsaw Regained

Sporadic fighting continued in the Galicia, but the threat in Galicia forced Ferdinand to abandon Warsaw and the Poles re-entered their capital on 7 June. Russian forces finally entered the war zone on about the 10th; they carefully avoided any earnest contact with the Austrians and generally caused more worries for Poniatowski (who feared a Russian land-grab at the expense of Polish aspirations) than Ferdinand. None the less, by the end of the month, the Austrians had been completely expelled from Poland and had lost their hold on much of Galicia.

Germany: Austrian Incursions into Saxony

Some small skirmishes had occurred along the Bohemian border between Austrian and Saxon forces in late May, but in June, Charles, pressed by the court, reluctantly launched a diversionary attack into Saxony itself. Two small Austrian divisions were to enter Saxony from Bohemia: one, under GM Am Ende, pushed due north towards Dresden, while a second, commanded by FML Radivojevich, aimed for Bayreuth and northern Bavaria. Am Ende's force, including small free corps from Braunschweig and Hesse–Kassel, crossed the border on 10 June, captured Dresden and slowly advanced on Leipzig. The Saxon defenders, led by an energetic colonel named Thielmann and reinforced by GM von Dyherrn's force recently arrived from Poland, were greatly out-numbered and forced to fall back before the torpid Austrian advance. Westphalia's King Jerome marched

to Saxony's aid at the head of X Corps and was able to unite with Thielmann east of Leipzig on the 23rd; the Allied forces now took the offensive and Thielmann led the Corps' advance guard into Dresden on the 30th. Meanwhile Radivojevich had pushed into Germany, entering Bayreuth and was pushing raiding parties out to Bamberg and Nuremberg. Napoleon, concerned about his line of communications, sent reserve forces from Hanau and Passau to counter the Austrian threat and these succeeded in forcing the evacuation of Nuremberg toward the end of the month.

JULY: The Storm Breaks

July opened with tremendous violence and closed with tenuous peace. Napoleon crossed on to the Marchfeld on the 4th and, after the gruelling two-day struggle at Wagram, pursued Charles' army into Moravia, imposing an armistice on the Habsburg generalissimo on the battlefield at Znaim (12 July). This act naturally set the tone for the other theatres of war and combat came to a halt except for the Duke of Braunschweig's bold foray in Germany and the grim conflict in the Tyrol.

The Danube Valley: Blood at Wagram, Peace at Znaim

During the first four days of July, Napoleon completed his final preparations for the second crossing of the Danube. From west and south, thousands of French and Allied troops streamed toward Kaiser Ebersdorf and passed over on to

Table 1-4: French/Allied Forces at Wagram

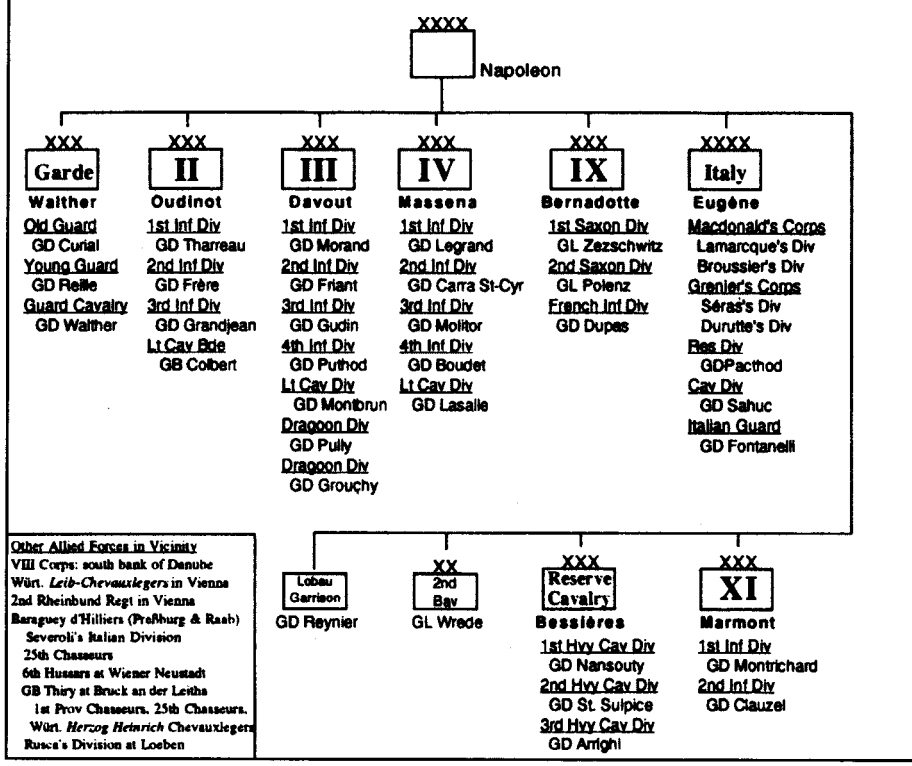
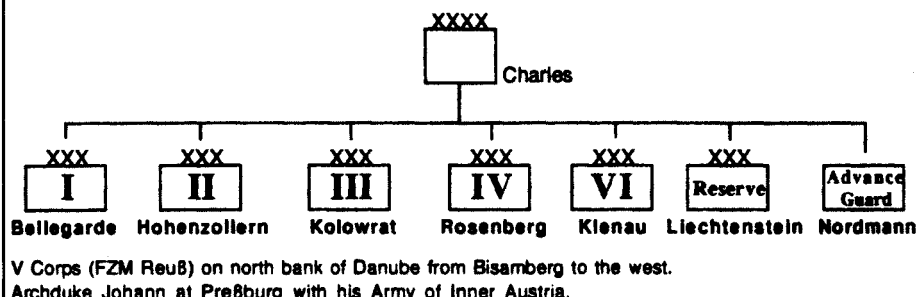


Table 1-5: Austrian Forces at Wagram

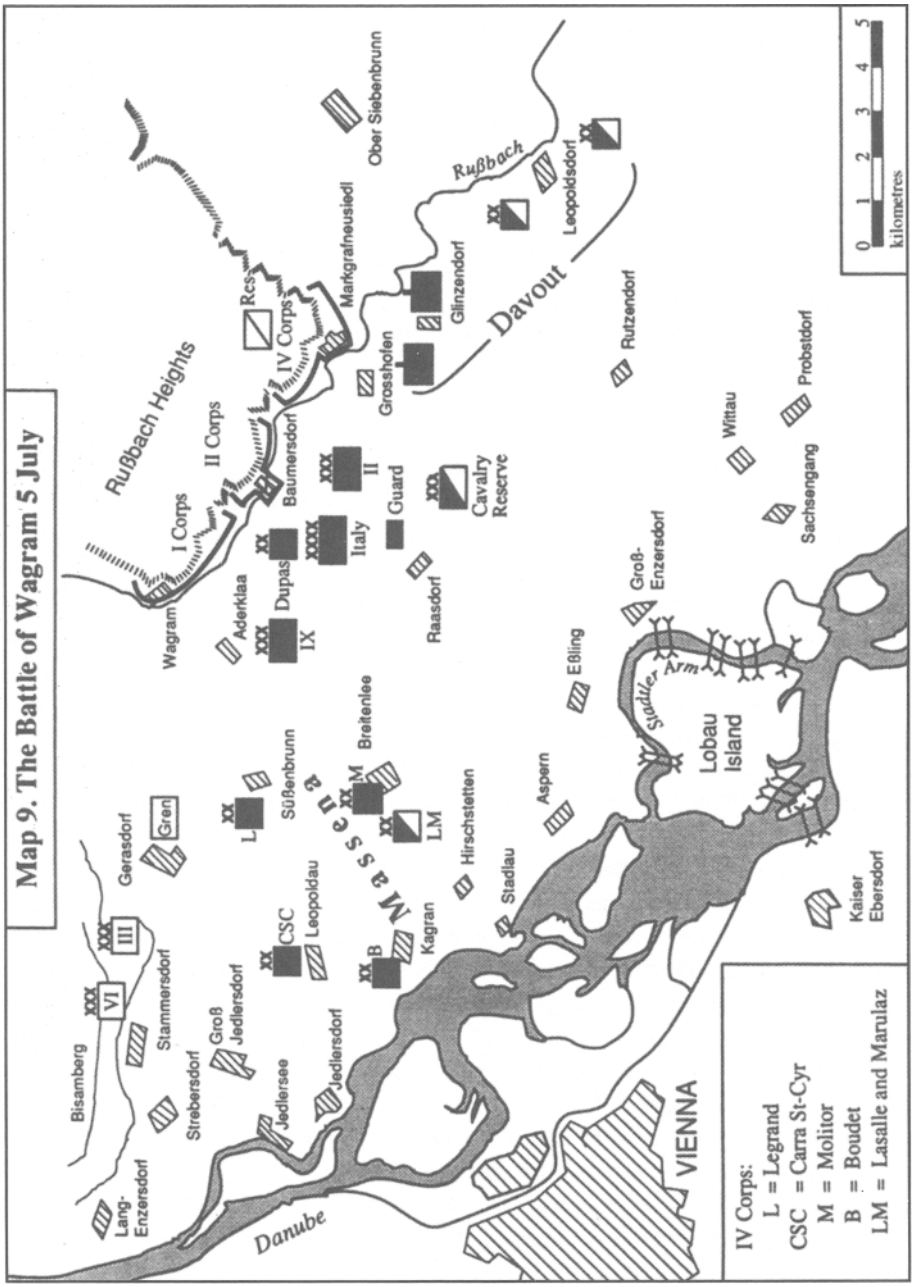


V Corps (FZM Reuß) on north bank of Danube from Bisamberg to the west.
Archduke Johann at Preßburg with his Army of Inner Austria.

Lobau Island: Eugène and Lasalle from Hungary, Davout from Pressburg, Marmont and Broussier from Graz, Bernadotte from St. Pölten, and Wrede from distant Linz. Ultimately, the Emperor's efforts would bring some 172,000 infantry and cavalry with 475 guns on to the battlefield to oppose approximately 136,000 Austrians with 388 guns.[13]

But Napoleon's mind was nothing if not comprehensive and, in addition to turning Lobau into a great armed camp, his planning encompassed the protection of his army's strategic flanks. GD Baraguey d'Hilliers of the Army of Italy commanded French and Allied forces south of the Austrian capital: a small garrison in the tiny fortress of Raab, GD Filippo Severoli's Italian Division opposite Pressburg, a provisional cavalry brigade (including a Württemberg regiment) under GB Thiry at Bruck an der Leitha, and GD Jean Rusca's Division intended for Semmering Pass. Vienna itself and its potentially restive population were entrusted to Vandamme's Württembergers, who were also responsible for watching the southern banks of the Danube as far as Melk.[14] Further downstream, the army's line of communications was guarded by Rouyer's German Division at Passau and the 1st Bavarian Division at Linz. Napoleon, always focused on his principal strategic objective, even ordered Deroy's 3rd Bavarian Division to march on Linz from southern Bavaria, leaving only a few *ad hoc* units to shield his primary German ally against Tyrolian incursions.

5 July (Battle of Wagram, First Day): Under the cover of a terrific thunderstorm and the roar of more than 100 guns, the Grande Armée crossed from Lobau on to the Marchfeld on the night of 4/5 July. Several days earlier (30 June), GD Legrand had established a lodgement in the Mühlau (site of the bridgehead during the Battle of Aspern–Essling), but this was a deception and the actual assault was launched from the eastern face of the island. Advance detachments from Oudinot's II Corps on the far right were the first to paddle across the Stadtler Arm, followed by similar detachments from Massena's command.[15] These picked troops quickly secured the far bank, and before long, hustling French pioneers had emplaced a series of prefabricated bridges to span the narrow body of water. Although the construction of bridges continued throughout the day, the army's advance did not stay upon their completion and by midday a huge force of more than 150,000 men was arrayed in glittering splendour under the brilliant sunshine that had


Map 9. The Battle of Wagram 5 July
Rußbach Heights
I Corps
II Corps
IV Corps
Res
Wagram
Aderklaa
Dupas
IX
Baumersdorf
Italy
II
Guard
Cavalry Reserve
Raasdorf
Markgrafneusiedl
Ober Siebenbrunn
Rußbach
Davout
Grosshofen
Glinzendorf
Leopoldsdorf
Rutzendorf
Probstdorf
Sachsengang
Wittau
Groß-Enzersdorf
Eßling
Aspern
Stadlau
Hirschstetten
Kagran
LM
Breitenlee
M
Süßenbrunn
L
Leopoldau
CSC
B
Jedlersdorf
Jedlersee
Groß Jedlersdorf
Strebersdorf
Stammersdorf
Gerasdorf
Gren
III
VI
Bisamberg
Lang-Enzersdorf
Danube
VIENNA
Lobau Island
Stadler Arm
Kaiser Ebersdorf
IV Corps:
L = Legrand
CSC = Carra St-Cyr
M = Molitor
B = Boudet
LM = Lasalle and Marulaz
0 1 2 3 4 5
kilometres

succeeded the night's tumult. Massena's troops had already stormed and seized Enzersdorf, outflanking the line of Austrian redoubts and enabling Napoleon to order his great host in two lines of battle from that village to Probstdorf. Their formations bristling with guns, Massena, Oudinot and Davout (from left to right) constituted the first of these lines, followed by Bernadotte, the Guard and the Army of Italy; swarms of light cavalry and dragoons ranged ahead of this mass and the army's iron men, the cuirassiers, were approaching the bridges to the rear. One hour after noon, the great army began to move.

Throughout the hot afternoon, the French army fanned out across the plain, artillery and cavalry leading, infantry following behind. Its progress was imposing, almost stately, as it seized Raasdorf and rolled up the line of Austrian redoubts at Aspern, but there was little serious fighting and Napoleon began to worry that Charles had withdrawn into Moravia, leaving only a rear guard behind.[16] As evening drew on and the army approached the Russbach Heights, however, it became clear that the Archduke meant to fight.

Charles had arranged his army to take advantage of the strong position on the Russbach Heights: General der Kavallerie (GdK) Liechtenstein's reserve cavalry and FML Rosenberg's IV Corps on the left around Markgrafneusiedl, FML Hohenzollern's II Corps in the centre with a detachment in Baumersdorf, and GdK Bellegarde's I Corps holding the right to include the town of Wagram.[17] The rest of the Main Army was deployed farther to the right between Wagram and the river: the grenadiers north of Gerasdorf, III Corps (FZM Kolowrat) and VI Corps (FML Klenau) north-east and north of Stammersdorf.[18] On the extreme right flank, FML Reuss's V Corps was posted from Bisamberg to the north-west to shield the northern bank of the Danube. Finally, Charles planned to position his brother Johann's command on the far left of the line around the Siebenbrunns as soon as it arrived from Pressburg.

Closing on the Russbach, Napoleon thus faced the three corps of the Austrian left supported by Liechtenstein's massed squadrons. His own army's front had expanded as it had progressed across the Marchfeld and it was now arrayed with Davout on the right opposite Markgrafneusiedl, Oudinot on his left facing Baumersdorf, and Bernadotte's Saxons around Aderklaa. Dupas's Division and elements of the Army of Italy were moving up to fill the gap between Bernadotte and Oudinot, while the Guard and heavy cavalry remained in reserve near Raasdorf. Massena's IV Corps protected the long front from Süssenbrunn to the Danube, with Boudet at Kagran especially charged with covering the approaches to Lobau Island. GD Reynier commanded the Allied garrison on the island itself, a collection of odd infantry detachments (including Saxons and Badeners) and numerous heavy guns confiscated from the Vienna arsenal. Satisfied with these dispositions and hoping to pin the Austrians in place, Napoleon decided to test the strength and determination of the Austrians on the Russbach Heights. At around 7 p.m., he issued orders for an immediate attack and sweating couriers dashed across the plain to launch the army toward the heights.

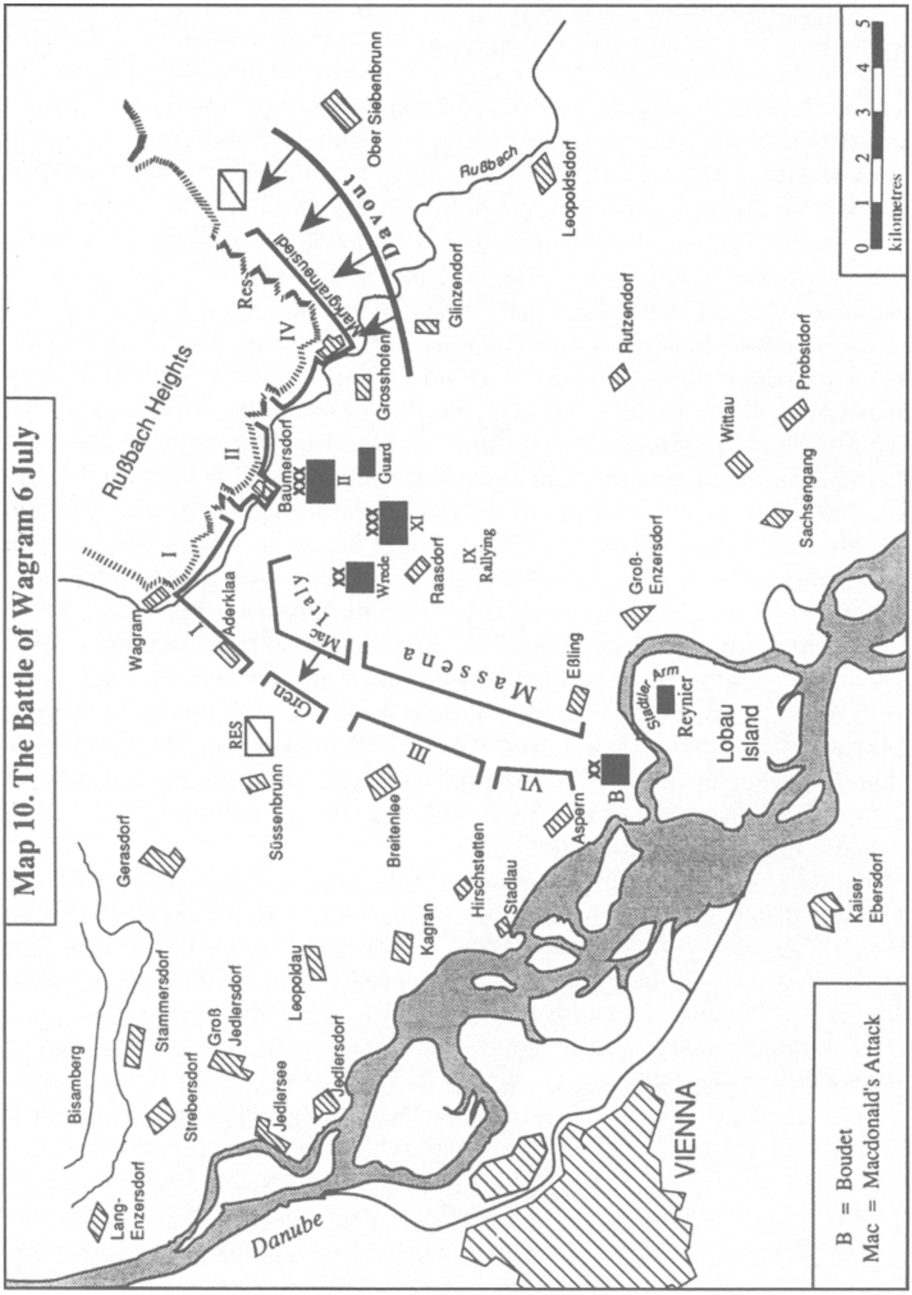
Although the entire French line was to advance against the Austrians on the high ground, no real effort was made to co-ordinate the actions of the various

corps and divisions. As a result, this concerted attack quickly degenerated into a series of isolated assaults which the Austrians were able to repel in sequence. Oudinot's men were the first to advance, striking Hohenzollern's II Corps between Baumersdorf and Markgrafneusiedl. While part of the French corps attempted to wrest Baumersdorf from its defenders, one of the army's finest regiments, the 10th Léger, managed to get on to the heights. With no support at hand, however, they were soon forced back south of the Russbach by the overwhelming numbers of Habsburg units and the attack in this sector was called off. On Oudinot's left, Dupas's French and Saxon troops also enjoyed initial success. Wading the stream and clambering up the heights, they hit the seam between two Austrian corps and made admirable progress as some of Eugène's troops pushed up on their right. Unfortunately, a supporting column from the Army of Italy mistook Dupas's white-coated Saxons for Austrians in the darkness and fired upon them from the rear. This shock, combined with renewed Austrian counter-attacks, boldly led by Charles himself, sufficed to snap the cohesion of Dupas's Division and its battalions were soon streaming down the slopes in disordered retreat, carrying many of Eugène's men with them. The rest of the Army of Italy's troops were put to flight by Hohenzollern's reserves and they fell back across the Russbach in great confusion.

Two Allied attacks had already been repulsed in bloody disarray, when Bernadotte finally ordered his Saxons to seize Wagram. It was now after 9 p.m., however, and darkness made effective command almost impossible, so that the Saxons, despite repeated efforts, were unable to advance beyond the centre of the blazing town. The lead battalions were already wavering when they were mistakenly fired upon by their supports in the gloom. The same misfortune that had stunned Dupas's troops thus broke the will of Bernadotte's men at Wagram and the Saxons fled into the sheltering darkness. It was nearly midnight.

On the French right, Davout's attack never really got started and the Iron Marshal recalled his men after a brief desultory exchange between opposing skirmishers. In the words of a surgeon in the Baden Brigade: 'Night fell, spreading its sombre wings over the two armies. The silence of death reigned over all'.[19]

Thus ended the first day of the Battle of Wagram. Although his unco-ordinated evening attacks had been roughly handled, Napoleon had succeeded in executing a brilliant assault crossing from Lobau Island on to the Marchfeld and had held his adversary in his grasp. The climactic battle was at hand and, with more reinforcements en route (Marmont, Broussier, Pachtod, Wrede), he could look forward to the coming struggle with confidence. On the other side of the field, Charles too had reason for satisfaction. His men had stood well against the French assaults and were encouraged by their success and the strength of their position above the Russbach. Over half of his army had not even been engaged on the first day and there was every reason to expect that Archduke Johann would bring an additional 12,000 men on to the field on the morrow.[20] Harbouring a fairly sanguine outlook, he set in motion a bold offensive against Napoleon's army.


Map 10. The Battle of Wagram 6 July
Rußbach Heights
Wagram
Aderklaa
Baumersdorf
Grosshofen
Glinzendorf
Leopoldsdorf
Ober Siebenbrunn
Rußbach
Davout
Markgrafneusiedl
Res
IV
II
I
I
XXX
II
Guard
XXX
XI
XX
Wrede
Raasdorf
IX
Rallying
Mac
Italy
Massena
Gren
RES
III
IV
XX
B
Stadtler Arm
Reynier
Lobau Island
Eßling
Aspern
Groß-Enzersdorf
Rutzendorf
Wittau
Probstdorf
Sachsengang
Süssenbrunn
Breitenlee
Hirschstetten
Stadlau
Kagran
Gerasdorf
Leopoldau
Stammersdorf
Groß Jedlersdorf
Bisamberg
Strebersdorf
Jedlersee
Jedlersdorf
Lang-Enzersdorf
Danube
VIENNA
Kaiser Ebersdorf
B = Boudet
Mac = Macdonald's Attack
0 1 2 3 4 5
kilometres

6 July (Battle of Wagram. Second Day): The second day of battle opened early with a general Austrian attack against both French flanks. Rosenberg was to strike Davout while the Reserve Corps (Liechtenstein had moved the cavalry west of Wagram during the night), Bellegarde, Kolowrat, and Klenau marched against Napoleon's left from Aderklaa to Kagran. Hohenzollern's II Corps, charged with defending the army's centre, was initially withheld from the attack and Reuss's Corps was inexplicably left idle on the Austrian extreme right.

The action began on the Austrian left flank shortly after sunrise as Rosenberg lumbered toward Davout's positions. A lively firefight was soon in progress and Napoleon, thinking that Johann had arrived on the field, rode to III Corps' support with several heavy cavalry regiments and part of the Guard. Rosenberg's white-coats had already begun to attack Davout's men at Glinzendorf and Grosshofen, when, much to the surprise of the French, the Austrian battalions began to retire. This unexpected action resulted from the inefficiencies of the Austrian command system. Although the entire army was to be in motion by 4 a.m., the transmission of orders to the right wing (especially III and VI Corps) had been badly delayed and Rosenberg, almost unique in attacking on schedule, was in danger of exposing himself to the attentions of the entire French army. To protect his IV Corps and bring the army's movements back in line with his plans, Charles thus ordered Rosenberg back into defensive positions until the right wing could begin its advance. Napoleon was unaware of his opponent's predicament, but it was quickly obvious that the attack on Davout had dissolved and that Johann was nowhere near the battlefield. Leaving the affairs of his right in Davout's capable hands, the Emperor rode back toward the centre and left of his army where an unpleasant surprise awaited him: the Austrians had occupied the key village of Aderklaa.

The other Austrian element to advance on time was Bellegarde's I Corps. Already stirring at 3 a.m., Bellegarde's scouts poked into Aderklaa shortly after 4 a.m. to discover that Bernadotte's IX Corps had departed several hours previously. The Austrian general, thrilled to win this prize so easily, immediately occupied the village and deployed his corps to engage the Saxons, now posted several hundred metres east of Aderklaa.[21] A deadly artillery duel opened, the Saxons on the plain suffering greatly under the converging fire of Bellegarde's guns to the west at Aderklaa and north on the Russbach Heights. To retrieve the situation on his left-centre, Napoleon directed Massena to seize Aderklaa at once. Massena, bringing three of his divisions up from their night's bivouacs (Boudet was left west of Aspern to shield Lobau), gave this mission to GD Carra Saint-Cyr's Division of French and Hessian troops, but the general moved too slowly for the marshal's taste and one of military history's more unusual scenes ensued. Injured in a fall from his horse several days earlier, Massena was unable to mount and was commanding his corps from a calèche drawn by a brace of white horses. Annoyed by Saint-Cyr's delays, he drove forward among the assault columns and ordered the drummers to beat the charge. His men responded to this peculiar spectacle with tremendous enthusiasm and swept into Aderklaa with loud cheers of 'Vive l'Empereur!' Unfortunately, they went too far, were caught by a powerful

Austrian counter-attack and ejected from the village before it could be placed in a state of defence. The Saxons and Dupas to Massena's right suffered a similar fate and the area east of Aderklaa was soon crowded with a mass of disorganized French and Allied soldiery, vulnerable to Austrian exploitation. His left wing in disorder, Napoleon faced a perilous situation.

Nor was this the only bad news from the left. The Austrian III and VI Corps had finally made their appearance and were advancing into the gap just vacated by Massena. The movement of Klenau's VI Corps along the Danube was particularly dangerous and, by 10 a.m. it had succeeded in seizing Boudet's artillery and pushing the lone French division back into the Mühlau. The rest of Charles's right had also moved forward and the main Habsburg battle line now ran almost due south from Wagram to Aspern. Klenau's advance guard had even reached Essling, completely outflanking the French left and threatening Lobau Island itself. It was the crisis of the battle. Klenau, however, with no further orders, chose to halt his advance while Napoleon made military history.[22] Posting himself east of Aderklaa at the hinge in his line, he issued orders in rapid succession. First, he turned Massena's entire IV Corps ninety degrees and sent it on an incredible flank march toward Essling across the front of the Austrian position.[23] To fill the huge hole thus created, he resorted to an expedient, gathering up more than 100 guns and forming them into a grand battery north-east of Raasdorf. But even this extraordinary measure was insufficient, so he shifted the Army of Italy to its left: two of its divisions facing Wagram and Aderklaa while Macdonald's small Corps and Seras' Division assembled behind the Grand Battery. In addition, he committed much of the heavy cavalry on this wing to cover the army's complex deployments with sacrificial charges and ordered Wrede's Bavarian Division up from the reserve to provide further support to Macdonald. By late morning the situation had stabilized and the Emperor could tell Massena 'the battle is won'.

His optimism was well-founded because the key to French success lay on the opposite end of the battlefield and here Davout was making encouraging progress. Swinging his huge corps far to the right, the Iron Marshal gradually forced Rosenberg back on to the plateau north-west of Markgrafneusiedl. The Austrian left wing was beaten and when Oudinot's men began to scale the Russbach Heights around Baumersdorf, Charles had no choice but to retreat. Observing the progress of his right, Napoleon ordered a general advance and hurled Macdonald toward Süssenbrunn in an effort to crack the Austrian centre and complete the destruction of Charles' army. But the white-coated battalions held and the defeated Archduke was able to conduct his retreat in good order, withdrawing north into Moravia under the cover of night.

It had been an horrific struggle, immobile wounded burning to death when the grain around them caught fire, and both sides had paid a heavy price. French losses exceeded 37,000 for 5 and 6 July, while their Habsburg foes suffered more than 41,000 dead, wounded, missing and captured. It had been no Austerlitz, no Jena–Auerstädt, but that it was a major Napoleonic victory was very clear at least in Charles's mind and he headed north by multiple routes to find a sheltered spot where he might rest and refit his battered army.