

# The Battle of Ostrolenka

Age of Eagles Scenario  
by GRW, 2011

## SETTING

**Date:** 16 February 1807, 10:30 AM  
**Location:** 70 miles northeast of Warsaw  
**Combatants:** French Empire vs. Russian Empire

**History:** Following the terrible blood-bath at Eylau, the far right flank of Napoleon's army was secured by the V Corps, once commanded by Marshal Lannes. But with Lannes ill, Napoleon promoted his long-time confidant General Jean Rene Savary to assume temporary command. Savary knew that the Russian Army of Moldavia threatened Warsaw, but he could not be sure of their precise location.

By mid-February each side had assembled roughly 20,000 men near the Narew River, slowly probing toward each other in the winter snows. The village of Ostrolenka straddled the frozen Narew, and Essen planned to approach the town from both banks, but at the last minute Sedmaratzki's 6th Division was recalled. This weakened Essen's two-pronged attack and at 9:00am on February 16, Savary struck first. The French attack drove back Essen's weaker force on the east bank, pursuing the Russians some five miles. But Savary did not realize that Essen's main attack was already descending on Savary's lightly guarded rear at Ostrolenka from the west bank of the Narew....



Jean Rene Savary

**French Orders:** Seek out and destroy the local Russian forces.



Ivan N. Essen I

**Russian Orders:** Surprise the French by capturing Ostrolenka and driving them from the field.

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

**Game length:** 10:30AM until 4:00PM (12 Turns)

## AFTERMATH

In the late morning, Essen's main attack converged on Ostrolenka, where Savary had left three brigades to defend the town. Russian artillery fire alerted Savary to the attack on his rear, and by noon his men were re-crossing the Narew River to counter-attack. The Russians defended some sandy hills outside the town but were driven back by late afternoon. Oudinot distinguished himself by personally leading a dragoon chare to end the battle. Essen retreated in good order, after losing some 2,500 men and 7 guns. The French lost 1,000 men and a battery of artillery. The indecisive battle allowed both sides to settle into winter quarters without further engagement. Savary, a man of considerable diplomatic talents, was soon sent by Napoleon to conduct political affairs Spain.

## SCENARIO RULES

1. OPTIONAL RULE: Essen had planned to advance the 9th Division down one side of the river, with the 6th Division down the other bank. Ordered 50 miles away to Goniadz, Sedmaratzki's division had been unexpectedly recalled by Bennigsen. If both players agree, this division can be made available for the battle as Essen intended. If these optional forces are employed, the French side receives two brigades which were nearby for the battle. *[It is the opinion of the author that the scenario plays much better if this optional rule is exercised.]*
2. SAVARY is +0 for initiative, and ESSEN suffers a -1 modifier.

## 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. Small hamlets lined the roads to Ostrolenka, but were not large enough for a brigade to garrison. The Narew River, and nearby ponds, are frozen and may be crossed by infantry at a -3" movement penalty. Cavalry and artillery may only cross the frozen river at the bridge. The woods are thick and count as rough going. Roads offer full movement benefits. The weather is cold with snow covering the ground.

## 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. RIELLE deploys near Ostrolenka with CAMPANA, RUFFIN, DEBELLE, and the artillery reserve. SAVARY returns from point A at 11:00am (Turn 2) with BECKER and the remainder of GAZAN'S division. SUCHET and the remainder of OUDINOT'S division arrive from point C at 12:30pm (Turn 5).

The historical Russian deployment and arrivals have been modified for this game to create a playable scenario. As such, the Russian player must withhold VOLONSKI, any two brigades, and the artillery reserve off table until 11:30am (Turn 3), when they enter from point A or B. ESSEN begins the scenario deployed with the larger balance of the 9th Division.

If the optional rule is used, SEDMARATZKI will arrive in march column from points A or B (both entry points can be used simultaneously, if desired) at the start of the 12:30pm turn (Turn 5).

## SCALE

Each infantry stand represents 360 soldiers, each cavalry stand 180 troopers, and artillery stands a battery of 6-8 guns. Ground scale is one inch to 150 yards.

## Notes on Sources

Ostrolenka is a minor footnote in most historical works. As a small, indecisive battle in the wake of the more famous Battle of Eylau, very little research exists to create accurate OOBs for Ostrolenka. Digby Smith's OOBs, for example, are completely incorrect. Using the works of Nafziger, Petre, and Savary's own account, the French organization should be reliable. Oudinot detached Villatte and Suchet detached Vedel's brigade just before the battle, and Savary himself noted that his cavalry were of little value. Such details are lacking for the Russian OOB, so many liberties were taken in organizing the brigades. Note that Essen's 10th Division had not yet arrived from the Turkish front. Refer to George Nafziger's orders of battle from the winter of 1806-1807. For a brief narrative see Francis L. Petre, *Napoleon's Campaign in Poland* (1901), pp. 208-212. *For the benefit of historical purists, it should be noted one final time that this particular scenario has taken many liberties with all aspects of the engagement.*



## MAP & DEPLOYMENT

