

The Battle of Sacile

Age of Eagles Scenario
by GRW, 2008

SETTING

Date: 16 April 1809, 10:00 AM

Location: 37 miles north of Venice, Italy

Combatants: French Empire & Kingdom of Italy vs. Austrian Empire

History: Austria surprised Napoleon with a sudden declaration of war in April 1809 and as a result, French forces in northern Italy were ill-prepared for action. The campaign in northern Italy pitted 40,000 men under Austrian Archduke John, a royal of dubious military ability, against Napoleon's adopted step-son, Prince Eugene, the viceroy of Italy. Eugene attempted to check the Austrian advance by uniting his scattered command at the town of Sacile. He planned for a battle on April 16, but Archduke John pressed forward and made contact two days sooner. By the time of the battle, only 35,000 of Prince Eugene's troops were on the field.

Rather than fall back, the French surprised the Austrians by giving battle on the morning of April 16, commencing with a traditional *en echelon* attack against Archduke John's left flank. The attack had to proceed over marshy ground divided by river tributaries. To make matters worse, the expected French reinforcements never arrived, due to muddy roads on the way to Sacile.



Eugene de Beauharnais

French Orders: Drive the Austrian army from the field, forcing them back on their main lines of communication.



Archduke John

Austrian Orders: Halt the initial French attack and fold Fontana-Freda. Do not allow the enemy to sever the Talpenedo road.

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

Game length: French 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM (14 turns, but see Scenario Rule #3)

AFTERMATH

The French assault bogged down in the marsh around Palse, before heavy reinforcements allowed Eugene's army to seize Porcia around noon. Archduke John spent the morning discerning the direction of the main French attack, and by afternoon, realized the French had stretched their forces thin. At 3:30 a powerful counter attack pinned French forces at Porcia, while the Austrian IX Corps advanced against the weakened French left. Only Eugene's quick decision to withdraw and his commitment of Sahuc's cavalry kept his army from being annihilated. A slow Austrian pursuit allowed the French to retreat in good order to Sacile. For the first time since 1800 the Austrians defeated a French army, inflicting almost 3,100 casualties and capturing 3,500 prisoners. Archduke John lost roughly 4,000 men in the battle.

SCENARIO RULES

1. See "Deployment" for special rules dictating French and Austrian reinforcements.
2. The Austrians deploy first.
3. The battle ends in an immediate French victory if the French have undisputed control of Pordenone, representing the Austrian line of retreat from the field.
4. EUGENE is a +0 for initiative rolls, and Archduke John suffers a -2 modifier. French begin with initiative on the first turn.

TERRAIN & WEATHER

The gaming table should be six feet long by eight 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 streams, swollen by the heavy spring rains, count as rough going and automatically disorder any cavalry and infantry units which ford. Artillery may only cross at the bridges, of which there are two. The marsh around Palse and Tamai halves the movement of any units in the marsh and disorders them. The weather is warm and 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. On the first French turn, BARBOU enters at point B and BROUSSIER at point C. GRENIER and SAHUC may elect to enter at points B or C. SERAS and SEVEROLI deploy in zone "A" near Tamai. EUGENE and his reserve artillery arrive at point B at 10:30am (French Turn 2).

The IX Korps of I. GYULAI may elect to arrive from Pordenone at 11:00am (Austrian Turn 3) or from Roveredo at 12:00pm (Turn 5). Units arrive in march column, and units which do not fit on the table will arrive the following turn as space becomes available.

The French reinforcements Prince Eugene expected to arrive may or may not appear in this scenario. Beginning at the French 1:00pm turn, roll a D6 to represent the reinforcing units. On a roll of 1 or 2, LAMARQUE and PULLY arrive at point C. The French player may make this same roll at the start of each subsequent turn, until the reinforcements arrive.

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.

Notes on Sources

The Battle of Sacile has received much attention from historians and is a popular scenario among other Napoleonic war gaming systems, including *Grande Armee* and *Napoleon's Battles*. Chuck Hamack wrote a superb scenario for *Napoleon's Battles*, although there is some disagreement about the exact OOB, especially on the Austrian side. His battlefield map is also at odds with the research of Frederick Schneid. Some liberties have been taken in designing this scenario with regard to exact brigade strengths. See Robert Epstein, *Prince Eugene at War 1809* (1984) and Frederick Schneid, *Napoleon's Italian Campaigns: 1805-1815* (2002).

French Order of Battle

EUGÈNE
Army of Northern Italy

EUGENE army ldr

Seras 1st Division ldr

Garreau R 7/5/4 Sk line
Roussel R 6/4/3 Sk line

Broussier 2nd Division ldr

Dessaix R 6/4/3 Sk line
Dutruy R 9/7/5 Sk line

Grenier 3rd Division ldr

Abbe E 7/5/3 Sk light
Teste R 9/7/5 Sk line

Barbou 5th Division ldr

Moreau E 6/4/3 Sk line
Roize R 9/7/5 Sk line

Severoli 6th Division ldr

Bonfanti R 6/4/3 Sk line (Italian)
Peyri R 7/5/4 line (Italian)

Sahuc R 7/5/3 LC chasseurs
Light Horse Artillery #1

Light Foot Artillery Reserve #2 & 3
Heavy Foot Artillery Reserve #4

Lamarque 4th Division ldr

Huard R 9/7/5 Sk line
Almeras R 8/6/4 Sk line

Pully R 8/6/4 HC dragoons

Austrian Order of Battle

ARCHDUKE JOHN
Army of Inner Austria

Archduke JOHN army ldr

Albert GYULAI VIII Korps (no ldr)

A. Gyulai 1st Division ldr

Colloredo R 16/11/7 line
Gajoli R 9/7/4 line
Splenyi E 6/5/3 LC hussars
Light Horse Artillery #1
Heavy Foot Artillery #2

Frimont Adv. Guard Division ldr

Wetzel R 7/5/3 Sk light
Schmidt R 8/6/4 line
Light Foot Artillery #4

Ignaz GYULAI IX Korps ldr

Besan 1st Division ldr

Kleinmeyer E 15/10/7 Sk grenadier
Marziani R 13/8/6 Sk line
Kalnassy R 8/6/4 line
Gavasini R 12/9/6 line
Light Foot Artillery #5 & 6

Haager E 7/5/3 HC dragoons
Light Horse Artillery #7

MAP & DEPLOYMENT

