

Battle of the Mincio River

Age of Eagles Scenario
by GRW, 2008

SETTING

Date: 8 February 1814, 10:00 AM

Location: 10 miles south of Lake Garda, Italy

Combatants: French Empire & Kingdom of Italy vs. Austria

History: As Napoleon retreated behind the Rhine River following a crushing defeat at Leipzig, the Sixth Coalition pressed their advance on other fronts. In northern Italy, a veteran Austrian army of 35,000 men under Field Marshal Heinrich von Bellegarde sought to reestablish Austrian dominance over Italy. A major victory would enable the Austrians to link up with the recent defector and King of Naples, Joachim Murat. Standing between these two forces was a conscript army of 34,000 men commanded by Napoleon's stepson, Eugene de Beauharnais.

Eugene sought to attack and destroy the Austrian field army before dealing with Murat's Neapolitans, and toward this end, he intended to quickly concrete his scattered divisions on the east bank of the Mincio River, near the town of Villafranca. Unbeknownst to the French, the Austrian army was not concentrated near Villafranca. Field Marshal Bellegarde mistakenly believed the French were retreating to the west, and had begun to send his divisions across the Mincio River in pursuit. When February 8, 1814 dawned, both armies straddled the river at different points, and neither commander realized the intentions of the other.



Eugene de Beauharnais

French Orders: Trap and destroy the Austrian army along the banks of the Mincio River. Keep control of the vital bridge at Goito.



Heinrich von Bellegarde

Austrian Orders: Locate and engage the French rearguard. Control all roads leading east to ensure your lines of communication are safe.

Victory points: Refer to the *Age of Eagles* 'Casualty Points Chart' to determine victory points.

Game length: French 10:00 AM until Austrian 4:30 PM (14 turns)

AFTERMATH

The morning fog and sounds of battle across a wide front surprised and confused both commanders early in the day. Lacking proper cavalry, neither side could determine what was happening. After driving the Austrians from Roverbella, Eugene correctly realized that the Austrian army was advancing across the Mincio. He ordered all available forces to converge on Valeggio in the early afternoon. Bellegarde was slow to realize French intentions, and failed to engage his reserves early in the battle. The Austrians eventually pulled back from Volta and Monzambano in order to barely halt the main French attack. Both sides withdrew the following day, after each suffering roughly 4,000 casualties. Eugene claimed a minor French victory.

SCENARIO RULES

1. Commanders EUGENE, FRESSINET, and MERVILLE are Charismatic.
2. The Austrians deploy first.
3. The early confusion of the battle was aided by morning fog. For the first two turns, fog reduces line of sight and all firing ranges to 2". All units suffer an additional -1 penalty when rolling for maneuver. The fog lifts at 11:00am and these penalties no longer apply.
4. EUGENE has a +1 modifier for initiative rolls, and BELLEGARDE suffers a -1 modifier.

TERRAIN & WEATHER

The gaming table should be eight feet long by six feet wide, laid out according to the accompanying map. Urban areas offer +2 advantages to defending units in melee and a -2 benefit when under fire. The Mincio River, while historically fordable at several points, can only be crossed at three locations in this scenario (represented by the roads on the map). Movement along roads offers full movement benefits. The weather begins foggy, but becomes clear.

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. ZUCCHI'S division enters at point C, at 1:00pm (French Turn 7). PALOMBINI enters from point "A" at 2:00pm.

FENNER'S division enters at point "B", on the Austrian 12:00pm turn but may not cross the river until the Austrian 3:00pm turn.

SCALE

Each infantry stand represents 360 soldiers, each cavalry stand 180 troopers, and artillery stands a battery of 10-12 guns. Ground scale is one inch to 150 yards and one complete turn represents thirty minutes of historical time.

Notes on Sources

The Battle of the Mincio River is not widely researched, which means that some liberties have been taken in designing the orders of battle--especially on the Austrian side. The French OOB is divided into three columns, just as Eugene divided his forces for the battle. Cavalry on both sides are consolidated for ease of play--historically both sides dispersed their cavalry below brigade level. Eugene's French infantry is rated as "regular" to represent their determination and high spirit during the battle, but they cannot skirmish, representing their lack of experience. See George F. Nafziger and Marco Gioannini, *The Defense of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Northern Italy, 1813—1814* (2002). Also see Frederick Schneid, *Napoleon's Italian Campaigns* (2002).

French Order of Battle

EUGÈNE

Army of Northern Italy

GRENIER corps ldr

Rouyer 2nd Division ldr

Schmitz R 6/5/3 line
d'Arnaud R 6/5/3 line
28th DemiB C 5/4/3 line
Perreimond R 5/4/3 LC hussars
Light Foot Artillery #1
Light Horse Artillery #2

Marcognet 4th Division ldr

Jeanin R 8/6/4 line
Deconchy R 5/4/3 line
Light Foot Artillery #3

Lecchi (ITALIANS) Royal Guard Div. ldr

Lecchi E 4/-/2 Sk grenadiers
Lecchi E 4/-/2 HC dragoons
Light Foot Artillery #4

Zucchi (ITALIANS) 6th Division ldr

Saint-Paul C 5/4/3 line

EUGENE corps ldr

Quesnel 1st Division ldr

Campi R 7/5/4 line
Forestier R 6/5/3 line
30th DemiB R 5/4/3 Sk light
Bonnemain R 5/4/3 LC chasseurs
Light Foot Artillery #5

VERDIER corps ldr

Fressinet 3rd Division ldr

Montfalcon R 5/4/3 line
Pegot R 5/4/3 line
25th DemiB C 6/5/3 line
Light Foot Artillery #6

Palombini (ITALIANS) 5th Division ldr

Ruggieri R 5/4/3 Sk light
Galimberti C 7/6/4 line
Light Foot Artillery #7

Austrian Order of Battle

BELLEGARDE

Army of Northern Italy

BELLEGARDE army ldr

RADIOJEVICH corps ldr

Radivojevich (acting corps ldr)

Bogdan R 10/7/5 line
Steffanini R 7/6/3 line
Vescey R 7/5/3 LC uhlands
Light Foot Artillery #1-3

Pflacher div ldr

De Best R 8/6/4 line
Quasdanovich R 11/8/5 line

Merville div ldr

Stutterheim E 6/4/2 Sk grenadiers
Wrede R 6/4/2 HC dragoons
Light Foot Artillery #4

SOMMARIVA corps ldr

Fenner div ldr

Paumgarten R 10/7/5 line
Suden R 8/6/4 line
Abele R 8/6/4 line
Light Foot Artillery #5 & 6

Heldenfeld div ldr

Eckhardt R 6/4/3 line
Spiegel R 7/5/3 line
Watlet R -/5/3 line
Winzian R 6/4/3 line
Light Foot Artillery #7 & 8

Heavy Foot Artillery Reserve #9 & 10

MAP & DEPLOYMENT

