Debacle on the Danube
Designing a campaign game

Steve Jones turns his talents from individual scenario design to the challenges of campaigning, a subject dear to the Editor's heart. Here, he takes inspiration from the events of 1809 and Napoleon's adventures against the Austrians.

There is a lot to be said for a wargames campaign. At a very basic level they act as scenario generators, giving our tiny troops a reason for being on the miniature battlefield. The results of our battles also gain an extra dimension as our tactical decisions have effects that last beyond the friendly handshake at the cessation of the day's hostilities. We may be discouraged from taking too many gambles at the eleventh hour when failure means fighting the next battle at a significant disadvantage – "he who fights and runs away…" and all that.

Campaigns in themselves can also give a great wargaming experience. Each 'move' can be built into a regular club meeting. Alternatively, modern technology allows participation in a 'play by email (PBEM)' approach by people who would not otherwise get together on a regular basis. The campaign

commanders need not be the same people who resolve the tactical situations, and it is often fun when this is the case as it adds to the 'fog of war'. It also allows the commander in chief a legitimate excuse of blaming the idiots who have ordered the troops about while permitting the generals on the field to blame 'HQ' for mismanaging the strategy.

For my wargame campaigns, I prefer the campaign itself to be a fairly streamlined operation, running mainly to generate interesting tactical situations. These I can then resolve using whichever set of tabletop rules are currently taking my fancy. For me, campaigns either add some depth to a solo wargaming experience, or allow me to act as a god-like umpire while friends email me orders for the respective armies.

What I'll present you with in this article is a simple approach to creating a wargames campaign based on a real historical situation. I will look at constructing a map, offer an order of battle and present a simple set of rules for running the campaign. You can either use this 'as is' or pinch whatever aspect you find useful to bolt on to your existing games.
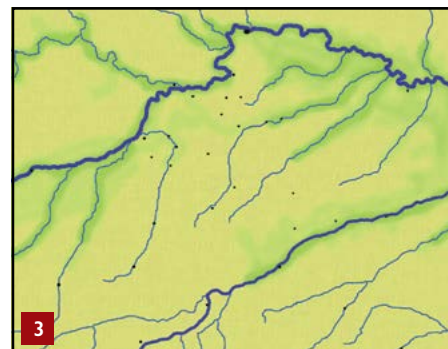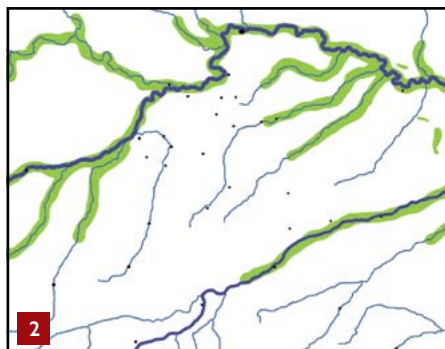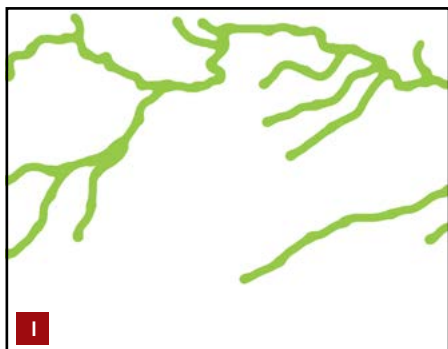
BACKGROUND

Napoleon's Danube campaign of 1809 has long been a favourite of mine and while its culmination offers the magnificent

A French column winds its way through another Bavarian town. The church is a JR casting from Magister Militum.

spectacles of Aspern-Essling and Wagram, the early stages are a war of manoeuvre that are eminently suitable for a quick campaign of the sort that is likely to generate a number of small and medium-sized battles to be resolved by a few friends using troops on the table and your favourite set of rules.

In April 1809, with Napoleon's gaze directed at Spain and Portugal, the Austrian army seized the opportunity to attack the French and allied forces stationed in Bavaria. The latter were initially widely dispersed and poorly coordinated. The Austrian assault floundered, however, allowing Napoleon the time he needed to rejoin his army along with significant reinforcements and eventually turn the tide in a startling example of his military genius. This reversal was by no means a certainty, however, and an Austrian victory was a real possibility, with the French on the back foot during much of the fighting.

RESEARCH

The events of 1809 are well documented in many books, the most comprehensive in the English language being Jack Gill's recent trilogy *1809 – Thunder on the Danube*, the first volume of which includes the April battles. A number of board wargames are also available for this campaign and I found Kevin Zucker's

The Seven Days of 1809 particularly inspiring and informative, with a beautiful map. More information on this game can be found at the publisher's website *http://napoleongames.com/ drupal2/abensberg.html* and on Board Game Geek, *http:// boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/11967/the-seven-days-of-1809*.

THE MAP

I find that a well-designed and attractive map helps greatly in creating a satisfying campaign experience in the same way that well-painted troops and high-quality scenery enhance tabletop battles. The type and complexity of your map will depend on the nature of the campaign you want to create. In my case, the approach was to keep things simple. Furthermore, for practical reasons I wanted a map that would fit onto one A4 piece of paper. Let's face it, if you want a larger and more detailed map, it's easy to pinch one from a boardgame!

I began by scanning a map of the general area of eastern Bavaria that I wanted and imported it into some photo-editing software. I used the map on page 21 of the relevant Osprey Campaign volume as a starting point, cropping the image to place Regensburg close to the north edge, Moosberg in the south, Ingolstadt to the west and Straubing to the east.

Bavarians prepare to stem the Austrian onslaught. All painting and basing by the author, who also took the photos.
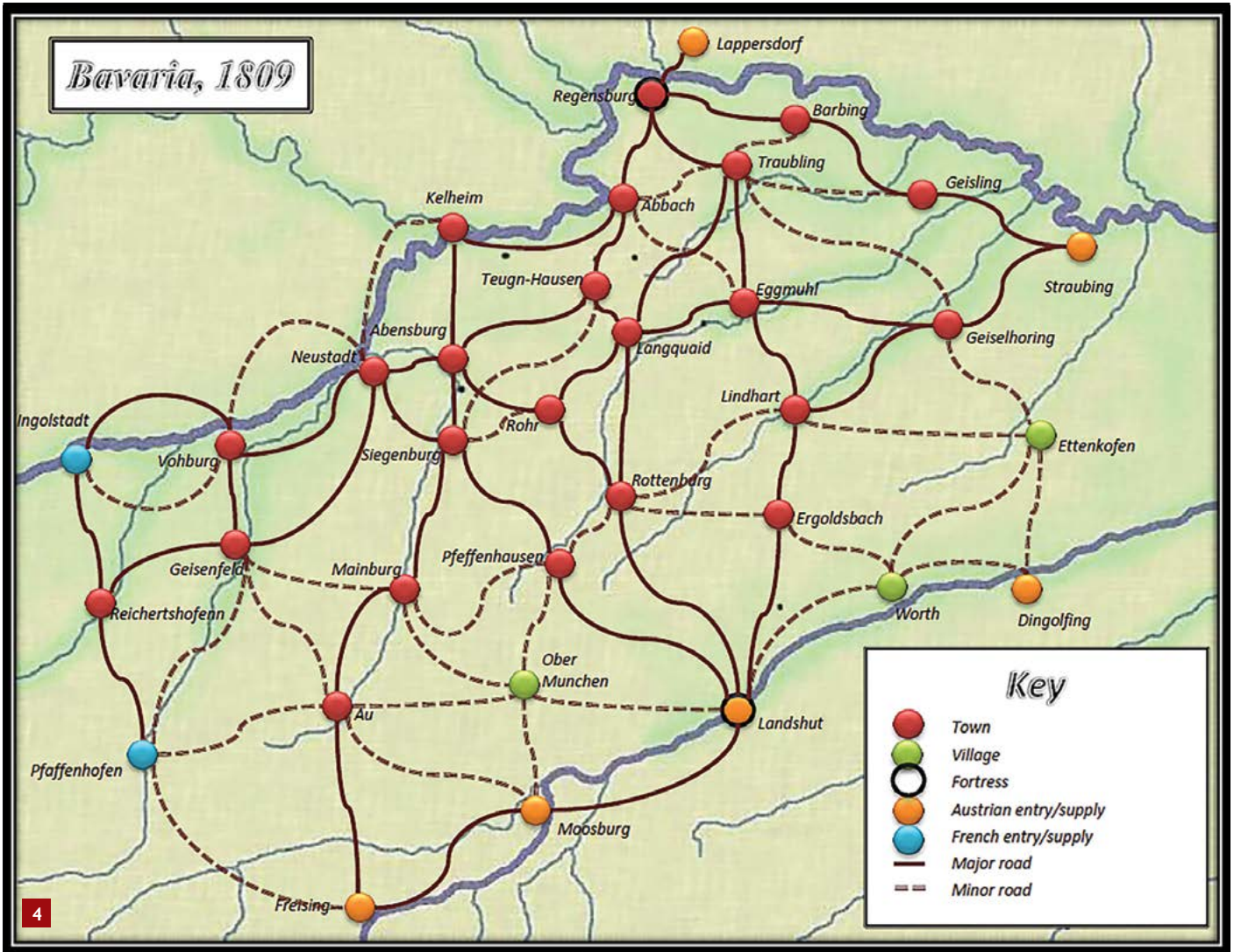
Feature: Debacle on the Danube

Archduke Charles and his staff observe the opposition. Buildings are mostly from TimeCast.

Using the photo-editing software, I then created a number of layers on top of the scanned map. On the first layer (Figure 1), I traced along the major rivers in a green shade. This layer isn't really necessary but adds to the aesthetics of the finished map. On the next layers, I traced the major and minor rivers in blue and showed the positions of towns and villages with black dots and placed this on top of the previous layer (Figure 2). Lastly, I created a background layer of pale green with a 'linen' texture to act as the base of the map. These layers were then arranged in order with the original scan hidden (Figure 3). This image was saved as a single layer JPEG file.

The next stage was to open a blank MS *Word* document, create a drawing canvas and drop the JPEG of the map into the canvas. I then went to town (no pun intended) using the drawing tools within *Word* to identify key features on the map. Towns and villages were marked in their approximate positions using circles, with a nice 3D effect, and roads were created using 'connectors' to join these circles together. By using curved connectors, a more pleasing effect was achieved than with stark, straight lines, and this also allows for a bit of fiddling to make roads follow their historical prototypes a little more closely. Major roads were shown with solid lines and minor roads with dotted ones. Locations lying on a major road are classed as towns and those lying only on minor roads are villages. Finally, each location was labelled using text boxes with no borders and transparent backgrounds (Figure 4), along with a key and a title. To determine details such as where roads ran and what type they were, I used whatever historical maps I could find online and maps from various board games.

The map does not include features such as hills and woods. When setting up a battle I refer to more detailed maps of the relevant area for that level of information. This keeps the map as uncluttered as possible.

The whole process of map creation took a couple of hours including a little trial and error.

ORDERS OF BATTLE

Keeping to my uncomplicated approach I represented units on the map as Corps where possible and Divisions where these operated, or could operate, individually. Using my books and games, the orders of battle in the tables opposite were created.

The strength of each unit can be tracked in a book, on a spreadsheet or in whatever way seems agreeable to the campaign organiser. Depending on the tabletop rules to be used, this strength may be expressed as numbers of men, brigades, battalions, and so on. Here, unit strengths have been calculated to allow the use of generic wargames units and can be easily adapted to whatever forces you have to hand, the point being to create wargames battles, not to exactly model every man present in 1809. In my case, wargame units are brigades, but they could just as easily be battalions on the tabletop if that suits your collection better. Artillery is only represented as Corps/Korps reserves, and Divisional reserves in the case of the Bavarians who possessed a particularly strong artillery arm.

I haven't given excessive detail, such as skirmishing ability, as this will be defined by your own rules and collections. Most troops should be of average quality, but the Austrians have better units in the form of the Heavy Cavalry, the Grenadiers and perhaps the Avant Garde Divisions, whereas the French veterans can be found in the majority of III Corps and the Hesse-Darmstadt infantry of IV Corps. Everyone will have their own view on this, so follow your own nose.

The campaign starts at 6am on the 16th of April 1809, with just the Bavarians and St Hilaire's division available to the French, and the main Austrian army beginning its advance from the south.

FRENCH ORDER OF BATTLE

Commander	Command	Date of Arrival	Point of Arrival
Napoleon	Commander in Chief	18th	Ingolstadt
Oudinot	II Corps	19th	Pfaffenhofen
Davout	III Corps	Start	Regensburg
Massena	IV Corps	19th	Pfaffenhofen
Lefebvre	VII Corps	Start	Pfeffenhausen
Vandamme	VIII Corps	18th	Ingolstadt
Lannes1	Any	19th	Ingolstadt
Bessières	Cavalry Reserve	19th	Ingolstadt

Corps	Division	Type	Units			Date of Arrival	Point of Arrival
			INF	CAV	ARTY1		
II	Tharreau	Infantry	3			19th	Pfaffenhofen
	Claparede	Infantry	4			19th	Pfaffenhofen
	Colbert	Light Cavalry		2		19th	Pfaffenhofen
	Corps Artillery	Artillery			2	19th	Pfaffenhofen
III	St Hilaire	Infantry	4			Start	Regensburg
	Morand	Infantry	4			17th	Lappersdorf5
	Gudin	Infantry	5			17th	Lappersdorf5
	Corps Artillery	Artillery			2	17th	Lappersdorf5
	Pajol	Light Cavalry		2		17th	Lappersdorf5
	Friant	Infantry	5			18th	Lappersdorf5
	Demont	Infantry	1			18th	Lappersdorf5
	Jacquinot	Light Cavalry		2		18th	Lappersdorf5
	Pire	Light Cavalry		2		18th	Lappersdorf5
IV	Legrand2	Infantry	4			19th	Pfaffenhofen
	St Cyr3	Infantry	5			19th	Pfaffenhofen
	Corps Artillery	Infantry			2	19th	Pfaffenhofen
	Marulaz	Light Cavalry		2		19th	Pfaffenhofen
	Molitor	Infantry	3			20th	Pfaffenhofen
	Boudet	Infantry	2			20th	Pfaffenhofen
VII (Bavarian)	Ludwig	Infantry	2	1	1	Start	Friesing
	Wrede	Infantry	2	1	1	Start	Landshut
	Deroy	Infantry	2	1	1	Start	Pfeffenhausen
VIII	Neubrunn	Infantry	4		1	18th	Ingolstadt
	Wollwrath	Light Cavalry		2		18th	Ingolstadt
Independent	Rouyer4	Infantry	2			21st	Ingolstadt
Cavalry Reserve	Nansouty	Heavy Cavalry		3		18th	Ingolstadt
	St Sulpice	Heavy Cavalry		2		18th	Lappersdorf5
	D'Espagne	Heavy Cavalry		2		20th	Pfaffenhofen

Lannes is allowed to command any division in the army and historically was used to command a provisional corps at the Battle of Eggmühl. He would later assume his intended command of II Corps in place of Oudinot.

The heavy cavalry divisions begin the campaign assigned to various corps and under the control of the relevant corps commanders. Bessières is available to the French should they wish to combine two or more of these Divisions into a single reserve corps.

AUSTRIAN ORDER OF BATTLE

Commander	Command	Date of Arrival	Point of Arrival
Archduke Charles	Commander-in-Chief	Start	Landshut
Bellegarde	I Korps	19th	Lappersdorf
Kolowrat	II Korps	19th	Lappersdorf
Hohenzollern	III Korps	Start	Landshut
Rosenberg	IV Korps	Start	Dingolfing
Archduke Louis	V Korps	Start	Landshut
Hiller	VI Korps	Start	Freising
Liechtenstein	IR Corps	17th	Landshut
Kienmayer	IIR Corps	17th	Landshut

Korps	Division	Type	Units			Date of Arrival	Point of Arrival
			INF	CAV	ARTY2		
I	Fresnel	Avant Garde1	2	1		19th	Lappersdorf
	Ulm	Infantry	3			19th	Lappersdorf
	Vogelsang	Infantry	3	1		19th	Lappersdorf
	Nostitz	Avant Garde1	1			19th	Lappersdorf
	Korps Artillery	Artillery			2	19th	Lappersdorf
II	Klenau	Avant Garde1	2	1		19th	Lappersdorf
	Brady	Infantry	3			19th	Lappersdorf
	Treuenfels	Infantry	3			19th	Lappersdorf
	Korps Artillery	Artillery			2	19th	Lappersdorf
III	Vukassovich	Avant Garde1	1	1		Start	Landshut
	Lusignan	Infantry	4			Start	Landshut
	St Julien	Infantry	4			Start	Landshut
	Korps Artillery	Artillery			3	Start	Landshut
IV	Stutterheim	Avant Garde1	1			Start	Dingolfing
	Somariva	Infantry	2	1		Start	Dingolfing
	Hohenlohe	Infantry	2			Start	Dingolfing
	Vecsey	Avant Garde1	2	1		Start	Dingolfing
	Korps Artillery	Artillery			2	Start	Dingolfing
V	Radetzky	Avant Garde1	2			Start	Landshut
	Lindenau	Infantry	4			Start	Landshut
	Reuss-Plauen	Infantry	3			Start	Landshut
	Schustekh	Avant Garde1	1	1		Start	Landshut
	Korps Artillery	Infantry			2	Start	Landshut
VI	Nordmann	Avant Garde1	1			Start	Freising
	Kottulinsky	Infantry	3			Start	Freising
	Vincent	Infantry	6	1		Start	Freising
	Korps Artillery	Artillery			2	Start	Freising
I Reserve	Hessen-Homburg	Heavy Cavalry		2	1	17th	Landshut
	Rohan	Grenadiers	3			17th	Landshut
II Reserve	D'Aspre	Heavy Cavalry		2		17th	Landshut
	Keinmayer	Grenadiers	1			17th	Landshut

FRENCH NOTES

1. The artillery reserves of II, III and IV Corps each consists of one foot artillery unit and one horse artillery unit
2. Includes two infantry units from Baden
3. Includes two infantry units from Hesse-Darmstadt
4. Infantry from the Confederation of the Rhine
5. Although Lappersdorf is an Austrian entry/supply point, these French units do appear here as they begin the game in retreat from the advance of Austrian I and II Korps

AUSTRIAN NOTES

1. The first infantry unit of each Avant-Garde Division is a 'mixed' unit of light infantry and light cavalry (or two small units of each).
2. All Austrian artillery is foot artillery, with the exception of the I Reserve Korps who have 'cavalry artillery' (counts as horse artillery when shooting, but foot artillery when moving)

CAMPAIGN RULES

With a finished map and a list of units constructed, the next step was to determine how the latter would move around the former. As the point of the campaign was to create believable wargame battles, the campaign rules really needed to concentrate upon speed of movement and penalising those units that chose to ignore logistical concerns. Here is what I came up with (all dice mentioned are of the usual six-sided type).

MOVEMENT

Movement should be conducted in accordance with written orders unless the campaign organiser prefers otherwise.

Movement is determined by the number of Movement Points (MPs) a commander or force (a unit or group of units) has, and the number of these that must be spent to move from one location to the next. Movement can only be made along a road.

Forces may split or combine during movement, but no part of a force may undertake more movement than it is allowed.

Movement Allowance

- Independent officers are allowed 4MP each day
- Forces consisting of all cavalry (and horse artillery) are allowed 3MP each day.
- All Other forces are allowed 2 MP each day.

Movement Costs

- Major road = 1MP to move to the next location
- Minor road = 2MP to move to the next location
- Upon entering a location, unless all MPs are already used, roll a die to determine if the force halts:

	French	Austrian
All cavalry	6+	5+
Other	5+	4+

The purpose of this rule is to make Austrian movement a little slower overall than that of their opponents. Austrian Divisions (or smaller detachments) moving independently of their Korps must add 1 to their die roll.

Forced Marches:

- A force that has not been halted by a die roll may move 1MP further than it usually would by declaring a 'forced march'. A force that uses 'forced march' acquires an attrition marker (see below).

- A force that currently has one or more attrition markers may not use forced march.
- Independent officers may not use forced march.

SUPPLY

- A supply line must be drawn from the force to a friendly supply source, using major roads only. Supply lines may not be drawn through enemy units.
- A force that can draw such a line is considered 'in supply' and suffers no adverse effects
- A force which cannot draw such a line is 'out of supply' and acquires an attrition marker (see below).
- Independent officers are not affected by supply or attrition

ATTRITION MARKERS

- Attrition markers are acquired when a force is out of supply, force marches or when it has engaged in combat. A force may possess more than one attrition marker.
- The effect of attrition markers is determined at the start of a battle, before deployment.
- For each unit in the force, roll a die for each attrition marker. Each roll of 4+ inflicts a hit marker (or similar penalty, depending on your rules) on the unit.

RALLY

Forces may attempt to rally instead of moving. Forces may not rally if they are out of supply. If the force is in supply it may remove an attrition marker if it rolls 2+ on 1d6.

BATTLES

These occur when forces from each side both attempt to be in the same location. Battles should be resolved on the tabletop as this is the point of the campaign! It may be desirable, however, to resolve very one-sided situations in a simpler fashion and the following method is suggested:

- When a small force is attempting to hold up a much larger one, roll a die. On a roll of 5 or 6, roll the die again and add to the number originally rolled. The total value is the number of hours the delaying action took and any further movement that day should be modified accordingly.
- The smaller force loses 10% of its strength for each hour of fighting and the larger force loses the same number of men/units. If the action took 6 or more hours, then all forces involved should acquire an attrition marker.
- Surviving defenders must withdraw once the battle is resolved.
- If the defender is occupying a fortress, then always roll two dice to determine the length of time taken, halve the losses to the defender and double the losses on the attacker.

WINNING THE CAMPAIGN

In order to win the campaign, each side is seeking to capture Regensburg, Landshut and all their opponent's supply points. More complicated victory conditions could be constructed, but it is best to keep things fairly clear. It will probably be obvious if one side has lost its ability to continue the fight and players can shake hands and agree a result whenever they feel it appropriate.

SUMMARY

I hope that this fairly brief article has shown you that a campaign does not need to involve a lot of work and complex book-keeping and has offered some inspiration to have a go yourself. Let Henry know if you'd like to see more like this!