

# Battle of Möckern

## April 1813

*REPUBLIC TO EMPIRE*

WEEKENDER

20/21 AUGUST 2011

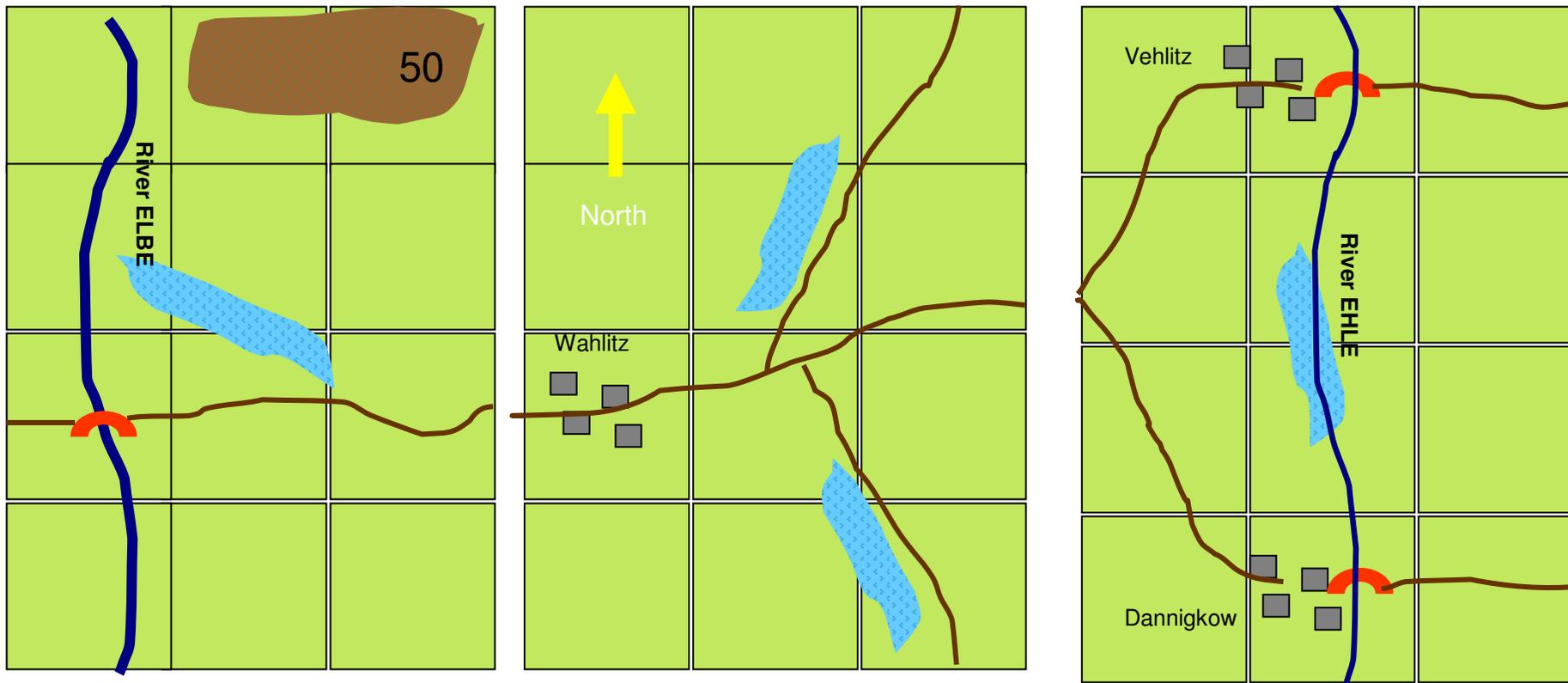
Scenario by Barry Hilton from an idea by Dave O'Brien

Events & Battle Report by Dave O'Brien

Terrain by Adrian Howe, Barry Hilton & Dave O'Brien

Troops: Barry Hilton, Dave O'Brien, Peter McCarroll, David Imrie, Bob Talbot, Peter Nicholson, Adrian Howe

3 tables 8 x 6 feet



Marsh/swamp



High ground

Forested areas to be added on the day

## Battle of Mockern 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1813

This account should be read in conjunction with Barry's map of the area to see where the following actions take place. For ease of explanation I have only classed the troops as French or Russian whereas you will see on Barry's orbat that there were actually Irish and Italian forces on the French side and Prussians fighting with the Russians. This is basically just an overview of the battle and not specific descriptions of what each unit was doing but I'm sure if I have missed any specific details the guys will quickly add their tuppence worth. The French forces were placed on the table in positions indicated on the map but before the action took place an event happened and all French players dived to see if they were actually in the positions they thought they were. The result was that the troops supporting west of Dannigkow and those south of Wahlitz were actually placed 12" and 24" further back than they had reported to their army commander. This change of position was to end up having dire consequences for the garrisons of Vehlitz and Dennigkow..

The game now started with both sides dicing for initiative which the Russians won. In the pre-game briefing the French had been informed that the Russians had been pushed back the day before to the east of Dannigkow and Vehlitz so they were not surprised when three forces entered from that side of the table but the two forces entering from north and south on the central table was unexpected. The supporting troops west of Dannigkow obviously expected French troops as they failed their charge threat reaction and one unit was cut down whilst another two retreated towards the village leaving one unit cowering in a wavering square. The Cossacks entering from the north swung round behind the supporting troops outside Vehlitz who did see the danger coming and formed squares. The three Russian forces entering from the East were struggling for movement points so very little happened from them. Now it was the French turn to react and the French troops north of Wahlitz quickly formed square and their supporting battalions guns managed to chase off a unit of Cossacks. The troops south of Wahlitz moved into position south of the village and supported their artillery which was deployed behind the swamp which was blasting the Russian infantry marching onto the battlefield. Meanwhile the garrisons of the two eastern villages shot at the Russians advancing on them.

Turn two started with the Russians getting initiative again so more troops poured onto the tables but the only action of note was the Russian dragoons cutting down the wavering square and the result was that the two retreating French infantry units promptly routed into the village of Dannigkow. The French reacted strongly with another Cossack unit retiring off table from fire from artillery fire and the French squares. The French artillery south of Wahlitz poured more fire into the Russians which caused heavy casualties on the Russian artillery which was trying to deploy and the shooting from the defenders of Vehlitz caused the rout of a Russian grenadier battalion and the lancers advancing on them. The third move saw an event which involved a mix up in orders and one of the battalions defending Dannigkow moved out of the village towards the west.

The French won the initiative this time and the artillery south of Wahlitz wiped out the Russian artillery before they could unlimber and the morale tests for nearby troops saw Russian infantry and a regiment of dragoons flee off the table. On their third move the Russians poured more troops on from the East and surprised the French when their troops started crossing the marsh which the French had thought was impassable and they finally started firing into the two villages.

Fog descended over the battlefield at the start of turn four which reduced visibility to 24" and affected some of the French long range artillery fire. The French had won the initiative again and had started bringing troops from the western table to support the fighting on the central table and continued with their shooting up of what Russian troops they could see. The artillery south of Wahlitz fired their last round before refitting and managed to rout another Russian infantry battalion. As the first artillery unit to refit this triggered another event which would only come into effect the next time the unit tried to fire. The Russians brought on more cavalry onto the central table northeast of Wahlitz and another brigade of Cossacks appeared on the French left flank way to the west. The new cavalry launched charges against the supporting squares west of Vehlitz and managed to rout another two squares which had wavered and caused further retreats on the infantry around them.

The fog was still lingering on move five and this time it was the Russians that won the initiative but apart from another two routing units being cut down and the Russians finally managing to get troops over the river Ehle very little of note seemed to happen except for firing all along the lines. The French had wanted to move troops to face the Cossacks but were prevented from seeing them due to the fog. The fog had lifted by move six as the French got the initiative but an event resulted in one of the defending units in Vehlitz discovering a wine store which had unfortunately effects on their shooting and combat effectiveness which was unfortunate as the Russians were now assaulting the village but did have an advantage on their morale as they were too pissed to bother about what was happening. The remaining defenders of Dannigkow were also now under attack and despite being heavily outnumbered and cut off from the rest of the army put up a stiff fight. The French were now able to react to the Cossacks on the west table which had wanted to threaten the bridge over the Elbe but instead discovered an unknown fortified camp defending the approaches to the bridge. In the Russian turn severe fighting was taking place all over the battlefield with heavy artillery fire causing heavy casualties to the French.

Turn seven started with the French getting the initiative and because of pressure everywhere they were keen to bring on reinforcements over the bridge from Magdeburg but an unfortunate event saw part of the bridge washed away in flood water. The look on the French commanders face was highly amusing. As the shooting started the French artillery unit which was now refitted discovered what their event was, they had been resupplied with the wrong size of ball for their guns and were forced to do another refit move. The Russian move saw the final assault and capture of both villages and bridges of Vehlitz and Dannigkow capturing 1,200 French who were surrounded outside the village. The crossroads east of Wahlitz were also in Russian hands so they were well in the lead in victory points.

Turn eight started with the Russians getting the initiative and despite action all over the battlefield the only action of note was a French unit that suddenly appeared over the river from the southeast of Dannigkow but unfortunately for the French they failed to charge and would be chased off in the next turn.

Turn nine started well for the French with the news that the bridge over the Elbe was repaired and they won the initiative but that was as good as it got as they lost another infantry unit outside Wahlitz but lost their divisional commander in the process. By turn ten dusk was falling and visibility was back to 24" and very little action took place as both sides were trying to recover from the fighting around Wahlitz and night fell ending the action.

**At this point in the actual battle the French pulled back over the Elbe giving the Russians a surprise victory but we were going for a new day of fighting so both sides were allowed to reposition their forces and pull back isolated units and refit all artillery. This meant that all Russian forces on the western table were pulled back as were all French troops that were still east of Wahlitz.**

The second day started with the French winning initiative but didn't do a lot except for small bodies of troops that appeared on both flanks east of the Elbe river cutting off the entry points and gaining some badly needed victory points for the French. The Russians launched a grenadier brigade with infantry support smashed into Wahlitz but failed to capture it. The Russians had kept substantial reserves in the two eastern villages so were able to send units out to chase off the French patrols but that would take a few more moves.

Move two saw the Russians win the initiative as well as getting an extra artillery ammo supply as an event. The Russian flank attack reappeared on the western table but this time it was more substantial with a mixed force of infantry, artillery, cavalry and Cossacks but they were unable to do much this turn and everyone's attention was on the continuing assault at Wahlitz and this time the Russians managed to break into the village but still didn't capture it.

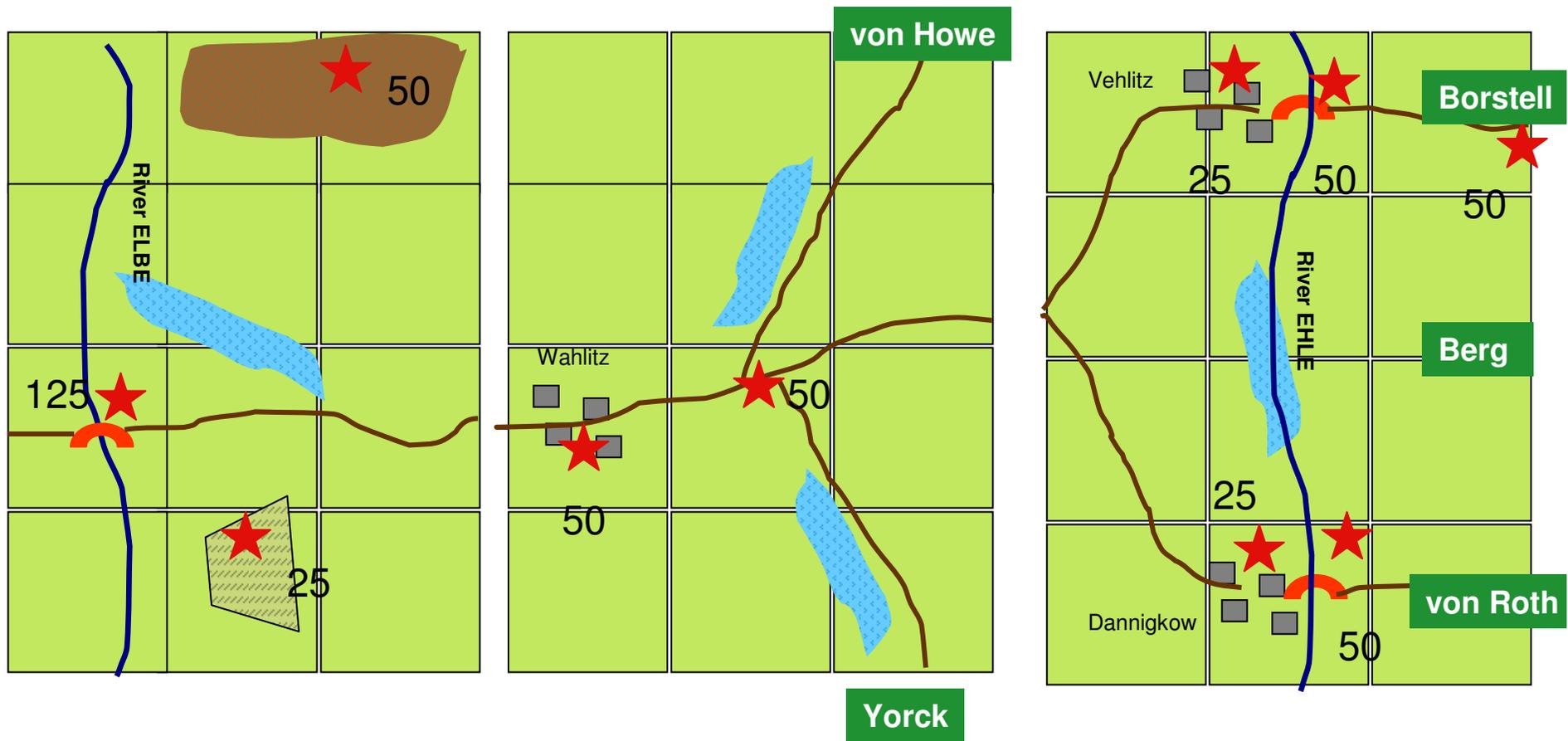
Move three and again the Russians get the initiative and continue with their assault on the village and finally force the defenders to disengage and on the northern edge of the west table the infantry move into position to challenge the French on the hill. Unfortunately for the Russians the French cavalry launch a counter attack before their cavalry can get their charge in and being caught at the halt the result was inevitable. In their turn the French launched an immediate counter attack with fresh troops to retake Wahlitz and managed to break in against the exhausted defenders.

Turn four saw the French get the initiative but an event caused an explosion in one of their batteries but fortunately for them there were minimal results from the explosion and they were able to carry on firing. The French counter attack finally pushes the Russians back out of the village and on the south of the village a strong attack by the French forces was about to push the Russians out of the crossroads but the defending grenadiers were made of sterner stuff and a counter attack by Russian dragoons broke yet another square and the resulting Resolve checks saw a few more units rout or retreat.

Turn five started with a severe downpour which gave a minus two dice off all shooting so most of this move revolved around hand to hand combat and the French finally forced the Russians away from the crossroads. The taking of the village, crossroads and the French patrols cutting the roads gave the French the advantage in victory points for the first time in the whole battle.

Turn six started with the French cavalry finally being exhausted which was going to affect their fighting ability. The French had been warned from the beginning that something like this would happen so it wasn't too much of a surprise but the event that came up did. As mentioned earlier the French forces were actually composed of French and Italian troops and the Italians finally fell out with the French having borne large share of the fighting so for this move the Italians diced up their own MP's and wouldn't share them with the French who had to dice their own. The Russians got the initiative and were able to clear away all the French patrols except one. Turns seven and eight still saw lots of action but nothing dramatic that was going to alter the battlefield situation so all that was left to do was a final victory points count which gave an overwhelming victory to the Russians.

**This was a really interesting battle to fight for both sides with the French having a large advantage of centralised position and numbers but most of their troops were poor quality infantry and they had a definite disadvantage in cavalry numbers which meant that huge amounts of their infantry spent the battle in square and they didn't know when or where the Russians would appear. Although the Russians were short in numbers they had good quality troops and plenty of artillery and cavalry which allowed for a very mobile battle but the sheer amount of French infantry squares limited their movement on the battlefield. Another surprise from this game was the number of squares that were broken by cavalry charges but it was all to do with troop quality and support or lack of it and I think five French squares were broken by Russian cavalry. Although they normally get a bad press by Napoleonic wargamers the Italians put up a stunning performance all through the battle and if it hadn't been for them the victory would have been an even bigger one for the Russians.**



Forested areas to be added on the day



# ALLIES

player	Command name	units
David Imrie	Berg	1 grenadier brigade 4 battalions 1 Infantry brigade 4 battalions + 1 12pdr battery + 1 Hussar regiment
Jim Wallace	Yorck	1 infantry brigade 4 battalions 1 Cavalry brigade, 2 regiments of Dragoons + horse battery
Tam Nish	Borstell	Infantry brigade 2 x grenadier battalions, 2 x infantry battalions 1 x Lancer regiment 1 6pdr battery, 1/2
Andy Mulligan	von Roth Advanced Guard	(2 bns Jager ,Olonez Militia bn, Volodoga Militia bn Grodno Hussars (32), Cossacks (12) + 6pdr battery
Adrian Howe	von Howe's Cossack force	6 x 12 Cossack polk + Horse battery
REINFORCEMENTS		Infantry brigade 4 battalions
		Cavalry brigade 2 regiments of Hussars
		Cavalry brigade 2 regiments of cuirassiers
		Infantry brigade 4 battalions of Militia
		Cossack Brigade 4 x 12 cossacks horse battery

# FRENCH

player	Command name	units
Gerry Donohoe 1	35 <sup>th</sup> Division Grenier	1 <sup>st</sup> Brigade: 4 battalions Garrison of Vehlitz: 2 bns + 4pdr
Bill Paterson 3	35 <sup>th</sup> Division Grenier	2 <sup>nd</sup> Brigade (Italian): 6 battalions + 4pdr
Bob Talbot 2	18 <sup>th</sup> Division Lagrange	1 <sup>st</sup> Brigade: 4 battalions Garrison of Dennigkow: 2 bns + 6pdr
Kieran Donohoe 4	18 <sup>th</sup> Division Lagrange	2 <sup>nd</sup> Brigade: 6 battalions + 4pdr
Bill Robertson 5	1 <sup>st</sup> Light Cavalry Division	1 <sup>st</sup> Brigade: 1 x 12 Hussars, 1 x 12 Lancers, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Brigade: 1 x 12 Chasseurs, 1 x 12 Chasseurs + Horse battery
EUGENE'S RESERVE		3 x 6pdr batteries
Reinforcements	1 <sup>st</sup> Cuirassier Division 3 <sup>rd</sup> Cuirassier Division	2 x 18 Cuirassiers 1 x 18 Cuirassiers, 1 x 24 Dragoons + 2 Horse Batteries
	Imperial Guard brigade Rottembourg	1 x Chasseurs, 1 x Grenadiers 2 x Young Guard
	Italian Imperial Guard Brigade	1 x Chasseurs, 1 x Turin Velites, 1 x Florence Velites
	31 <sup>st</sup> Division Bardet's 13 <sup>th</sup> Provisional Demi Brigade	6 battalions
	FORITIFED CAMP GARRISON	1x 6 pdr battery, 2 infantry battalions

- To be in possession of the most points at the end of the game.
- Divisional sized commands.
- More French than Allies
- More Allied cavalry than French
- French use central command Allies use independent commands
- No central command for the Russians so each turn each player will receive either 0, 1 or 2 extra DAv (D3 throw).
- French do have a central command – General or Marshal will be Competent or Skilful.
- Game should be about movement, surprises, events and not wall to wall troops.