

The Battle of Wavre

Age of Eagles Scenario
by GRW, 2008

SETTING

Date: 18 June 1815, 1:00 PM

Location: 8 miles east of Waterloo, Belgium

Combatants: French Empire vs. Kingdom of Prussia

History: For his master-stroke at Waterloo, Napoleon planned to drive a wedge between the allied armies of Blücher and Wellington, and he successfully inflicted a major defeat on the Prussians at Ligny on June 16. To pursue the Prussian retreat and keep them from rejoining their British allies, Napoleon entrusted his newest marshal with 30,000 men. Marshal Grouchy cautiously set off to the northeast, but neither Blücher or Grouchy had accurate reconnaissance of the other's disposition.

On the morning of June 18, the day of Waterloo, Grouchy heard Napoleon's cannon fire several miles west. Some of his officers argued that they should march to the guns, but Grouchy had just received direct orders to seize the hamlet of Wavre and intercept Prussian relief columns marching west. The French lacked clear intelligence of how many Prussians guarded Wavre.



Emmanuel Grouchy

French Orders: Cross the Dyle River to intercept any Prussian relief efforts towards Waterloo.



Johann von Thielemann

Prussian Orders: Hold Wavre and check the French advance.

Victory points: Refer to the *Age of Eagles* 'Casualty Points Chart' to determine victory points. The French gain two points for each unspent unit that exits road point "B."

Game length: French 1:00 PM until 4:30 PM (7 turns)

AFTERMATH

Historically, Grouchy did not assault Wavre until almost 4:00pm. By this time, two Prussian corps had already passed to the west, on the march to Waterloo. However, when the advance Prussian columns heard cannon fire back at Wavre, they nearly turned around to meet the threat--a move which may have doomed Wellington. Instead, Thielemann's corps held off Grouchy along the Dyle River for three hours, until the French forced a crossing south of Wavre, rolling up the Prussian right flank. The battle raged well into the darkness with both sides fighting until 11:00pm. Grouchy resumed his attack the next morning, but Thielemann soon retreated, leaving 2,500 casualties for each side. Not until mid-morning on June 19 did Grouchy learn of Napoleon's final defeat. Grouchy then conducted a skillful retreat back into France.

SCENARIO RULES

1. The Prussians deploy first.
2. Each of the five villages represented on the map has a bridge over the Dyle River.
3. GROUCHY and THIELEMANN are both -1 for initiative rolls. French begin with the initiative.

TERRAIN & WEATHER

The gaming table should be six feet long by four feet wide, laid out according to the accompanying map. Urban areas offer +1 advantages to defending units in melee and a -1 benefit when under fire. The town of Wavre offers a +2 benefit, making it the best defensive point along the river. The ground rises on both sides of the Dyle River, so the river runs through a small valley. The river may only be crossed at the bridges. The weather is warm and clear, and the ground is soft from recent rain.

DEPLOYMENT

Units set up according to the accompanying map in whichever formation the commander sees fit. Batteries may begin limbered or unlimbered, and commanders must be deployed within 12 inches of their commands.

This battle is somewhat of a "what if" scenario, because Grouchy did not press his attack on Wavre until 4:00pm. Armchair generals and historians have long criticized Grouchy's lethargic performance, although it is the opinion of the author that much of this criticism is unfair. If you think you can do better than Grouchy, this is your chance to save Napoleon from certain defeat at Waterloo. The arrival of Grouchy's divisions has been sped up slightly, to reflect the new sense of urgency you would most certainly have displayed in his stead.

VANDAMME begins in march column along the road to Wavre. EXELMAN's corps enters at point "A" on at 1:30pm. GERARD's corps arrives at 2:00pm (French Turn 3), and army commander GROUCHY arrives with GERARD. PAJOL arrives at 2:30pm. For those who are more familiar with this battle, Teste's division does not appear in the French OOB, because he did not arrive until after dusk.

SCALE

Each infantry stand represents 360 soldiers, each cavalry stand 180 troopers, and artillery stands a battery of 6-12 guns. Ground scale is one inch to 150 yards and one complete turn represents thirty minutes of historical time. Ideally, this is a two or three-player scenario.

Notes on Sources

The Waterloo campaign might be the most studied campaign in military history. The Battle of Wavre, fought on the very same day as Waterloo, has received considerably less treatment than it deserves. Considerable liberties were taken when designing the Prussian OOB in order to balance the game play. For an overview of Wavre and the full campaign, see Geoffrey Wooten, *Waterloo 1815* (1992), but for a more detailed account of Wavre specifically, see W. Hyde Kelly's excellent study: *The Battle of Wavre and Grouchy's Retreat* (1905).

French Order of Battle

GROUCHY French Right Wing

GROUCHY army ldr

<u>VANDAMME</u>	<u>III Corps ldr</u>	<u>GERARD</u>	<u>IV Corps ldr</u>
<u>Lefol</u>	8th Division ldr	<u>Pecheux</u>	12th Division ldr
Billard	R 8/6/4 Sk line	Rome	R 8/6/4 Sk line
Corsin	R 7/5/3 Sk line	Schaeffer	R 5/4/3 Sk line
<u>Hubert</u>	10th Division ldr	<u>Vicary</u>	13th Division ldr
Gengoult	R 8/6/4 Sk line	Le Capitaine	R 5/4/3 Sk line
Dupeyroux	R 8/6/4 Sk line	Desprez	R 5/4/3 Sk line
<u>Berthezene</u>	11th Division ldr	<u>Hulot</u>	14th Division ldr
Dufour	R 5/4/3 Sk line	Baume	R 5/3/2 Sk light
Lagarde	R 5/4/3 Sk line	Toussaint	R 5/4/3 Sk line
Light Foot Artillery Reserve #1 & 2		Light Foot Artillery Reserve #4 & 5	
Heavy Foot Artillery Reserve #3		Heavy Foot Artillery Reserve #6	
Maurin	R 5/4/3 LC chasseurs		
<u>EXELMANS</u>	II Cav. Corps ldr	(detached from I Cavalry Corps)	
Strolz	R 7/5/3 LC dragoons	Pajol	R 7/5/3 LC hussars
Chastel	R 6/4/3 LC dragoons		
Light Horse Artillery Reserve #7 & 8			

Prussian Order of Battle

von THIELEMANN Prussian III Armeekorps

THIELEMANN III Corps ldr

<u>Borcke</u>	9th Inf. Brigade ldr	<u>von Luck</u>	11th Inf. Brigade ldr
Zeppelin	E 6/4/2 Sk line	Zschuschen	C 5/4/3 landwehr
Tippelskirch	C 5/4/3 landwehr	Grolman	C 4/3/- landwehr
<u>Kampfen</u>	10th Inf. Brigade ldr	<u>Stulpnagel</u>	12th Inf. Brigade ldr
Natzmer	R 6/4/3 Sk line	Ketteloot	R 6/4/3 Sk line
Beckendorff	C 5/4/3 landwehr	Rohr	C 5/4/3 landwehr
<u>Hobe</u>	Reserve Cav. Div. ldr	(detached from I Corps)	
Marwitz	R 5/4/3 LC uhlands	Stengel	R 6/4/3 Sk line
Lottum	R 7/5/4 LC mixed		
Light Horse Artillery #1		Reserve Light Foot Artillery #2-4	
		Reserve Heavy Foot Artillery #5	

MAP & DEPLOYMENT

